

Dr. Eric Kligerman: ekligerm@ufl.edu  
Office: 206 Walker Hall  
Office Hours, Mon and Wed, 4th period

Classroom: TUR2318  
Meeting Time: Mon. periods 6-8

### **Fall 2018**

## **From Nuremberg to South Park: Representations of Nazism In Film and Literature** **GET 3930, LIT4930, JST3930**

This course examines the representation of the Nazi epoch in pre- and postwar visual culture and literature. In addition to exploring the historical, political and ideological implications of how National Socialism is recollected and represented, we will also track the transformation of the Nazi perpetrator in the cultural imagination of Europe and America. This course shifts attention from the debates regarding the commodification of the victims of the Holocaust, which has led to the provocative terms “Shoah business” and “Holocaust industry,” to what Susan Sontag describes as “fascinating fascism”: our commercial fascination with the perpetrators of genocide. How have those responsible for the crimes of the Third Reich been represented, theorized, turned into metaphors as well as clichés through the space of film and literature? By shifting our attention from the tragic images of the victims to the figure of the perpetrators, we will examine the ethical implications as well as moral ambiguities behind various representations of Nazism.

Beginning with Riefenstahl’s documentary films, we will examine the circulation of the Nazi aesthetic and its associations with questions of beauty, power, gender and eroticism. How has this aesthetic been re-circulated in postwar cinema? How does the Nazi figure function in documentary films, German cinema (the rubble films, New German Cinema and contemporary German film), Italian neorealism, and American popular culture? Does the representation of Nazism in shifting periods and forms critique, explain or bring about an understanding of those who committed the crimes of the Third Reich? Or, do they perpetuate the spectator’s obsession with the horrors of Nazism while circumventing issues of guilt, responsibility and historical comprehension? Our probing of the Nazi aesthetic along with the stereotype of unimaginable evil will be conjoined to how such concepts like Arendt’s “banality of evil” and Sontag’s “fascinating fascism” are treated in films that focus on iconic Nazi imagery and the central perpetrators: Hitler, Himmler, and Eichmann.

Interrogating the boundaries of representation, where the figure of the Nazi is not outside the frame of the imagination but occupies our day-to-day world, our objective is to explore how these films position the spectator in relation to the Nazi past. What moral and aesthetic complexities arise when the Nazi figure inhabits such genres as documentary, comedy, horror and erotica?

### Grading

Class participation/attendance: 20/5%=25%  
Research paper: 25%  
Midterm exam: 25%  
Final take home exam: 25%

**Required texts: All students must purchase the two books. I will also send PDFs of articles and essays. This material can be procured at UF Bookstore in Reitz Union.**

Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*  
Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

- 1) Students are allowed 2 unexcused absences. 1 point will be deducted from your final grade for each unexcused absence. **Excessive absences will result in an automatic failing grade regardless of other scores (4 absences is a failing grade).** Participation will play a major part of the final grade and students are expected to partake and contribute daily to class discussions. If you do not bring your texts to class, this too will count as an absence. Finally, film screenings are mandatory. You must watch the film before its discussion in class.
- 2) There will be one 8-10 page double-spaced research paper on a topic related to representations of Nazism. You are responsible for doing a close reading of the representation and for linking it to our theoretical discussions. Topics for the final paper will be student-generated and must be pre-approved by me.
- 3) There will be a take home midterm and final exam comprised of identification and short answer essay questions.

**Academic Integrity:**

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students who enroll at the University commit to holding themselves and their peers to the high standard of honor required by the Honor Code. Any individual who becomes aware of a violation of the Honor Code is bound by honor to take corrective action. Violations of the honor code include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, bribery, misrepresentation, fabrication, and conspiracy. Such violations may result in the following: lowering of grades, mandatory 0 on assignments, redoing assignments, a final failing grade in the course, expulsion from the course, referral to the student-run Honor Court. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: *On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.* For more information, refer to: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/>

**Students with Special Needs:**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

**(Syllabus subject to change)**

**Weeks One and Two, Introduction:** Leni Riefenstahl and the Third Reich

8/27:

**Readings:** Himmler's Posen Speech (link)

Sontag, "Fascinating Fascism" (PDF)

**Screening before class meeting** *Triumph of the Will* (Riefenstahl, 1935)

Discussion of *Triumph of the Will* and Sontag's "Fascinating Fascism"

9/3: **No Class**

**Week Three: Nazi Concentration Camps**

9/10: **Rosh Ha Shana**

Discussion of *Triumph of the Will* and Sontag's "Fascinating Fascism"

**Screening in class:** *Nazi Concentration Camps* (Stevens, 1945), and scenes from

*Judgment at Nuremberg* (Kramer, 1961)

**Readings:** Lawrence Douglas, "Film as Witness: Screening *Nazi Concentration Camps* before the Nuremberg Tribunal"

**Discuss *Nazi Concentration Camps* and Douglas article**

#### Week Four: Rubble Films

**9/17:**

**Screen before class:** *Murderers are Among Us* (Staudte, 1945)

**Readings:** Robert R. Shandley, "Coming Home through Rubble Canyons" (PDF)

Discussion of *Murderers are Among Us* and Shandley's essay

#### Weeks Five, Six and Seven: Representing Hitler

**9/24: Screen before class:** *To Be, Or Not To Be* (Lubitsch, 1942)

**Reading:** Annette Insdorf, "Black Humor" (PDF)

**Discuss *To Be, Or Not To Be*, Insdorf's essay**

**10/1:**

**Screen before class** *Downfall* (Hirschbiegel, 2005)

Read: Gordon A. Craig, "Hitler and the New Generation" (PDF)

**Readings:** Fest Joachim C. Fest, "Prologue: Hitler and Historical Greatness," "Götterdämmerung," and "Conclusion: The Dead End"

**10/8:**

**Screening selections in class:** *Our Hitler, A Film From Germany* (Syberberg, 1978)

**Read:** Anton Kaes, "Germany as Myth" (PDF)

Discuss: *Downfall*, *Our Hitler* and Fest

**Start Reading:** Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

#### Weeks Eight and Nine: The Banality of Evil

**10/15:**

Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem*

**10/22:**

**Screening before Class:** *Mr.. Death: The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr.* (Morris, 1998)

Discuss *Eichmann in Jerusalem* and *The Rise and Fall of Fred A. Leuchter, Jr*

**Screening scenes in class:** *The Specialist* (Sylvan, 1998)

#### Week Ten: Nazi Erotica

**10/29:**

**Screening in Class:** *Night Porter* (Cavani, 1974)

Reading: Teresa De Lauretis, "Cavani's *Night Porter*: A Woman's Film?"

**Weeks Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen: Nazis in American Popular Culture**

**11/5:**

**Screening before class:** *Inglourious Basterds*

Discussion of *Night Porter* and De Lauretis article; begin discussion of Tarantino

**11/12: NO CLASS**

11/19

Discuss *Inglourious Basterds*

Start reading Delillo's *White Noise*

11/26:

Discussion of *White Noise*

12/3: Conclusions:

**Screen before class:** Episodes of *South Park*

Discuss *White Noise* and *South Park*

**Final exam will be sent on 12/3 and is due by 12/8 at 1pm.**

**Final paper is due on 12/12 at 1pm. Late papers will not be accepted.**