

ITT 3700/JST 3930
The Demolition of Man: Italian Perspectives on the Holocaust
Fall 2024



Instructor	Deborah Amberson
Meetings - Time	T 8-9 (3:00-3:50; 4:05-4:55); R 9 (4:05-4:55)
Meetings - Place	TR MAT 0011
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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will guide us through a sampling of Italy's texts and films on the Jewish Holocaust. Centered on the writings of Primo Levi, Italy's most well-known and internationally esteemed survivor, our itinerary will also take us through the historical realities of fascist Italy to a selection of Italian films (Pontecorvo, Cavani, Wertmüller, and Benigni) that, often in controversial ways, deal with the experience of the concentration camps.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Touchstone, 1996)
- Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (Vintage, 1989)
- All other reading materials are available on CANVAS.
- All films are on reserve in Library West.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

FINAL GRADE AT A GLANCE:

1. Class Participation, 10%
2. Reading Team Reports, 15%

3. Exam, 15%
4. Paper 1, 15%
5. Discussion: *Pasqualino Settebellezze*, 10%
6. Podcast Review of *Portiere di notte*, 5%
7. Final Presentation, 10%
8. Paper 2, 20%

Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93 (4.0)	92-90 (3.67)	89-87 (3.33)	86-83 (3.0)	82-80 (2.67)	79-77 (2.33)	76-73 (2.0)	72-70 (1.67)	69-67 (1.33)	66-63 (1.0)	62-60 (0.67)	59- (0)

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

- <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>;
<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

ASSIGNMENT NOTES

- **Rubrics for written assignments, oral presentations, and participation** are available in the Rubrics folder on Canvas.
- All written assignments should be submitted through **Canvas**.
- All assignments should be submitted in Microsoft word format (**NO ADOBE/PDF**). They should be **double-spaced and written in 12 pt. font** (Times New Roman, Cambria, Calibri, or similarly conventional script) with **1-inch margins** on all sides.
- In the case of **presentations**, each individual student must **upload notes and visual supports**. If you do **NOT** upload your materials, you will **NOT** receive a grade for the assignment.

1. CLASS PARTICIPATION (10%): When you come to class, you should be ready to speak, ask questions, and engage with the materials. Please note that class participation is not about having all the right answers. Instead, it is a question of preparing your homework and being alert and active in class. It is about expressing your uncertainties and doubts about our texts and films as much as it is about sharing your opinion. It is also a question of listening to your classmates' opinions or questions and responding where you can. Your participation grade will therefore reflect your overall attitude and your willingness to engage with the work. It will also reflect the degree to which you have prepared your reading homework and the quality of your interventions in class. While I understand that some people are shyer than others, you should understand that you cannot get an A for participation if you do not participate actively in class discussion. **You will receive two grades over the course of the semester. At mid-semester you will receive a grade for 5% of the total 10%. This grade will cover your participation from the beginning of the semester to October 17. The remaining 5% will reflect your performance from mid-semester onwards.**

2. READING TEAM REPORTS (15%): You will be expected to partner up with one other student and meet for at least 30 minutes – in person or online – to discuss your comprehension of the week's readings and/or films. The goal of this assignment is to provide you with a sounding board regarding your understanding of the assigned texts and films. You can compare what you have understood, share your interpretations, and address any doubts you might have. After your meetings, each member of the team should submit via Canvas their own report (at least a page and a half in length) indicating when and for how long you met and describing what was

discussed. You should detail your conversation, sharing and explaining your ideas and interpretations. You should also aim to cite or directly reference the readings/films as this will reinforce the points you make. You will lose over 2% every time you fail to submit your report. There will be 6 reading reports in total. **See course calendar for due dates.**

3. EXAM (15%): At the end of our history introduction, you will take an in-class exam, which will consist of multiple-choice format and/or short essay answers. **Exam is scheduled for Sept. 12.**

4. PAPER 1 (15%): You will write a paper of 2-3 pages in length exploring a single concept or area addressed by Primo Levi. This is not a research paper; you are not expected to include sources beyond Levi's texts and the assigned readings. Topics will be discussed during the semester. **The short paper is due by midnight on October 19.**

5. DISCUSSION: PASQUALINO SETTEBELLEZZE (10%): Our analysis of Wertmüller's *Pasqualino Settebellezze* will revolve around an extended class discussion of the film, its ideas and strategies. You will be responsible for the content of this discussion—in effect, you will structure and teach the class. The class will be divided into groups of 2-3 students, and each group will select a specific aspect of the film and present its findings to the class as a whole. Each group presentation should include visual support. It is expected that everyone will participate in this discussion and your grade for this assignment will be based on the level and quality of your participation. You can use notes while presenting, but you should not read your contribution. You should also incorporate some questions into each group presentation. Further details will be provided. **Discussion is scheduled for 10/29-10/31.**

6. PODCAST REVIEW PORTIERE DI NOTTE (5%): Working with a classmate, you should prepare a pre-recorded podcast-style review of *Night Porter*. The podcast should be between 5 and 10 minutes in length. This recording will be played in class. This is an extremely controversial film, so you might use the podcast to work through some of the more provocative questions posed by the film. You might decide to defend the film, or you can denounce the director's choices and strategies. You can also be creative in your approach. For example, you might imagine a conversation between Primo Levi and the director. You should feel entirely free to make this assignment your own. **Your podcast should be ready to be played in class on Thursday 11/7.**

7. FINAL PRESENTATION (10%): As part of a group of 2-3 students, you will be expected to deliver a presentation of 15-20 minutes in length. Together with your group, you will select a film not included on the syllabus. Though this film does need to address the experience of the camps, it does not have to be the work of an Italian director. Your presentation should introduce your classmates to the work, and it should also consider the work in the light of the texts and films studied during the semester. In the interests of clarity, your group should use visual support such as PPT. **Presentations are scheduled for 11/19-11/21.**

8. PAPER 2 (20%): You will be expected to write a paper of 4 pages in length reflecting on how one of our directors deploys and develops Levi's thought.

Papers must be submitted on the due date unless you have received permission to extend the deadline or unless you have a signed medical excuse explaining your delay. Late papers are penalized and receive no comments. Papers will be graded with regard not only to content and organization, but also to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Secondary sources, whether textual or web based,

must be adequately cited. UNATTRIBUTED USE OF SOURCES WILL EARN YOU AN E FOR THE COURSE.
Paper must be uploaded to Canvas by 9pm on Sunday December 9.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Attendance & Makeup: Attendance is mandatory and will be assessed by roll call. Students will lose 1% from their final grade for each unexcused absence. Absences are excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, & the 12-day rule: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Repeated tardiness will also negatively affect your attendance record as 3 late arrivals count for 1 absence. Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered. Moreover, I will not remind or nag you about your attendance as it is your responsibility to keep a record of your absences. Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse, there will be no make-up option for missed exams/assignments. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged prior to absence. Alternatively, students should contact me on return to classes.

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. 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.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center: <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling & Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352-392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Course Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

COURSE CALENDAR

(schedule subject to change over the course of the semester)

T 8-9; R 9	READING & VIEWING
8/22	(R) Course Introduction
8/27-8/29	(T/R): Pugliese, "Israel in Italy: Wrestling with the Lord in the Land of Divine Dew"
9/3-9/5	(T/R): Duggan, <i>Concise History of Italy</i> , 195-245
9/10-9/12	(T) Levi, <i>Survival</i> : "Author's Preface," Poem ("Shemà"), "The Journey," "On the Bottom," "Initiation" (R) EXAM
9/17-9/19	(T) Levi, <i>Survival</i> : "Ka-Be," "Our Nights," "The Work," "A Good Day," "This Side of Good & Evil" (R) Levi, <i>Survival</i> : "Drowned & Saved," "Chemical Exam" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READING REPORT #1 DUE BY TUESDAY'S CLASS
9/24-9/26	(T) Levi, <i>Survival</i> : "Canto of Ulysses," "Events of Summer," "October 1944," "Kraus," "Die drei Leute vom Labor" (R) Levi, <i>Survival</i> : "The Last One," "Ten Days" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READING REPORT #2 DUE BY TUESDAY'S CLASS
10/1-10/3	(T) Levi, <i>Drowned & Saved</i> : "Memory of the Offense," "Gray Zone," "Shame" (R) Levi, <i>Drowned & Saved</i> : "Communicating" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READING REPORT #3 DUE BY TUESDAY'S CLASS
10/8-10/10	(T) Levi, <i>Drowned & Saved</i> : "Useless Violence," "The Intellectual in Auschwitz," (R) Levi, <i>Drowned & Saved</i> : "Stereotypes" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READING REPORT #4 DUE BY TUESDAY'S CLASS
10/15-10/17	(T): Levi (Poems): "Reveille," "Partisans," "The Survivor" (R): Levi Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/19 PAPER 1
10/22-10/24	(T): Watch: Pontecorvo, <i>Kapò</i> (1960); (R): Read: Rivette, "On Abjection" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READING REPORT #5 DUE BY TUESDAY'S CLASS
10/29-10/31	(T): Watch: Wertmüller, <i>Seven Beauties</i> (1975); (T): Read: Pfefferkorn, "Bettelheim, Wertmüller, & Morality of Survival." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WERTMÜLLER DISCUSSION 10/29-10/31
11/5-11/7	(T): Watch: Cavani, <i>Night Porter</i> (1974); No critical reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PODCAST REVIEW OF NIGHT PORTER FOR THURSDAY'S CLASS
11/12-11/14	(T): Watch: Benigni, <i>Life is Beautiful</i> (1997) (R): Read: Viano, "Life Is Beautiful, Reception, Allegory, & Holocaust Laughter." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • READING REPORT #6 DUE BY TUESDAY'S CLASS
11/19-11/21	(TR) PRESENTATIONS
11/26-11/28	THANKSGIVING WEEK – NO CLASS
12/3	(T) Housekeeping and Feedback