

REL 598/494 Studies in Critical Theory: Post-Holocaust Ethics

Spring 2010, Mondays, 11:50-2:40 offered at ASU – Tempe, ECAA 371

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The seminar will examine some responses to the "irreparable," "inexpiable," and "unforgivable" in contemporary moral, political and religious thought. "Post-Holocaust Ethics" refers specifically to philosophy, ethics, and religion after *Shoah* and broadly to coming to terms with unforgivable harm, such as genocide or cruelty in torture. "Critical theory" refers to two genealogies of thought: first, several generations of thinkers in the Frankfurt School of Social Criticism and, second, thinkers in Continental philosophical traditions, literary critical theory, Continental philosophy of religion, and cultural studies. We will consider Post-Holocaust Ethics not only as a response to *Shoah* but also as a critical theory that articulates resources of hope after the irreparable.

Selected primary texts for this course will come from Derrida, Fackenheim, Goldhagen, Jonas, Lang, Levi, Levinas, Wiesel, Wiesenthal, and several contemporary cases. Seminar will integrate lectures, seminar discussions, and student workshops related to the final seminar papers. *Students registered for the course should consult the blackboard in January 2010 for the syllabus.*

The first reading assignment for January 19, 2010: Primo Levi's Survival in Auschwitz.

Required texts (begin with ISBN numbers):

0-253-21728-8 Berel Lang. *Post-Holocaust*. Indiana UP, 2005.

978-0-684-82680-6 Primo Levi. *Survival in Auschwitz*. Touchstone Books, Simon and Schuster, 1996.

978-0415236652 Melissa Raphael. *The Female Face of God in Auschwitz: A Jewish Feminist Theology of the Holocaust*. Routledge, 2003.

978-1-55778-212-0 John Roth and Michael Berenbaum. *Holocaust: Religious & Philosophical Implications*. New York: Paragon House, 1989.

0-8052-1060-1 Simon Wiesenthal. *The Sunflower*. Schocken Books, 1998, no older editions!

978-1586487690. *Worse Than War: Genocide, Eliminationism, and the Ongoing Assault on Humanity*. (Hardcover) PublicAffairs; 1 edition, October 6, 2009. \$18.75 hard cover from amazon.com or \$14.99 on Kindle.

Optional: 1-55778-771-9 John K. Roth. *Ethics After the Holocaust: Perspectives, Critiques, and Responses*. St. Paul: Paragon House, 1999.

On Reserve (Haydn and Fletcher Libraries):

Shoah: a film by Claude Lanzmann (several tapes, total 570 minutes)

The Pianist: a story of one man's survival in Warsaw, 1939-1945. A Roman Polanski film and a book by Wladyslaw Szpilim.