

We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands and the Songhees, Esquimalt, and WSÁNEĆ peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

# GMST 585

## *Holocaust and Memory Studies*

January – April 2021

### About the Course

This course meets synchronously every Tuesday from 9:30 am – 12:30 pm (Pacific Time) on zoom. The course format is structured so that everyone is able to participate in each class session in a meaningful way.

### Instructor

Hello everyone! My name is Helga Thorson, and I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies. I have been at UVic for 15 years and teach a range of German language and cultural studies courses with a focus on early twentieth-century literature, Nazi cinema, and literature about the Holocaust and World War II. In 2012 I received the Faculty of Humanities Teaching Excellence Award. This was followed by the UVic Excellence in Teaching for Experiential Learning Award (2017) and a 3M national teaching award (2019). One of the highlights of my teaching career has been co-founding and teaching the [I-witness Field School](#). The best way to reach me is via email ([helgat@uvic.ca](mailto:helgat@uvic.ca)) and during my office hours (see [Brightspace](#) for more details).

### Facilitators and Guest Speakers

In this course there will be a number of guest speakers and facilitators. For example, several of the authors whose works we are reading will join us when we are discussing their books. We will also be meeting a number of community partners whose stories we will present in a digital exhibit this semester. We will be participating in three workshops with Matt Huculak, digital scholarship librarian at the University of Victoria, in order to build the digital literacy skills needed to create the exhibit. Additionally, Frances Grunberg, social work educator, will be taking part in the course. During the initial class session, she will introduce us to aspects of selfcare that are necessary when taking a course of this kind.

## Introduction from Frances Grunberg

It is my hope that during this course, I will help you develop some personal tools to facilitate your learning on both an intellectual and emotional level. Since the subject matter is uniquely sensitive and can be overwhelming at times, it is important to pay attention to your own selfcare. I will introduce you to some strategies that you can incorporate into your life as a student. You will be asked to develop a simple selfcare plan and write in a journal on a regular basis about your thoughts, what you are learning in this course and how you are feeling, particularly during your interviews with a survivor or child of a survivor. Both of these tasks will be confidential and used only for your own purposes. You are not expected to share your writing with the instructor, your classmates, or me at any point in the semester. I will be attending the synchronous sessions each week and will be available should anyone wish to contact me outside of class.

## Course Description

This seminar explores issues of Holocaust and memory studies from a wide range of perspectives, investigating the ways in which stories of the past are told in the present and how aspects of gender, intersectionality, and genre come together to shape these accounts.

## Course Material

Much of the course material is available on the course management system, [Brightspace](#). In addition to this, you will need to purchase the following four books (which you can order from the UVic Bookstore or a book vendor of your choice):

### *Mouth of Truth*

Author: Lillian Boraks-Nemetz  
ISBN: 9781771712118  
Publisher: Canada Books  
Edition: 2017

### *Letters from the Lost*

Author: Helen Wilkes  
ISBN: 9781897425534  
Publisher: Athabasca University Press  
Edition: 2010

### *Imprint: A Memoir of Trauma in the Third Generation*

Author: Claire Sicherman  
ISBN: 9781987915570  
Publisher: Caitlin Press  
Edition: 2017

### *Still Alive*

Author: Ruth Kluger  
ISBN: 9781558614369  
Publisher: The Feminist Press at CUNY  
Edition: 2003

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to complete the following course objectives:

- understand the foundational concepts of memory studies within the context of Holocaust studies
- closely analyze and discuss Holocaust memoirs and poetry from various perspectives, including with the authors themselves
- discern differences in experience of the Holocaust based on gender, race, ethnicity, age, etc. in an intersectional way

- communicate effectively and interact ethically with a community partner as you develop an exhibit based on their own or their family's Holocaust experiences
- demonstrate the digital humanities skills needed to create an exhibit on Omeka
- examine your own role and responsibilities in telling someone else's story in a digital format.

## Evaluation

Participation/Preparation	20%
Presentation on one of the assigned readings	20%
Mock conference panel discussion	10%
Creation and launch of one section of a digital exhibit	30%
Corresponding final paper on the course project	20%

## Course Requirements

You are expected to attend the course regularly, to have the readings and assignments completed on time, and to participate fully in the class discussions. Your individual in-class contributions, interactions, and reflections are calculated into the participation/ preparation grade. You may also participate on the discussion forum on Brightspace outside of class time.

Besides participation and preparation, course requirements include: presenting on one of the scholarly articles or book chapters assigned in the course, participating in a mock conference panel on one of the four memoirs we are reading in the course, creating a section of a digital exhibit based on a community member's stories, and writing a corresponding paper about the process of creating the exhibit.

Each course participant will give a presentation on one of the secondary readings assigned in the seminar and will lead the class discussion on that article. The presentation should last approximately 15 minutes, followed by 15 minutes of discussion (for a total of 30 minutes). On the day of your assigned presentation, you should provide a handout to each class member summarizing the main points of the reading.

You are expected to participate in one of the four mock conference panels on one of the memoirs we are reading in the course. At the start of the class session, three class members will each present a 10-minute discussion of the book, followed by a combined 20-minute (minimum) class discussion. At the end of your own presentation, you will post three questions in the zoom chat box that we can address during the discussion.

As an ongoing project in this course, the class as a whole will put together a digital exhibit on local stories of the Holocaust. You will work one-on-one with a Holocaust survivor or the descendant of a Holocaust survivor to create a portion of the exhibit focusing on your community partner's story. As a first step, you will become familiar with these stories (by talking to your community partner, reading texts they have written, or watching videos of them speaking). In collaboration with your community partner, you will determine the best way to tell these stories in an online exhibit, e.g., what should be highlighted, what documents or images could best be included, etc. If your partner agrees, you also have the option of conducting a socially distanced interview that could be included in the exhibit. Finally, you will create the exhibit itself using a platform called Omeka.

In addition, you are expected to write a 10-12 page corresponding paper analyzing the choices that were made and the methodological issues encountered while working with your community partner on creating the digital exhibit. The final paper should be written as though it were to be included in an edited volume on the topic and should include a discussion of at least four of the articles or book chapters we discussed in the course.

The launch of the exhibit is currently scheduled for the evening of Thursday, April 15, 2020 (although this might change depending on our community partners' availability). Your final paper is due by noon (Pacific Time) on Monday, April 19th. *I will deduct 5% each day for any late assignment turned in after the required due date. Course projects will not be accepted after April 25, 2020.*

### Grading scale

Please refer to the [UVic Calendar](#) for the complete grading scale.

Grade	Percentage*	Description	Achievement of Assignment Objectives
A+	90 - 100	Exceptional Work	Technically flawless and original work demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations; often publishable.
A	85 - 89	Outstanding Work	Demonstrates a very high level of integration of material demonstrating insight, understanding and independent application or extension of course expectations.
A-	80 - 84	Excellent Work	Represents a high level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity, as well as mastery of relevant techniques/concepts.
B+	77 - 79	Very good work	Represents a satisfactory level of integration, comprehensiveness, and complexity; demonstrates a sound level of analysis with no major weaknesses.
B	73 - 76	Acceptable work that fulfills the expectations of the course	Represents a satisfactory level of integration of key concepts/procedures. However, comprehensiveness or technical skills may be lacking.
B- C+ C D	70 - 72 65 - 69 60-64 50-59	Unacceptable work revealing some deficiencies in knowledge,	Represents an unacceptable level of integration, comprehensiveness and complexity. Mastery of some relevant techniques or concepts lacking. Every grade of 4.0 (B-) or lower in a course taken for credit in the Faculty of

Grade	Percentage*	Description	Achievement of Assignment Objectives
		understanding or techniques	Graduate Studies must be reviewed by the supervisory committee of the student and a recommendation made to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such students will not be allowed to register in the next session until approved to do so by the Dean.
F	00-49	Failing grade	Unsatisfactory performance. Wrote final examination and completed course requirements.

## Departmental and University Policies

The following section highlights particular policies established by the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies and the University of Victoria. Please refer to the [University Calendar](#) for more details on these and other university policies.

### University Policy on Human Rights, Equity, and Fairness

According to the [Policy on Human Rights, Equity, and Fairness](#), the “University promotes a safe, respectful and supportive learning and working environment for all members of the university community. The University fosters an environment characterized by fairness, openness, equity, and respect for the dignity and diversity of its members. The University strives to be a place that is free of discrimination and harassment, injustice and violence. The strength and vibrancy of the University is found in the diverse life experiences, backgrounds and worldviews of all its members.”

### Commitment to Inclusivity and Diversity

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe learning and working environment for all of its members.

### Classroom Conduct and Course Responsibilities

With regard to the learning environment, the [University Calendar’s Policy on Creating a Respectful and Positive Learning Environment](#) states that UVic “is committed to promoting critical academic discourse while providing a respectful and productive learning environment. All members of the university community have the right to experience, and the responsibility to help create, such an environment. In any course, the instructor has the primary responsibility for creating a respectful and productive learning environment in a manner consistent with other university policies and regulations.” All members of the course are to recognize that the instructor has the responsibility to teach the material on the syllabus, to keep the class meetings on track, and to facilitate a positive space for discussion and learning.

In terms of expectations for students, the [University Calendar’s Attendance Policy](#) states that “[a]n instructor may refuse a student admission to a lecture, laboratory, online course discussion or learning activity, tutorial or other learning activity set out in the course outline because of lateness, misconduct, inattention or failure to meet the responsibilities of the course set out in the course outline.” Aside from the course’s academic requirements, the

responsibilities of this course may include but are not restricted to: using electronic devices appropriately, listening to students and the instructor without interrupting them or diminishing their personal background or experiences, remaining on topic when engaged in class discussion, and communicating respectfully with each other and your instructor (in person or in e-mail) on topics related to the course.

Students engaging in misconduct or failing to meet their course responsibilities can expect a communication from the instructor that outlines the concerning behaviour, explains how such behaviour is disrupting the learning environment, and requests that the student refrain from further disruptive behaviour. Should such instances of misconduct continue, the student will receive a formal request to meet with the Department Chair in order to seek remediation between the parties. If necessary, further procedures to resolve the situation can be found in the [Policy on Resolution of Non-Academic Misconduct Allegations](#).

Please keep in mind the overlapping policy on [Online Student Conduct](#) specifies standards of behaviour in the online environment.

#### [Information on Campus Supports for Student Wellbeing](#)

A note to remind you to take care of yourself. Do your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, getting enough sleep and taking some time to relax. This will help you achieve your goals and cope with stress. All of us benefit from support during times of struggle. You are not alone. Resources include:

*Counselling Services - Counselling Services can help you make the most of your university experience. They offer free professional, confidential, inclusive support to currently registered UVic students.*

*Health Services - University Health Services (UHS) provides a full-service primary health clinic for students and coordinates healthy student and campus initiatives.*

**Update:** UVic Health is open. Health has transitioned to offering services primarily by phone or video. Appointments can be made by phone, please do not come in person to make appointments (<http://www.uvic.ca/services/health/>).

*Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL) - Students with diverse learning styles and needs are welcome in this course. In particular, if you have a disability/health consideration that may require accommodations, please feel free to approach me and/or the CAL as soon as possible. CAL staff members are available by appointment to assess specific needs, provide referrals and arrange appropriate accommodations.*

The sooner you let us know your needs the quicker we can assist you in achieving your learning goals in this course. Please note that your instructor cannot provide CAL-type accommodations without CAL documentation.

SupportConnect – Mental Health Support. Anytime. Anywhere.

SupportConnect is a free, confidential mental health support service for UVic students. Get connected with qualified counsellors, consultants, and life coaches anytime, anywhere.

Available 24/7 by phone and online. Video and in-person options are also available. You can reach out for any reason - big or small!

Support Connect offers short-term solution focused counselling with the same counsellor. You and your counsellor will work together through a set of sessions to assist you in moving forward.

### **How to Connect**

SupportConnect is here to help you face the challenges of balancing school with life and work or other responsibilities. Help is available from a network of qualified professionals.

### **Phone**

When you call the toll-free number, a qualified counsellor will respond to your request thoroughly and promptly. You can call SupportConnect anytime, from anywhere you are.

**Toll-free (calls from North America):** 1-844-773-1427

**International collect calls:** 1-250-999-7621

### [Add/Drop Deadlines](#)

It is the student's responsibility to attend to ADD/DROP dates as published in the Calendar and the Graduate Registration Guide and Timetable. You will not necessarily be dropped automatically from a class that you do not attend.

### [Communication](#)

The most efficient way to talk to your instructor is during scheduled online office hours and/or by appointment. If you decide to communicate by email, please be advised that instructors can be expected to check and answer UVic emails from Monday to Friday between 9.30 a.m. and 4.30 p.m. Please keep this in mind when awaiting a response, especially on weekends. When emailing your instructor, please identify yourself and your course, use a proper form of address and clearly state your question or request.

### [Absences and Incomplete Work](#)

Regular attendance, completion of participation check-in activities, and the punctual submission of work are important and mandatory components of completing the course successfully. The standard late penalty for submitting work late is 5% per day in this course. Please communicate with your instructor regarding an extension in a timely manner.

### [A Note on Pronouns](#)

As a Department, we acknowledge and support each student's right to and preference for their own personalized pronouns in our courses.

### [Concessions and Documentation](#)

**These policies normally apply during a pandemic-free environment. In the interest of public safety and the proper use of medical services, students are not required to produce**

**documentation for short-term absences. Please inform your instructors of your absences and your possible date of return (if known) so that we can work together to keep your learning on track.**

For significant periods of absence or lengthy extensions, these policies may apply: Students may ask for an academic concession, such as an extension for an assignment, upon providing proper documentation of a personal or medical affliction or of a time conflict. Proper documentation would include a doctor's note or a memo from Counseling Services, or a memo from a coach, employer or faculty member. It must be dated before or close to the time of the missed work or classes.

### Withdrawals and Deferrals

Students who miss more than **three** classes for documented medical or personal reasons may still be asked to apply for a *backdated withdrawal*. Even when the reasons for failing to meet course requirements are valid, it is neither academically sound nor fair to others in the course to allow students missing significant amounts of work to continue in the course and receive credit.

Students who miss substantial amounts of class and assignments without documentation will be asked to withdraw, as they will receive an N at the end of the semester.

Students are to familiarize themselves with the [withdrawal dates](#) in the academic calendar. Students may only apply for a *course deferral* if a) they have serious and documented medical or personal reasons for not completing some of the end-of-term requirements and b) they have already completed practically all the course requirements at the time of their application.

In situations in which a student cannot complete the course requirements and a deferral is not a viable option, he or she must have completed 80% of the course requirements for an *AEG (aegrotat)* grade to be assigned.

### A Note on Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

You must inform yourself about the university regulations (see the [UVic Policy on Academic Integrity in the University Calendar](#)). Students are required to abide by all academic regulations set as set out in the University calendar, including standards of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity (e.g. cheating and plagiarism) are considered serious and may result in significant penalties.

### Unauthorized Use of an Editor

An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student's written or non-written work. The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. If you have questions, please ask! The main principle: do your own work according the guidelines, and all will be well.



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