

Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust

Student Viewing Guide-Homework Assignment and Group Activity

As we come to the end of the semester it is important for us to examine the role that film plays in the representation of the Shoah. Next Fall 2014, there will be a new special topics course I have created. It is **ENG 2930- The Holocaust in Cinema and Television**. This lesson about Hollywood and the Holocaust is a mere introduction to that very wide and complex topic. The new course will take the issue and the related issues and examine them in detail over an entire semester.

Day 1:

Topic introduction by Professor Gair with a brief lecture.

In class viewing of the first half of the documentary “Imaginary Witness: Hollywood and the Holocaust” Please take notes as they will be needed for Day 2. At the end of class turn in your usual 4 by 6 index card with your response to today’s focus question based upon the viewing.

Day 1 Viewing Focus Questions:

When a filmmaker decides to make a movie about the Holocaust what are their responsibilities? Should there be limits on how graphically a filmmaker should be able to tell the story of the Holocaust? If yes, then what are the limits in your view?

Homework: Go to my VIMEO web site and view the remainder of the documentary. The password is below. The makers of this documentary who own the rights to it have asked that I share it with you only for instructional purposes and password protect it from all other viewers. I personally paid for the purchase and the rights to use it in an educational setting. You will not be able to download, embed or save it as a favorite in your own collection. I have disabled all those features to comply with their wishes and legal rights. Thanks for understanding.

Copy and paste the [http://...address](#) into your browser or type it in the address bar.

Password: Valencia

<http://vimeo.com/67723121>

In preparation for Day 2 please take careful notes and respond to the following questions-issues.

1. Educational Value:
2. Censorship
3. Holocaust Fatigue
4. Expected changes in viewer.
5. Good taste...what is it? Do we all have a different definition of it? Do we know “good taste when we see it? Is there an imaginary line we can draw beyond which we can say something is in “poor (bad) vulgar...taste” when it comes to the art of Holocaust representation?
6. Education versus entertainment
7. Documentary versus docudrama. What is the difference? Is one more suitable for the Holocaust than the other?
8. Are there things that are so graphic that they should be left to the imagination of the viewer? If so, name some.

I believe all the above issues are starters for some very deep thought and examination. Leave plenty of space in your notes between each question so that you can refer to them in class. We will be divided into groups of 4 and each group will be assigned one or two of these issues. You will share your notes for the assigned issue with your group mates and one person will act as a recorder. At the end that recorder will report to the rest of the class what consensus or lack of consensus their group reached.

At the end of Day 2 each student will hand in their own set of notes, stapled together for grading. It will be a participation type grade. No notes on each issue a zero. Some personal notes for each one in preparation for Day 2 will be a 100. There is NO IMAGES ASSIGNMENT THIS WEEK.

Day 2:

1. Discussion and sharing of homework responses within assigned group. 30 MINUTES
2. Group sharing by each group recorder: 5 minutes for each group (25 min total)
3. Wrap up by Professor Gair (remainder of class time.)
4. Turn in notes to group leader and attach recorder’s notes to the top of the group’s notes.

Do not forget...you should sign up for ENG 2930 The Holocaust in Cinema and Television for the Fall 2014 to explore this entire topic in depth and view many major Holocaust films and their various genres and approaches.