

HUMN 4: TRAUMA & THE ARTS

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Summer 2023
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	One of the following: ENGL 1A or 1AH or ESLL 26 strongly recommended; not open to students with credit in HUMN 4H.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Area I: Humanities
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade Only
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Synthesize critical thinking, imaginative, cooperative and empathetic abilities as whole persons in order to contextualize knowledge and make meaning.
- Discuss how cinematic representations have shaped contemporary understanding of the Holocaust.
- Discuss three different strategies with which film makers aestheticize the representation of violence.

Description

This course applies theories of trauma to representations of trauma and violence in the visual arts, literature, film, and music, with an emphasis on the transformative potential of the creative process. Topics include the representation of war, genocide, and racism. Students will gain acuity to identify, understand, empathize, and respond to traumatic subjectivity, its images, and artistic as well as social intent.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Identify diverse cultural and historical origins of values and ideas as related to violence and trauma
2. Distinguish the subtlety and complexity with which cultural ideas and values related to violence and trauma are disseminated, encoded, and reinforced through literature and visual representation
3. Develop correlations between historical, philosophical, and cultural contexts and artistic mediums in representing violence and trauma
4. Apply criteria of cultural and aesthetic (philosophical) analysis to artworks depicting violence and trauma from various historical and cultural backgrounds
5. Trace how aesthetic representation of violence and trauma reflects and shapes national discourse
6. Identify and evaluate aesthetic experiences of violence and trauma and formulate reactions to these experiences

7. Demonstrate via discussion and in writing an awareness of the ways in which ideological and cultural viewpoints shape the representation and reception of art depicting violence and trauma

Course Content

1. Introduction to the field of Trauma Studies
 - a. Excerpts, Judith Herman's Trauma and Recovery
 - i. Terror
 - ii. Disassociation
 - iii. Stages of recovery
 - b. Sigmund Freud and Bessel van der Kolk
 - i. Screen memories
 - ii. Consequences of overwhelming life experiences
 - c. Excerpts, Cathy Caruth, "Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History" and/or Dominick La Capra's "Writing History, Writing Trauma"
 - i. Construction of trauma
 - ii. Construction of history
2. Analysis of visual art representing trauma, for example:
 - a. Picasso's Guernica
 - b. Art Spiegelman's Maus I + II
 - c. Vietnam Memorial
3. Analysis of literary representations of trauma
 - a. Excerpts: Sophocles' Antigone or Aeschylus' Agamemnon
 - b. Excerpts: Shakespeare's Macbeth
 - c. Depictions of war
 - d. Depictions of racism
 - e. Holocaust representation
4. Analysis of cinematic representation of trauma
 - a. Depictions of war, for example:
 - i. Excerpts from Christian Carion's "Joyeux Noel" (2005) or Alain Renais' "Hiroshima Mon Amour" (1959)
 - b. Depictions of racism, for example:
 - i. Excerpts from Jonathan Demme's "Beloved" (1998) or Norman Jewison's "In the Heat of the Night" (1967)
 - c. Holocaust representation, for example:
 - i. Excerpts from Roberto Benigni's "Life is Beautiful" (1997) or "Jan Hrebek's Divided We Fall" (2000)
5. Analysis of music as a universal means to transcend trauma
 - a. Mozart's Requiem
 - b. Mourning songs, dirges, and/or chants
 - c. Lullabies from various cultures
 - d. Spirituals
 - e. Songs of struggle

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. LCD projector, DVD player.
2. When taught as an online section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Exams
Evaluation of contributions to class discussions
Formal essay

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture presentations
In-class discussions

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Auslander, Shalom. Hope: A Tragedy. 2012.

Aeschylus. Agamemnon (Translated by Philip de May). 2009.

Shakespeare. Macbeth. .

Spiegelman, Art. The Complete Maus: A Survivor's Tale. 2003.

La Capra, Dominick. Writing History, Writing Trauma. 2014.

Although these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Freud, Sigmund. "Screen Memories in Peter Gay." The Freud Reader. 1995. pp. 117-126.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Weekly assigned readings from 5-50 pages drawn from both primary and secondary sources
2. Brief philosophical and literary critical readings designed to familiarize students with ongoing debates and perspectives in trauma theory and the aesthetics of violence
3. Bi-weekly one to two-page essays requiring summary, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of both original and secondary texts

Discipline(s)

Humanities