CU 361 THE CULTURE OF TRAUMA
IES Abroad Vienna

DESCRIPTION:
The course examines the rise of trauma as a prominent cultural discourse for the representation of individual and collective injuries and catastrophic events in the 20th and 21st centuries. The course will follow the historical process through which trauma transformed from a specialized medical and psychoanalytical term into a household concept that permeates our culture. Students will become familiar with the cultural uses to which the early models of trauma have been put and with the major controversies surrounding them as trauma became a more general cultural concept, including debates about collective and inherited trauma, vicarious trauma, and repressed memories and the cultural impact of representing experiences of harm and disempowerment. Scholarly material on trauma will be juxtaposed with a selection of European and American narratives (literature, memoir, and film), exemplifying the challenges of representing, narrating and responding to trauma. This allows students to recognize and empathetically, yet critically respond to the cultural conventions that have developed in audio-visual representations of trauma. Students will also reflect on how a contemporary culture of trauma affects our own time in such practices, for instance, as the consumption of mediated suffering on television and the internet or the creation of “safe” environments in education.

CREDITS: 3 credits

CONTACT HOURS: 45 hours

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English

PREREQUISITES: none

METHOD OF PRESENTATION: There will be 20, ninety-minute-long sessions. The course is composed of lectures, class discussions, written assignments, exams, and excursions to Mauthausen and Budapest.

REQUIRED WORK AND FORM OF ASSESSMENT:
- Class-participation - 10%
- Response papers - 25%
- Midterm - 30%
- Final Exam - 35%

Class-participation
- Oral component: class-discussion of specific topics on the basis of the compulsory readings (descriptive or theoretical pieces).
- Participation policy: Students differ in character and in their habits of communication and will be highly respected. No arbitrary ‘points’ for participation will be assigned. Class atmosphere will be encouraging and not competitive. However, not making an effort to contribute to the discussions at all, or simply skipping classes unexcused will result in lowering the final grade.

Response papers
Students are expected to write one short response a week (2-3 typewritten pages) either to a theoretical text or a narrative. Students are expected to go beyond summary or description and interpret, critique or reflect on the given work.

Midterm
The in-class midterm exam will consist of two parts: (1) explanation and interpretation of concepts and (2) one shorter essay on a major topic.
Final
The take-home final exam will be a longer, integrative essay addressing or extending one of the themes of the course. Emphasis will be on the development of the student’s ideas shaping during the course as a whole.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:
By the end of the course students will be able to:
- describe the psychoanalytical origins of trauma as a concept
- compare concepts of individual and collective trauma
- analyze conceptual schemas related to trauma, narration, and the body
- identify the major controversies in the history of trauma
- compare positions in the major controversies in the history of trauma
- identify differences between academic disciplines in the use of trauma as a concept
- classify and evaluate uses of the concept of trauma in social discourse
- analyze cultural differences in representing and responding to traumatic events
- analyze media practices of visually representing traumatic events

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
IES Vienna requires attendance at all class sessions, including field study excursions, internship meetings, scheduled rehearsals, and all tests and exams. Attendance will be taken for every class. If a student misses more than two classes without an excuse, the final grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter grade (for example, A- to B+) for every additional unexcused absence.

CONTENT:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week, Session</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Assignments/Readings</th>
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</table>
| Week 1, Session 1 | - Introduction  
| Week 2, Session 1 | - The Vienna and Budapest Schools (continued)  
| Week 2, Session 2 | - The Vienna and Budapest schools (continued) | - Sandor Ferenczi, “Two types of war neuroses” [1916/17], in Further Contributions to the Theory and Technique of Psychoanalysis, Karnac Books, 1994, 133-141. |
| Week 3, Session 1 | • War  
|---|---|---|
| Week 3, Session 2 | • War (continued) | • The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (1920) d. Robert Wiene, 71 min. (viewed ahead of class)  
| Week 4, Session 1 | • War (continued)  
| Week 4, Session 2 | • War (continued) | • Art Spiegelman, Maus (continued). 75-135.  
| Week 5, Session 1 | • Family  
• Repressed memory debate | • Binjamin Wilkomirski, Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood. New York: Schocken Books, 1996, 38-68. (A famous and famously perplexing case of fraud/delusion, this inauthentic memoir of an alleged child survivor of the Holocaust has been withdrawn by the publisher, but not the author.)  
| Week 5, Session 2 | • Midterm Exam | • Capturing the Friedmans, dir. Andrew Jarecki (2003). 104’. (viewed ahead of class) Richard J. McNally, “Theories of Repression and Dissociation”, in Remembering Trauma,
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<th>Week 6, Session 1</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family (continued)</td>
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<td>• 4th response paper due</td>
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<td>Father [Apa] (1966). Dir. István Szabó. 86'. (Set in postwar Budapest, a film about the challenge of self-knowledge and separating fantasy from reality in the wake of devastation.) (viewed ahead of class)</td>
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<td>• Szilárd Borbély, The Dispossessed: A Novel, trans. Ottilie Mulzet, 2016. (excerpt, c. 80 pp.)</td>
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<td>• Body</td>
<td>Caruth, Cathy. Trauma and Experience. in Trauma: Explorations in Memory. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996. 3-12.</td>
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<td>• Son of Saul, dir. L. Nemes Jeles. 117’. 2015. (Based on historical documents, a fictional story of a Hungarian member of the Sonderkommando, the group of Jewish prisoners assisting the Nazis in the extermination, who finds a boy he claims is his son.) (viewed in class, if possible – more than 90 mins.)</td>
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<td>• Body (continued)</td>
<td>White Palms. 2006. Dir. Szabolcs Hajdú. 101’. Award winning sports drama about idealized and failing bodies – individual and political -- that carry imprints of the past (state socialism). (viewed ahead of class)</td>
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<td>• 6th response paper due!</td>
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<td>• The Danube Exodus, dir. Péter Forgács. 1998. 60’. (Award-winning found footage filmmaker’s work about two boats carrying two fleeing groups along the Danube: first Slovakian and Austrian Jews fleeing to Palestine, then, on the return trip, repatriating Bessarabian Germans, fleeing to the Third Reich. Based on films made by the captain of one of the boats.) (viewed in class)</td>
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## Week 9, Session 1
- Mediating Trauma
- **7th response paper due**
- Warsaw Uprising, 2014. 85’. (A film made with the latest technologies of colorization and audio reconstruction, based on archive footage commissioned by Bureau of Information and Propaganda of the Polish Home Army documenting the uprising for cinema newsreels) (excerpt of c. 30’ viewed in class)

## Week 9, Session 2
- Dark Tourism
- Austerlitz, dir. Sergei Loznica. 2016. 104’

## Week 10, Session 1
- Mediating Trauma (continued)

## Week 10, Session 2
- 20th meeting: Review and summary
- Final Exam

### COURSE-RELATED TRIPS:
- Mandatory field trip to Mauthausen and mandatory weekend trip to Budapest along with AH341 and HS340 as part of the “History, Memory and Trauma” course cluster (date tba).

### REQUIRED READINGS:
- Kaplan, Ann E. "Vicarious Trauma and ‘Empty’ Empathy: Media Images of Rwanda and the Iraq War,” in Trauma Culture, 87-100.
Konner, Melvin. “Trauma, Adaptation, and Resilience: A Cross-Cultural and Evolutionary Perspective.” In L. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, and M. Barad (eds.), Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives, University of California, Los Angeles, 300-338.


Filmography
- Son of Saul [Saul fia]. Dir. László Nemes Jeles. 2015.

RECOMMENDED READINGS:
- Mark E. Bouton and Jaylyn Waddell, “Some Biobehavioral Insights into Persistent Effects of Emotional Trauma.” In L. Kirmayer, R. Lemelson, and M. Barad (eds.), Understanding Trauma: Integrating Biological, Clinical, and Cultural Perspectives, University of California, Los Angeles, 41-77.