

## Writing the Holocaust: Fiction and Non-Fiction

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**Start date** Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January                      **End date** Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> January

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge

**Tutor** Dr Gilly Carr, Derek                      **Course code** 1819NDX068  
Niemann, Kim Sherwood,  
Dr James Jordan.

**Director of Academic Centres** Sarah Ormrod

**For further information on this course, please contact** Head of Academic Centre Administration, Zara Kuckelhaus  
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**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

**Gilly Carr** is a Senior Lecturer and Academic Director in Archaeology at ICE; she also works in the fields of History, Heritage Studies and Holocaust Studies. She is a member of the UK delegation of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and the British Association of Holocaust Studies. She has a particular research interest in the Holocaust and Nazi persecution in the Channel Islands, and her most recent monograph, *Victims of Nazi Persecution in the Channel Islands: A Legitimate Heritage?* will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in May 2019.

Nature writer **Derek Niemann** forsook the birds and butterflies six years ago when he discovered his long-dead grandfather had been an SS officer, actively involved in the Holocaust. Three years later, he produced *A Nazi in the Family*, a book that pieces together the story of the man and his 'ordinary' family.

**Kim Sherwood** studied Creative Writing at UEA and is now Senior Lecturer in Creative Writing at the University of the West of England. Kim began researching and writing *Testament* (riverrun, 2018), her first novel, after her grandfather, the actor George Baker, passed away and her grandmother began to talk about her experiences as a Holocaust Survivor for the first time. *Testament* won the 2016 Bath Novel Award, and was chosen in proof form as one of three best

books of 2017 by Amit Chaudhuri. *Testament* tackles memory, identity, and the trans-generational legacy of the Holocaust.

**James Jordan** is the Karten Lecturer in Jewish/non-Jewish Relations at the University of Southampton. He is the author of *From Nuremberg to Hollywood* (2015), editor of the journal *Holocaust Studies* and co-editor of numerous books including *The Memory of the Holocaust in Australia* (2008). His current research is on the representation of 'the Jew' in post-war British television.

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## Course programme

09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	<b>Digital Heritage and Writing about Nazi persecution and the Holocaust (Gilly Carr)</b>
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	<b>A Nazi in the Family: Reading the Holocaust from a perpetrator perspective (Derek Niemann)</b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	<b>Finding the Words: Writing fiction about the Holocaust (Kim Sherwood)</b>
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<b>Of Men and Mice and Striped Pyjamas (James Jordan)</b>
16:45	Day-school ends

## Course syllabus

### Aims:

This course aims to:

- introduce students to sources of research for writing about the Holocaust;
- introduce students to fiction and non-fiction texts on the subject of the Holocaust;
- provide students with advice about how to write authentically about the Holocaust.

### Content:

This course will introduce students to the many facets of writing about the Holocaust in fiction and non-fiction. Just as it will inspire and provide direction for potential writers, both academic and non-academic, so it will also give guidance to teachers hoping to introduce the genre in the classroom. This course will also help students who wish to begin to write about the Holocaust in an ethical, responsible and authentic manner.

The first lecture by Gilly Carr introduces students to key sources of archival material relating to Nazi persecution and the Holocaust in Britain. She also demonstrates her website, which tells the story of many Britons (specifically those from the German-occupied Channel Islands) who were deported to Nazi prisons, labour camps and concentration camps.

Derek Niemann then addresses the difficult issue of telling a story that doesn't want to be told. He reveals how he pieced together the evidence of his grandfather's life and weaved it into a narrative. The research relied on both documented material and the recollections of those still alive to tell their part in this salutary tale. He also explores the sensitivities in writing the book and reactions to its publication.

Kim Sherwood then considers the critical, creative, and ethical issues involved in writing fiction about the Holocaust. Focusing on questions of (in)comprehensibility, (in)communicability, representation, and the role of research in the creative process, she will discuss the choices and experiences that shaped her debut novel, *Testament*.

Finally, James Jordan will end the day by introducing students to some of the most canonical of Holocaust texts, moving from memoirs by Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel, to the commix of Art Spiegelman and the popular - but academically unpopular - recent fiction of John Boyne.

### Presentation of the course:

The course will be taught through a combination of lectures, seminar-style teaching and class discussion. There will also be a website demonstration and reading from published works.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

- Have a clear understanding of the main archival sources (online and physical) to study to facilitate writing about the Holocaust;
- Acquire a basic knowledge of key works of Holocaust fiction, both those recommended and not recommended by subject specialists;
- Have an understanding of what constitutes writing about the Holocaust in an authentic way and how to go about achieving it

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## Reading and resources list

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*The books below will be discussed or recommended on the course.*

Borowski, T. (1976). *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*. (Penguin).

Boyne, J. (2006). *The Boy in Striped Pyjamas*. (David Fickling Books).

Carr, G. (2019). *Victims of Nazi Persecution in the Channel Islands: A Legitimate Heritage?* (London: Bloomsbury Academic)

Carr, G. (2017). *On British Soil: Victims of Nazism in the Channel Islands*. (McDonald Institute, Cambridge).

Jonathan Safran Foer (2003). *Everything is Illuminated*. (Penguin).

Levi, P. (2014). *If This is a Man*. (Hachette UK).

Morris, H. (2018). *The Tattooist of Auschwitz*. (Zaffre).

Niemann, D. (2015). *A Nazi in the Family: The hidden story of an SS family in wartime Germany*. (Short Books).

Sherwood, K. (2018). *Testament*. (Riverrun).

Spiegelman, A. (2003). *The Complete Maus*. (London: Penguin).

Wiesel, E. (2017). *Night: A Memoir*. (Hill and Wang).

Wilkomirski, B. (1997). *Fragments: Memories of a childhood 1939-1948*. (Picador).

## Website addresses

The Frank Falla Archive: [www.frankfallaarchive.org](http://www.frankfallaarchive.org)

The National Archives: <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>

The Imperial War Museum: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>

The Wiener Library: <https://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/>

Jewish Museum, London: <https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/>

Refugee Voices: <https://www.refugeevoices.co.uk/>

Holocaust Matters: <https://www.holocaustmatters.org/>

H-net Holocaust: <https://networks.h-net.org/h-holocaust>

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## Additional information

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### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

## **Refreshments**

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 01 November 2018