Content of Research Paper History 274 Due on or before final day of class

1) a. Evaluation of at least two events in the text
   Or
   b. Investigation of basic premise of the text
2) Internet Literature Review of two sources about some aspect of your text
3) Explanation of most important scene
4) Discussion of one scene which reveals a character’s relationship to authority(ies)
5) Works Cited page

Directions

Evaluation of at least two events

A) Describe each event
B) Provide at least two sources of research about an element of the event (character, time, place). Explain what your research has revealed
C) If the event is real, explain how well it is represented. If it is not, explain why you think it was included in the text and whether you think the invention has a negative or positive effect on the viewers’ understanding of Holocaust history. Provide the source for further information you use to prove your conclusion.
D) Cite your sources using the MLA format (even if you didn’t find anything in the texts. Provide the search terms for on-line research, URL of cites you consulted or the citations and indexed words you consulted in a print source.

Example of “C” scene evaluation

Some of the events in Amen appear to be invented in order to represent more complex situations. For instance, in the film a Jewish man shoots himself in front of the League of Nations sometime before the war. I can find no evidence that this actually happened. While this is probably included to show how the world ignored the violence against Jews quickly. The problem is that the film claims to be based in reality, and this is very dramatic event is not real. This might lead naïve viewers to think that other events, like the Holocaust itself, were not real.

Dwork, Deborah, ed. Voices and Views, New York: Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, 2002 (index terms: League of Nations. I also glanced through the pages on Europe before the war)

Reason for “C”: The example does not provide evidence of research about ways that the European Jewish community did try to alert the world of the persecution of Jews in Germany.

Example of an “A” scene evaluation: Another event which is hard to verify, but unlikely, is the trip to Rome by the young Italian priest and Gerstein ostensibly to convince the pope that Jews were being exterminated. The article on Gerstein on the
USHMM Encyclopedia says that Gerstein did speak to protestant church leaders and the papal nuncio in Berlin, Father Cesare Orsengo, but there is no mention of a trip to Rome.

However, as the Jesuit priest in the movie’s own father points out, the pope did not need him to provide information about the extermination of the Jews. What the movie fails to point out is anyone who wanted to know about the fate of the Jews, including the Pope’s advisors, could have read about it in *The New York Times*. Readers of the *New York Times* knew about the mass extermination of Jews from 1941 on (Wyman 26). As Eli Wiesel says in his preface to Wyman’s book, when his family reached Auschwitz in May 1944, they did not know their fate, but the leaders of the free world did, including the pope (xiii).

This fiction is not helpful because it implies that Christians all over the world would have acted if only the Pope had alerted them to the reality of the Holocaust. While there is no excuse for Pope Pius XII failure to protest the murders of Jews or protect Italian Jews from deportation, his failure to act is also not an excuse for the rest of the world’s Christians. In fact, according to Wyman, the debate about whether or not to help Jews was being conducted openly in the US Christian press. Wyman quotes the Protestant weekly *The Christian Century*, which stated that the rather than “expend in vain outcry one unit of emotional energy” against the “Polish horror” it would be better to put that energy into winning the war. In this argument is made by the American Ambassador to the Vatican, but in fact it was being made openly by American Christians, as well. The movie reduces the controversy over the debate about why Christians did not act to save Jews to the failure of one mission made by two men to notify their respective denominations.


**Investigation of Basic Premise of the Text**

You can also discuss the basic assumptions of the text. Could a Jewish teenager hide from the Holocaust within the German Army or the Hitler Youth? Could an Italian Jewish man keep the reality of the Holocaust from his son once they were inside the camp?

Reviews can be a good source for material discussing the basic premise of your text. If you chose to do this, go to the library to search databases for more scholarly reviews than you will find by searching on Google and Yahoo. These reviews might also point you toward sources for further research, or even provide you with material you can then use in your evaluation. Cite the source of those ideas and that information, of course.

**Direction for Internet Literature Review**

a) provide the title and URL of the source  
b) explain how the site relates to your topic
c) Evaluate the credibility of the source by explaining how the site is funded and what people or institutions support the site. Most sites have an “About Us” or “Links” tab and/or a “Mission Statement” tab which will provide this information.

d) Summarize what you learned from the site or from evaluating it as a source.

Dibert. A. Review of The 'Confessions' of Kurt Gerstein by Roques Henri. Institute for Historical Review
http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v10/v10p223_Dibert.html

This site was one of the results from a search using “Kurt Gerstein.” The Institute for Historical Review claims to be “the leading periodical of its kind,” a statement scholarly journals do not have to make about themselves. In fact, the organization, centered in Contra Costa, CA, is funded privately and is not linked to any public institutions of higher learning. http://www.ihr.org/main/about.shtml

Dibert says that Roques uses Gerstein’s testimony to prove that the Holocaust was a hoax. Since Gerstein’s testimony is a very small part of the documentation about the Holocaust, the fact that the site would publish a positive review about such a ridiculous book casts serious doubt on the Institute’s credibility.

“Kurt Gerstein” Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The Museum was begun by an act of the US Congress in 1980 and is supported by donations, grants and public funds. The purpose is to collect and disseminate information about the Holocaust. The academic committee has professors from NYU, Hebrew University, Boston University and many others.

The article on Gerstein says that he was conflicted throughout his life about his duty to his country and to his God. He joined the Nazi party in 1933, was thrown out for questioning it, was actually sent to prison for a time, but then rejoined the party in 1939 with the help of his father, a very influential Nazi. The article says it is unclear if he joined the SS before or after his sister-in-law was murdered in a euthanasia program. While it doesn’t dismiss his claims to be a spy in the midst of the SS, it doesn’t affirm them either.

Most Important Scene or Event in Text

Choose what seen you think will have the most impact on viewers. If you object to other parts of the text, do you think this scene salvages the text? If you think the text is good overall, why is this scene so powerful? Provide the necessary context for the scene, giving citations for the dates and locations of events in your discussion of the scene’s validity or lack thereof.