The Weiss-Livnat International MA Program in Holocaust Studies

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<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Researching and Restaging the Ghez Collection of Jewish Artists Who Perished in the Holocaust: A Curatorial Experiment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Instructor</td>
<td>Rachel Perry</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor Email</td>
<td><a href="mailto:perryrub@bezeqint.net">perryrub@bezeqint.net</a></td>
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<td>Number of Credit Points</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Time Course is offered</td>
<td>Fall Semester. Wednesdays 11:00-2:00</td>
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**Course description:** In 1978, the Swiss art collector, Dr. Oscar Ghez, donated his important collection of works of art by artists who perished in the Holocaust to the University of Haifa. Consisting of oil paintings, watercolors, drawings and sculptures, the collection includes over 130 works by 18 artists who lived and worked in Paris before the Holocaust in what was known as the “School of Paris.” Arrested by the Nazis and their French collaborators, many of these artists were interned in the transit camps of Drancy, Gurs, Compiègne before being deported East to death camps. Ghez conceived of the collection as a memorial to artists who perished in the Holocaust, but it is also an important record of their lives and creativity.

In this course, we will collaborate with the Hecht museum on a unique research project revolving around the Ghez collection and culminating in an exhibition which the class will curate and install. The last exhibition catalogue of the Ghez collection is over 20 years old. The time is ripe for a reassessment of the collection, relying on new scholarship and new methodological approaches. Little research has been done on these artists; for many, the dates and place of death is unknown. Like detectives, we will explore the archives and trace the provenance of the art works before Ghez acquired them (ie. where they were purchased, when, by whom). Where did these artists emigrate from? What social, religious, political networks and organizations were they affiliated with? Where did they go to art school, with whom? Where did they exhibit (galleries, museums) and who were their patrons? What subjects and media did they gravitate towards? Answering these questions will contribute to a fuller picture of the rich diversity of Jewish culture in the prewar period, when Paris was a magnet for Jewish artists across Europe.

**Final Research Project:** During the semester, students will work independently or in small groups on one aspect of the exhibition. For their contribution, students are encouraged to think outside of the box. Whether it is a documentary film detailing our research and progress as a group; a collection of poems and literary texts which relate to the art; a sound track of testimonies; documents relating to each artists (photographs, Pages of Testimony, artifacts); wall labels which provide important contextual information; an educational guide for students or a web based project (blog or website) – this course welcomes interdisciplinary approaches and original
ideas about how to curate these works of art in the museum. No prior knowledge of art is necessary.

**Museum Visits and Film Screenings:** Throughout the semester we will study other museums and collections devoted to art and the Holocaust. Visiting lecturers and museum visits, as well as films about art and the Holocaust and academic articles and books, will complement class sessions in the Hecht museum and its archives in front of the works of art and relevant historical documents. Film screenings are scheduled throughout the semester both in class and as homework assignments. If you cannot make a screening, you must inform me in advance. Attendance at museum visits is absolutely mandatory. In addition to the class meetings held in museums, you may be required to visit museums on your own to complete assignments.

**Required readings:** There is no course packet to purchase. PDF files of assigned articles and other documents may be downloaded or printed directly from the Moodle website under Course Library. Because this class only meets once a week, it is critical that you leave yourself enough time to read the material each week so that you will be able to discuss new concepts and arguments in class discussions.

**Course Requirements and Grade Distribution:**

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Paper (Hecht Museum)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Proposal due at midterm</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**Response Papers** — 3-5 pages. Consider a question or analyze a text in relation to theories and modes of analysis explored in class. No late submissions.

**Final Research Paper and Oral Presentation:** During the semester, you will work either independently or in small groups on an original research project related to the exhibition of the collection. You will submit a paper detailing your project proposal, with preliminary list of sources/bibliography, and thesis statement by midterm period. You will present your research in an oral presentation to the class for feedback.

**Office Hours:** By appointment. I can be reached at 054-772-1169.
Email: perryrub@bezeqint.net
Course Outline:

**Week 1: Introduction and visit to the University of Haifa Hecht Museum**


**Week 2: From the Emancipation to the Dreyfus Affair: Inventing the Jewish Artist in Western Europe (Oppenheim, Solomon, Kaufman, Levy)**

- Richard Cohen, “Nostalgia and the Return to the Ghetto,” in *Jewish Icons*.

**Week 3: Dilemmas of the Modern Jewish Artist: Jewish Identity-Assimilation vs. Tradition (Oppenheim, Gottlieb, Hirszenberg)**

- Richard Cohen, “Images of Jewish Fate: At a Crossroads,” in *Jewish Icons*.

**Week 4: Jewish Artists and the Avant Garde c. 1900: the Dreyfus Affair and escalating anti-Semitism (Pissarro, Lieberman, Chagall)**

- Stephanie Rachum, “Camille Pissarro’s Jewish Identity,” Israel Museum
- Chaim Potok, *My Name is Asher Lev* (Selections).

**Week 5: Hecht Museum to view the collection and select works**

Short Paper Hecht Museum due
Week 6: **School of Paris or French School? (Modigliani, Soutine, Man Ray)**

- “Revolutions in Art and Politics,” ch. 3 in *Jewish Art: A Modern History*
- Donald Kuspit, “Jewish Naïveté: Soutine’s Shudder,” in *Complex Identities: Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*, pp. 87-99.

Week 7: **The Nazi Campaign against Degenerate Art**

Film Screening: *Architecture of Doom, Degenerate Art, Good Morning Mr. Hitler*


Week 8: **Art in the Ghettos, Camps and in Exile**

Film Screening: *The Führer Gives the Jews a City* (Theresienstadt, 1944);  
Franz Weisz, *Charlotte Salmon*, 2012, *Through These Eyes*

Week 9: Finalize Selection of Works, Curatorial Strategies and Installation (readings tba)
Project Proposal due – NO EXCEPTIONS – absolute latest date to submit

Week 10 - 12: Presentations and In Gallery Installation

Bibliography:


Web sites:
http://www.ecoledeparis.org
http://www.jpost.com/Arts-and-Culture/Arts/From-Montparnasse-to-Auschwitz
https://www.commentarymagazine.com/articles/the-fate-of-otto-freundlichpainter-maudit/
http://lastexpression.northwestern.edu/
http://fcit.usf.edu/HOLOCAUST/arts/art.htm
http://art.holocaust-education.net/
http://chgs.umn.edu/museum/
http://www.iwm.org.uk/upload/package/99/
http://www.gfh.org.il/Eng/
http://www.bterezin.org.il/