

SYLLABI**“Creative Writing Workshop on Jewish History and Culture”**

- This is an introductory workshop; the focus is on familiarizing students with specific topics and to learn and reflect about them through creative writing.
- The topics taught in this workshop are Jewish religion and culture; socio-political frameworks of Jewish communities in Europe from 1800; the dynamics of anti-Judaism and antisemitism; the structures and narratives of hate that led to the Holocaust; the complexities of contemporary antisemitism from 1945; and Jewish life today.
- This workshop is oriented to small groups of young adults, ranging from seventeen to eighteen years old. The workshop will take place in a high-school environment in Madrid, Spain.
- This is a five-session workshop taught over five consecutive days. Each day will consist of a four-hour session plus two half-hour intervals.

READINGS AND VISUALS

Extracts will be read and watched in class.

Session 1: Selected short videos of Jewish life pre-Holocaust.

Session 2: *Reunion* by Fred Uhlman (1971).

Session 3: *Maus* by Art Spiegelman (2007).

Session 4:

- *Antisemitism Here and Now* by Deborah Lipstadt (2019).
- *Cartoons and Extremism* by Joël Kotek (2008).
- ADL 100 Report - <https://global100.adl.org/map>
- RAXEN Report - <http://www.movimientocontralaintolerancia.com/html/raxen/raxen.asp>

Session 5: *Dora Bruder* by Patrick Modiano (2016) [to be read before the session].

OPTIONAL VIEWINGS

The students will be offered two additional online activities:

- Online viewing of *Himmelweg* by Juan Mayorga (theatre play) (2011).
- Online visit to the “Auschwitz” exhibition, as displayed in Madrid from 2017 to 2018.

SESSIONS

Each session will start with two one-hour classes divided by a half-hour interval. These classes will introduce students to different topics, along with photographs and videos. Then, after a second short interval, the creative writing class will take place. This class will last an hour and will start with the reading of an excerpt of a book or the viewing of a short film and students will write about it. Then, the final hour will be dedicated to read the texts and discuss them in connection with the topics learnt that day. During the fifth and final session, we will dedicate the first hour to talk about Jewish life today and reflect on what we have learnt; the last three hours will be divided between a last writing session and a practical lesson.

SESSION 1: Jewish life in Europe (1800-1920) + writing

For this first session a questionnaire will be given to the students to assess their previous knowledge.

- What does it mean to be Jewish?
- Religion: customs and traditions of Judaism.
- Geography: the Jewish communities of Europe.
- History: Historical framework of the different European Jewish communities.
- Culture(s): Social and cultural expressions of the European Jewish communities.

Creative writing class dedicated to “Being Jewish” as a celebration of diversity and the beauty of Judaism and Jewish culture and history. We will use a selection of short films.

SESSION 2: Narratives of Jew-Hatred: Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism + writing

- Ancient Judeophobia.
- Christian anti-Judaism.
- The Spanish expulsion.
- The age of Enlightenment.
- Modern Antisemitism.
- Antisemitism previous to the Holocaust.

Creative writing class dedicated to “The World that was Lost”, talking about how antisemitism, through discourse, expulsion and violence tried to stigmatize Jews and modify, reduce and erase Jewish heritage, religion, culture and ways of life. We will use excerpts of the book *Reunion*.

SESSION 3: Rise of Nazism and the Holocaust (1920-1945) + writing

- Germany and the Weimar Republic.
- The birth of Nazi ideology.
- The role of Antisemitism.
- The rise of Nazism to power and the Nuremberg laws.
- The *yellow star* and ghettoization.
- The Final Solution.
- The transport network.
- Work and death camps + The *Auschwitz Exhibition* in Madrid.
- Liberation and what came after.

Creative writing class dedicated to “The Holocaust: Victims and Perpetrators” using the comic books *Maus*.

SESSION 4: Antisemitism after the Holocaust + writing

- Antisemitism after the Holocaust: Denazification and Communism.
- The birth of Israel: between independence and conflict.
- The new Antisemitism: Anti-Zionism; reactions from the “Left”, Muslim-Arab prejudices; anti-racist movements; the role of the U.N.; antisemitism on campus.
- Online antisemitism: the internet and social media.
- Antisemitism in the U.S.: A short introduction.
- Antisemitism in Europe today: the case of Spain, France and the United Kingdom.

Creative writing class dedicated to “Images of Hate” and how antisemitism is transmitted in our current societies. We will use excerpts of the books: *Cartoons and Extremism* and *Antisemitism. Here and now*.

SESSION 5: What have we learnt? + writing + activity

In this final session, a questionnaire will be given to students and they will discuss their doubts and share what they have learnt.

- Jewish life today: a worldview. We will finish discussing the beautiful heterogeneity of Jews living around the globe and the problematics those communities still face.
- Activity: Hate online – how to identify it and how to answer.

Creative writing class dedicated to “Reflections about hate – *Dora Bruder*” to examine how we can be better by understanding and respecting other religions and cultures and learning from the past. Becoming active, reflective and informed citizens that reject abuse and stigmatization of others.