

The Holocaust and Representation | GER433/HIS433 | Spring 2016
 Instructors: Scott Denham with Caitlin Christian-Lamb and Roman Utkin

There are many claims for the singularity of the Holocaust, its incomparability, its incomprehensibility. Students in this seminar will acquire a thorough history of the Holocaust before examining questions of definition, representation, and comparativity: how to represent the history and varied experiences of the Holocaust, and how to do so responsibly? A group of faculty members and a digital humanities archivist will accompany the students on site in Berlin for a week of intensive observation, engagement, reflection, questioning, and discussion. Associate Archivist Caitlin Christian-Lamb and Assistant Professor of Russian Studies Roman Utkin will shadow the course and take on some aspects of instruction throughout the semester. Additionally, these lead co-instructors and the six additional co-instructors will bring their own related interests and disciplinary expertise to the study trip and follow-up meetings, highlighting the challenges and benefits of informed, responsible comparison across fields and disciplines. Students will have the factual knowledge to engage and teach back, as well. Archivist Christian-Lamb will teach about the structures, ethics, and primary responsibilities of the archive in the context of Holocaust studies, while at the same time preparing the students for their own group digital archival project for the seminar. Professor Utkin will bring to the course his knowledge of artistic discourses of trauma and memorialization in the Soviet, Russian, and Eastern European context. Finally, I will be teaching a parallel mini version of our course to some local life-long learners through the Davidson Learns program of continuing education. We will arrange for a few of meetings of these two groups together, we may choose to involve those students in our own work in other ways.

the course

basic content of the course

- an intensive history of the Holocaust, with a focus on the origins and structural processes of the Holocaust
- definitions and roles of perpetrators, bystanders, resisters, and victims
- a study of examples of representations of the Holocaust as history, memorial practices, art, literature, and discourses of public memory
- questions and politics of historical and cultural comparativity (understanding what comparisons are possible, legitimate, and what they can yield, also over time)

some learning outcomes At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to define the Holocaust, be able to recognize and evaluate representations of the Holocaust, and will be able to compare and to judge others' comparison of various phenomena to the Holocaust. They will be able to construct timelines of facts about the Holocaust and explain the rationale for highlighting those facts in a historiographical argument about various aspects of the Holocaust; they will be able to identify various types of primary and secondary sources used in Holocaust historiography; they will be able to place historians' arguments about the genesis, execution, and representation of the Holocaust within a continuum of historiographical studies of the Holocaust and do so critically and analytically; they will be able to navigate the historical, political, and artistic geographies of Berlin as a site and archive of Holocaust history, historiography, and memorialization; they will be able to analyze and explain the politics of cultural memory in the context of this course; they will be able to design and carry out an original group project adding original knowledge and analysis to the public history of the Holocaust; they will be able to compare in ethical and informed ways other examples of genocide, racism, trauma, totalitarianism, utopianism, or colonialism, for example, to the examples of those kinds of events in the context of the Holocaust; they will understand and will be able to interpret and explain different kinds of memorial culture in the arts and letters, in public memory structures such as memorials and museums, and in political discourse.

requirements, resources, etc.

- Read. Readings in the course are substantial and substantive. Start early. Give yourself time with these difficult texts.
- Write. Everyone responds about something—readings, discussions, films, conversations, artifacts, whatever—for every class. Some assignments will be very specific, others broad and open. Most are quite brief, but you will return to these notes and responses later in the course as you put together a portfolio of your best ideas. We all read all these notes and we write them with the whole group as the audience, not just the instructors.
- Listen, discuss, share, debate. Through our discussion of the material we will develop into a collective community of scholars.
- Post all your written work, essay reviews, reports, brief responses, ideas—whatever the assignments are for that week—to the Moodle course blog by 5pm on Saturdays. That gives everyone a chance to read and think about our notes, questions, and responses on Sundays before class on Mondays.
- Berlin study trip. The centerpiece of our course will be our work in the archives and memorial spaces and museums in Berlin. Each evening there we will set aside a couple hours for conversation together about the days events. That week will be very tightly scheduled and will require that we all keep up.
- Final project. With the support of archivist Caitlin Christian-Lamb we will design some kind of public history project, most likely via a Davidson Domains platform. You will take the lead on what that will be and how your work will bring something new to Holocaust historiography and representation.
- Portfolio. Gather all your other writing for the course in a portfolio to turn in at the end of the semester. We will decide together what parts of that work you might choose to revise, to make public on the project site, to share in some other way.
- Grading: one half based on your participation in the seminar, one half based on the quality of the final project. I assign no grades during the course but I will let you know if your work is inadequate or insufficient.
- The [college honor code](#) holds for all your work. You should discuss the course, your ideas, the readings, your questions, the final project, and portfolio revisions thoughts with your classmates, your apartment mates, your family members, your friends, and your pets. Whenever you use someone else's words or ideas in any context, cite. Even if it's your dog.
- No absences. (In case of illness, crisis, death etc. let us know before class: unexcused absences will hurt your otherwise stellar grade. Let us know about absences for sports, field trips, or other qualified (so-called excused) potential absences well in advance. There are a few required seminar meetings outside of our normal meeting time: Berlin! of course, some film screenings I would like us to do together, a speaker or two, some presentation of our work in Berlin and on the work-in-progress on the final project—probably to the trustees in April, etc.
- No late work, please.
- [Accommodation](#). Be in with the Office of Academic Access and Disability Resources or the Dean of Students office if you need accommodation of any sort.
- Rest. The material in this course can be grindingly difficult to take in. The readings are often emotionally draining. You will need to take breaks from the material. Pace yourselves and take some breaks.
-

bibliography

Winter break readings (any editions are fine for all these, most can be found used very inexpensively or in most public libraries).

Borowski, Tadeus. *This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen*.

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*.

Nomberg-Przytyk, Sara. *Auschwitz: True Tales from a Grotesque Land*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1985.

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*.

books required for the course (12 copies ordered at the college store), more or less in the order we'll be reading them:

Friedländer, Saul, *Nazi Germany and the Jews 1933-1945*, Harper Perennial, 978-0-06-135027-6, Abridged edition by Orna Kenan., 2009.

Bartov, Omer, ed., *The Holocaust: Origins, Implementation, Aftermath*, Routledge, 0415778514, 2nd ed only. 2015.

James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, Yale UP, 0-300-05991-4, any edition, 1993.

Gross, Jan T., *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Penguin, 978-0-14-200240-7, This edition with the new afterword, 2002.

Hoffman, Eva, *Shtetl: The Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews*, Public Affairs, 978-1586485245, any edition [1997 Houghton Mifflin also ok], 2007.

Spiegelman, Art. *Maus: A Survivor's Tale. Vol I. My Father Bleeds History; Maus: A Survivor's Tale. Vol II. And Here My Troubles Began* (2 vols), Pantheon, vol I: 0-394-74723-2 ; vol II: 0-679-72977-1, Any edition. (often in a boxed set, but any editions okay) [not Metamaus.], 1986-1991.

Delbo, Charlotte, *Auschwitz and After*, Yale UP, 978-0-300-07057-6, any edition, 1995

Klüger, Ruth, *Still Alive: A Holocaust Childhood Remembered*. The Feminist Press of the City University of New York; 1-55861-436-2; any edition 2003

Other readings are located on Moodle, in the "Readings" folder.

basic schedule and some key dates

always see the moodle pages for specifics / everything subject to change based on consensus

Week 1: Jan 11-17

intros and overview, discuss break readings
read Friedländer

Week 2: January 18-24

Friedländer
Night and Fog.

Week 3: January 25-31

begin Bartov
Davidson Learns 1st meeting (Tuesday 2:00 - 3:30, Temple Kol Tikva)
films

Week 4: February 1-7

Bartov
DL meeting 2
films

Week 5: February 8-14

Gross and Hoffman
maybe excerpts from Synder, Black Earth
DL meeting 3

Week 6: February 15-21

Young

Week 7: February 22-28

Berlin preparations.

Week 8: February 26-March 5
Berlin

Week 9: March 7-13
Berlin
DL meeting 4

Week 10: March 14-20
Spiegelman
poets
DL meeting 5

Week 11: March 21-27
Delbo
music
DL 6th (final) meeting

Week 12: March 28-April 3
Kluger
novels, memoirs

Week 13: April 4-10
/ tentative / Sat. 9 April screening of Claude Lanzmann's film Shoah (all day)
fakes, denial

Week 14: April 11-17
project

Week 15: April 18-24
project

Week 16: April 25-May 1
project

Week 17: May 2-8
Reading day is May 5
Examination period May 6-11

26 Feb. – 5 Mar. 2016

Study trip, faculty development, co-teaching, and digital humanities in Berlin

Loads of details about this to come in due time.

9 instructors (1 seminar leader, 7 faculty members, 1 digital humanities archivist)

- Patricio Boyer—Hispanic Studies, Latin American Studies, Gender and Sexuality Studies: trauma and culture, representations
- Caitlin Christian-Lamb—Associate Archivist: mapping tools, databases, archives, digital humanities, collective memory
- Scott Denham—German Studies, Global Literary Theory: lead instructor, history, historiography, representation
- Caroline Fache—French and Francophone Studies, Global Literary Theory: Blackness, critical race theory, language, colonialism
- Kyra Kietrys—Hispanic Studies, Global Literary Theory: comparative fascism, gender and women's voices

- Kristi Multhaupt–Psychology: science of memory, social memory constructions, ethics in behavioral research
- Alan Michael Parker–English, Creative Writing: museology, fictional representations
- Roman Utkin–Russian Studies, Global Literary Theory: Soviet, Russian responses, visual culture, music, memorials, video testimonies (Fortunoff Archive), collective trauma
- Rizwan Zamir–Religion, Global Literary Theory: comparative narratives of suffering in a religious context

basic tentative itinerary

Leave Friday afternoon and return Saturday afternoon.
Berlin only. All in English.

Saturday–arrive Berlin mid-day, get settled in apartments, like [this](#) or [this](#) or [this](#). (2 six-person apts for the students; 3 three-person apts for us, or a four and a five) Shared bath, but everyone has a separate bed.

Sunday – epic walking tour of our neighborhood, Jewish Berlin, some key Holocaust sites, memorials, synagogues; city overview; Bonhoeffer’s church

Monday – morning seminar at the [House of the Wannsee Conference](#); afternoon the Soviet cemetery and monument at Treptower Park, monument vs memorial; and city geography;

Tuesday – concentration camp [Sachsenhausen](#), just north of Berlin; the prison at [Plötzensee](#)

Wednesday – [Topography of Terror museum](#) and study center w seminar; Daniel Libeskind’s [Jewish Museum](#); library visit to Hans Scharoun’s [Staatsbibliothek](#) and a meeting with a librarian there about archives, maps, digital tools
[revised 11/04: Seminar meeting with Thomas Volk, coordinator for religious dialogue at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, and historians there, about the role of the state in Holocaust historiography.]

Thursday – [Memorials](#): Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Memorial to the Homosexuals Persecuted under the National Socialist Regime, Memorial to the Sinti and Roma of Europe Murdered under the National Socialist Regime, and the Memorial and Information Point for the Victims of National Socialist “Euthanasia” Killings; and the [Basic Law](#) of the Federal Republic (outdoor exhibit), and Norman Foster’s transparent democracy dome over the Bundestag in the Reichstag Building
[revised 9/10/15: Seminar meeting with Deidre Berger, director of the Berlin office of the AJC.]

Friday – open day; closing seminar w breakout groups, some kind of teaching event for all of us, plans; perhaps a meeting or dinner with Member of Parliament [Ekin Deligöz](#). Deligöz is an Alawite Turkish German who can talk about her recent official trip to Armenia to lay a wreath in commemoration of the one-hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide, and the politics of that act.

Saturday – early morning departure; back in Davidson by about 6pm

Most late afternoons and evenings will be open for dinners out, but instructors take turns hosting a table at a Stammtisch (planned drop-in gathering) at a local café or restaurant in the neighborhood every night for the students, who will have a lot to digest and to ask about. They will also be keen to connect their readings and research from the seminar to what they are seeing here on site. You can see from the [student reviews of the study trip this spring](#) that students wanted more time with instructors. This will also be faculty development time for us.

study trip participant details and rationale

There are two groups of participants, the twelve students in the seminar and a group of nine colleagues: one lead instructor, one archivist and digital humanities librarian, and seven faculty members. Here they explain their interests, backgrounds, reasons for taking part, and potential outcomes for their teaching and scholarship.

Patricio Boyer–Hispanic Studies: trauma and culture, representations

I have specific interest in the relationship between historiography and catastrophe, particularly as conceptualized within the framework of an ethics of history. My research focuses on the way that historical narrative shifts in order to accommodate affective modes of understanding the past, as well as how it capitalizes and subverts affective experience in service to or against dominant intellectual and political ideologies. Although I work on the conquest of the New World, the relationship between cultural extermination and history clearly comes to the surface in the sixteenth century as a hallmark characteristic of “the modern.” Much of my graduate training is in psychoanalytic theory and trauma studies, especially as it was marked and transformed by World War II and the Holocaust in particular. The specificity of those events allowed me to more carefully reconsider the way memory and history were conceptualized in my own work, no matter how far afield it might seem.

As an extension of the connection between history and catastrophe, I am interested in the relationship between national identity and state violence, particularly in the case of late twentieth century Latin America. Detainment, disappearance, and erasure, as well as the way those events are memorialized, are a continuing and vexing part of my intellectual and pedagogical landscape. My introductory courses try to push students to think about the way that nationhood is inscribed in memorials, monuments and buildings, and how it is that these structures do important cultural work in producing the modern citizen subject.

Both my research and teaching is concerned with the ways that space and memory work in tandem. In both my introductory course on national identity and a more advanced course on the imperial city, I ask students to think about the way that the urban landscape and edifications work to enshrine memory and affects. This trip would lend itself to further my preparation for teaching students to think in a nuanced manner about the way that culture and memory both can become spatial and material artifacts. Perhaps more importantly, it offers an opportunity to work through what for me is one of the central insights of Freud’s civilization and its discontent; that is, the way in which a fundamental part of the modern experience of the past is spatial rather than merely temporal.

Caitlin Christian-Lamb–Associate Archivist: mapping tools, databases, archives, digital humanities, collective memory

In addition to serving as the digital studies point-person in the Davidson College Library, my work as Associate Archivist centers on archival outreach and education – teaching Davidson students how archives (ours, other brick and mortar archives, and digital archives) work, and how primary source material can be accessed and used in research across a myriad of academic disciplines. Much of our work is done through course collaborations with Davidson faculty, and the bulk of my course support involved scaffolding digital projects or assignments, particularly with an archival bent.

Prior to joining Davidson’s staff, I worked in several research and archival roles at a variety of academic or cultural heritage institutions, including: Harvard University, the Massachusetts Historical Society, Historic New England, the Nichols House Museum, Brown University, and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. My graduate coursework focused on the relationship(s) between historical events and collective memory, and how memorialization and mass media interplay and alter historical narratives. I would like to gain a greater knowledge of German archival organization and principles by visiting libraries and archives and starting dialogues with information professionals, which I could then use to aid Davidson students who do research abroad for thesis or capstone projects. Additionally, joining an interdisciplinary collaboration like this one will strengthen

ties between the library and academic departments, and potentially lead to more innovative digital projects that I can support and help preserve for the long-term in the Davidson College Archives.

My work would support the seminar project, for example:

- Digitally mapping U.S. Holocaust monuments and memorials (using [Neatline](#), which is scalable for both those who struggle with technology but also for students who enter the course with more advanced coding skills. [DHPress](#), QGIS, or Google Fusion Tables are other possible digital mapping software solutions.)
- Adding additional research project layers (mapping both Holocaust monuments/memorials and Jewish diaspora in the U.S. to visualize any connections between the two, for example)
- Text analysis of some part of the International Tracing Service data (perhaps analyzing location data? We could also see if there's any other large digital archives we might want to pull data from.)
- Creating an online exhibit (using [Omeka](#) or [Scalar](#), covering a research topic or expanding on either the digital map or a research paper.)
- Annotating videos or documents (using Scalar for this or other storytelling software, we could annotate survivor's histories (perhaps from the [Yale Fortunoff archive](#), which Roman Utkin knows), or we could map locations from a written narrative and tie them to relevant parts of the text).
- Blogging (we will have the students, faculty, and staff blog about their experiences and their research process, trips, and conclusions, using WordPress – a useful exercise about writing for the public and presenting history research to the public, which will put the entire group's thoughts and conclusions in a central, digitally-accessible place.)

Scott Denham–German Studies: lead instructor, history, historiography, representation

I have taught about the Holocaust in various ways and contexts for nearly thirty years and in that time led six different study trips that dealt wholly or in part with the Holocaust and Nazi Germany. Most recently, Bes Ceka accompanied me on the DRI/Dean Rusk-funded study trip for GER240 German for Economics and Policy, which took ten students to Berlin over spring break 2015. The organic, spontaneous dynamism of our teaching with the group surprised us both, and the rich conversations we had about German and European politics, economics, history, and culture were like a high-intensity faculty development seminar. Triangulating students, a lead teacher, and accompanying colleagues from other disciplines will be a high-energy and highly productive teaching and learning experience for everyone.

My own interests in the Holocaust relate to my broader concerns about how we represent the experiences of trauma and loss, mainly in literary terms, but also in historiography, visual art forms, music, and architecture, including museums, monuments, and memorials. I have written and spoken on fictional and cinematic representations of WWI and WWII combat, the Holocaust, and the Red Army Fraction domestic terrorism of the 1970s. Two key aspects of telling the stories of trauma interest me. First, I explore relationships between history and fiction, each of which are constructed narratives and can thus be subjected to narratological analysis, which queries the techniques and functions of how stories are told and read. Both history and fiction hold valid truth claims accepted by most readers, yet that are also fundamentally different. And second, the nature of comparativity, that is, how comparing the Holocaust (in this case) to other genocides, colonial projects, totalizing statist schemes, etc. informs our thinking about the Holocaust per se, and about the other historical phenomena. What does comparing other things to the Holocaust, which is seen by many as a singular event in human experience, do to both our understanding of the Holocaust and our understanding of those other events, from slavery to the Ukrainian famine, to the extermination of Native Americans, to colonial wars, and beyond. And what responsibilities should inhere to those of us doing the comparison?

Involving students in a common project about some aspect of representations of the Holocaust will necessarily highlight representation and comparison. Including colleagues from

different disciplines, which different concerns, will, I hope, inform my teaching and scholarship in transformative ways.

Caroline Fache–French and Francophone Studies: Blackness, critical race theory, language, colonialism

My research focuses on racial/ethnic identity struggles in contemporary Francophone spaces in the post- and neo colonial context. French speaking migrant and postcolonial communities are affected by the transnational and transcolonial francophone collective memory and the construction (re-/de-) of narrative of the French colonial, post-colonial and neo-colonial experiences.

Two of my articles were dedicated to memory and World War II: “Crossroads of Memory: Contexts, Agents, and Processes in a Global Age” *Culture, Theory and Critique*, Vol. 53, No. 2. (30 May 2012), pp. 99-109, and “Transnational Heritage in Boualem Sansal’s *The German Mujahid*.” *Culture, Theory, and Critique*, Vol. 53, No. 2. (30 May 2012), pp. 163-179. In these articles that were part of a volume on memory I co-edited, I was particularly interested in the notions of transnational heritage and the effects of globalization and migrations on collective memory.

I am therefore extremely interested in this study trip since it will allow for a comparative study of museum space, and space allocated to minorities of color after works such as *Destined to Witness: Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany* by Hans J. Massaquoi (1999), and testimonies like that of Theodor Wonja Michael, retelling his Afro-German experience during and after Nazi Germany, have highlighted the presence and critical participation of people of color in World War II. Similarly, in the last two decades, France (with the Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration) has been striving to integrate her minorities (the Tirailleurs sénégalais, the colonial troops) back into the collective memory and narratives of critical historical events, from which they had been excluded.

Participating in a trip with colleagues from various disciplines will inform my own work, since I have mostly focused on the linguistic, literary and cultural aspects of transnational and transcolonial transmissions, and I am looking forward to learn from an interdisciplinary discussion on museums, collective memory, and trauma. It will also be the opportunity to study and learn more about today’s Afro-German community and its representations in Berlin, as I continue to develop courses about the Black experience in France and Europe for the Africana Studies department.

Kyra Kietrys–Hispanic Studies: comparative fascism, gender and women’s voices in fiction and non-fiction

I’m interested in participating in this trip both because of the topic itself and because of the opportunity it affords to closely connect with my colleagues and discuss the ways in which our work intersects that will, consequently inform my teaching and my scholarship. My research focuses on the contemporary construction of collective memory of Spain’s Second Republic, the brief liberal period from 1931-1939 between the Primo de Rivera Dictatorship (1923-31) and the Franco Dictatorship (1939-75). I study gender roles during Franco’s Fascist regime and the re-presentation of women’s voices under the different stages of Spain’s developing democracy (1975-present). Since 2008, I’ve been creating a digital archive of Hildegart, a political activist from the Second Republic. I’m currently migrating the archive into the Omeka platform, and I’ve recently been exploring Neatline and digital mapping as new features of the archive. German representations of the Holocaust are particularly interesting to me in the ways they do, and do not, compare to Spain’s representation of its Fascist past.

In my most recent project, I consider the notion of space as a social construct as portrayed in a contemporary novel and television mini-series, *The Time Between the Seams*. This work reconstructs the Second Republic from the perspective of a female hero, using space and architecture to develop the protagonist’s agency. I’m interested in the gendered use of space and architecture, and in the context of this trip, inasmuch as space and architecture relate to museums and memorials. I’m planning on developing this material for a new 400-level seminar slated to be taught in 2016-17.

I’ve also worked on memory and trauma in a book chapter titled, “Collective Memory and the Eruption of the Spanish Civil War in 11-M, la novela gráfica.” This piece analyzes the representation of the terrorist commuter train bombings in Madrid, March 11, 2005 and discusses how

contemporary trauma connects to a community's shared traumatic history. I've taught this graphic novel in a course titled, "Memory and Forgetting in Contemporary Spain," which I hope to teach again in the near future.

Kristi Multhaupt—Psychology: science of memory, social memory constructions, ethics in behavioral research

The Holocaust is the reference point for discussions of torture. Currently, the American Psychological Association is [under scrutiny regarding its role in "enhanced interrogations"](#) of detainees in Iraq and elsewhere. Discussing this current issue with students and colleagues on the proposed trip will help me shape how I cover the APA issue in the ethics section of my senior capstone course in psychology, a discussion that occurs after spring break.

Since 2008 I have been in cross-disciplinary discussions of memory. I still hope to team teach a multi-disciplinary course on cultural memory with a focus on monuments and museums. Given the interests of colleagues on this trip, I believe headway could be made toward such a course, building on work that Scott and I did with Hilton Kelly and Barbara Lom with an ACS grant that supported a field trip to Washington DC. Conversations and shared explorations of monuments and museums would add to the cross-cultural element of the course.

I would also like to take photographs within German museums that would allow me to replicate and extend [the fine work of one of my former students, Phia Salter '05](#). She and her colleagues found that people who are high on an assimilationist national (U.S.) identity are particularly sensitive to photographs that are critical of the U.S., and that viewing museum photographs that glorify the U.S. decreases their perception of racism with respect to immigration into the U.S., whereas viewing museum photographs that are critical of the U.S. had no effect. I am in conversation with Phia about a collaboration that would extend this work by examining perceptions of German as well as U.S. museum photographs (e.g., would the pattern be opposite such that strong assimilationist U.S. identity would be sensitive to museum photographs that are critical of Germany with no effect for museum photographs that are glorifying Germany?).

Alan Michael Parker—English, Creative Writing: museology, fictional representations

I am interested in the ways museums and memorials organize perceptions, and how architecture and exhibition practices combine to make visitors form opinions. What difference does it make if the visitor walks over a bridge to enter a museum, rather than under an arch? How do the various elements of memorials shape our experiences, and thus our responses to being in a museum? How are we instructed by our built environments to think and feel? These questions are active ones in my scholarship, as I have written on numerous art museums, including most recently an essay on the new Whitney in NY. Having taught a class entitled "What Does Art Do?", as well as "Literature and Social Change," the museology work feeds directly into my classroom inquiries.

In addition, I teach Holocaust texts in my World Literatures course, including but not limited to the poems of Celan and Milosz. The site visits seem to me ideal opportunities to think through, with colleagues and students, how the Holocaust is represented in literature, and how survivors (along with other writers) work with extreme states of experience.

Roman Utkin—Russian Studies: Soviet, Russian responses, visual culture, music, memorials, video testimonies (Fortunoff Archive), collective trauma

Berlin and Russian-German cultural interactions feature prominently in my scholarship. In the fall of 2015 I look forward to teaching a seminar called "Modernist Berlin, Petersburg, and Moscow." I am keen on joining the proposed study trip because it offers valuable opportunities both to build on pedagogical and research practices and, as I am a new faculty member, to get to know my colleagues and the students at Davidson.

During the trip I would like to focus on Berlin as an arena of competing ideologies and explore sites commemorating World War II and the Holocaust in post-unification Berlin. I am interested in the roles and relevance of the vast Soviet war memorials in Treptower Park, the Tiergarten, and other locales today, now that much of the initial ideological charge of communism has expired but the physical narrative of Soviet saviorhood still stands. (While the Holocaust was a taboo subject in

the Soviet Union proper, Soviet military forces were the first to liberate major Nazi camps.) Furthermore, I look forward to experimenting with digital humanities tools in charting a collaborative interdisciplinary map of the ways the city absorbs and gives shape to collective memory and trauma.

The opportunity to spend time with colleagues from different disciplines and with students would allow me to advance my ideas about new courses on art and ideology during the Cold War and prison narratives from Nazi camps and the Gulag, which I would like to teach (or co-teach) in the near future. Also, this experience would aid me in revising into an article a paper on Russian exiles in Nazi Berlin that I will present at a roundtable on “Spaces of Horror in the 1930s and 1940s: Texts and Contexts” at the annual convention of the Association for Slavic, Eastern European, and Eurasian Studies in November.

Rizwan Zamir—Religion: comparative narratives of suffering in a religious context

I intend to explore the question of suffering, not as a theological jigsaw puzzle or an argument about God that has to be won or lost - but as an existentialist condition, a concrete lived experience and as among the various basic human dilemmas. Religious traditions and sub-traditions respond to traumatic, violent, and horror-evoking circumstances in varying ways. What is experienced as suffering by some is often seen by others as a ‘trial’ that teaches what could not be learned otherwise; or a self-imposed spiritual discipline of asceticism with its varying currents in various traditions; or as ‘destiny’, part of the divine plan; or as ‘our karma’; as the most basic premise of all human syllogisms; or as a flat out acknowledgment that the world has gone wrong; or as mark of the end of times; or a disaster to which one just has to resign; or an existentialist proof of utter meaninglessness of everything. Although somewhat interested in exploring these varying responses and why they are different, for him discussion about suffering could not simply be imported and abstracted away from the “context of suffering” and thus turned into a faceless theological problem of theodicy. It is in relation to the narrative of the concrete experience of suffering that one could speak, and only secondarily in the language of higher and stable principles.

Concretely, I hope to explore what stories communities tell in the wake of devastations and disasters, yet with special attention to how people position themselves in relation to the source of suffering (human, institutional, or divine) and the suffering itself. Furthermore, I feel invited to probe the post-holocaust Jewish religious imagination and thought and what it illumines for suffering communities, for example, in relation to what Black American Muslim theologian Sherman Jackson has called “the problem of black suffering”, or/and black theology in general, liberation theology in the South America, communities hit by an earthquake in Nepal recently, and finally the postcolonial attempt to truly be ‘post-colonial’, thus overcoming the religious, political, economic, social, cultural and artistic, and most importantly the psychological dimensions of the suffering caused by the colonial experience.