

# SYLLABUS

#AHRSYLLABUS

## Historiography of Holocaust Testimonies

### **Guiding Questions**

# What Is the Role of Survivor Testimony and Voices of Victims in the Study of the Holocaust?

*The questions below are designed to support students' comprehension and analysis as they read the texts in the Document Packet. Feel free to adjust these as necessary for your students. We have designed these questions to prepare students to participate productively in the discussion rounds (see Teachers Guide).*

## **BROSZAT**

### **EXCERPT 1: SCOPE AND GOALS OF BROSZAT'S ESSAY**

- Who is the author of this excerpt? When did he write it?
- What is the study about?
- What is the author's main argument?
- What types of historical sources would you like to examine to find out whether the main argument accurately represents the past? How would they help you to evaluate the author's claim?

### **EXCERPT 2: NAZIS SET UP NEW CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN 1940**

- What is the main claim of this excerpt?
- What evidence does the author use to support the claim?
- What do you learn from this excerpt?
- What perspectives are missing?

### **EXCERPT 3: GROWING NUMBER OF CONCENTRATION CAMP PRISONERS IN 1944**

- What is this excerpt about?
- What sources does the author cite in this excerpt?
- Whose perspective and voices are included in this passage?
- Whose perspective and voices are missing?
- What might historical sources produced by perpetrators of genocide help historians to understand? What are the limits of these sources?

# FRIEDLÄNDER

## EXCERPT 1: VICTIMS' ACCOUNTS AS HISTORICAL SOURCES

- According to Friedländer, what sources make it possible for historians to include the perspectives of victims in the study of the Holocaust?
- How should historians use these sources?
- According to Friedländer, why are individual witnesses' accounts important in the study of the Holocaust?

## EXCERPT 2: INDIVIDUAL VOICES AND THE WRITING OF HISTORY

- What does it mean to be disruptive? What do you think Friedländer means when he writes that victims' voices serve a disruptive role in the writing of history?
- What does it mean to be objective? Why do you think Friedländer puts the word "objectivity" in quotation marks?
- How would you summarize Friedländer's claim in this excerpt?

## EXCERPT 3: PRIMO LEVI ARRIVES IN AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

- What does this excerpt describe?
- What sources does Friedländer cite in this excerpt?
- How does Friedländer's use of testimony contribute to your understanding of this experience?

## EXCERPT 4: RUTH KLUGER ARRIVES IN AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

- What does this excerpt describe?
- What sources does Friedländer cite in this excerpt?
- How does Friedländer's use of testimony contribute to your understanding of this experience?
- How do the similarities between Levi's and Kluger's accounts support the case for using testimonies as evidence?

## EXCERPT 5: THE FATE OF KOVNO AND ŁÓDŹ GHETTOS IN 1943

- What does this excerpt describe?
- What sources does Friedländer cite in this excerpt?
- How does Friedländer's use of testimony contribute to your understanding of this experience?

# BROWNING

## EXCERPT 1: TESTIMONY, HISTORY, AND MEMORY

- According to Browning, what is the role of testimonies in the study of the Holocaust?
- What challenges of working with testimonies does he identify in this excerpt?
- According to Browning, how should historians address these challenges?

## EXCERPT 2: TESTIMONY AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

- Browning writes: “For many events, if we do not use survivor testimony, we must forego any attempt to write their history at all.” What is an example of an event that could not be understood without survivor testimony?
- What challenges of working with testimonies does he identify in this excerpt?
- According to Browning, how should historians address these challenges?

## EXCERPT 3A–3D: WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF A TRANSFER OF PRISONERS

- What sources does Browning cite in these excerpts? How would you describe the differences among them?
- How does Browning use corroboration? What are one or two examples?
- How does he handle disagreements among these testimonies?
- What final version of Guta Blass’s experience does he articulate? How does he support it with evidence?
- What do these excerpts suggest to you about the *value* of working with Holocaust testimonies? What about the *challenges* of working with Holocaust testimonies?
- What else would you like to know about Guta Blass’s experience or about the lives of any of the witnesses whose voices appear in Browning’s analysis?

## EXCERPT 4: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RECOVERING GUTA BLASS’S STORY

- According to Browning, what is the significance of Guta Blass’s experience in the Nazi slave-labor camp in Starachowice?
- Did Browning’s analysis change any of your prior understandings of the life of Jewish prisoners in Nazi concentration camps?
- What questions do you have about testimonies or Nazi concentration camps? How could you begin investigating them?