

## Holocaust Testimonies and Their Afterlives

Central European University, Summer University Course, Budapest, July 10-21, 2023

### CORE FACULTY:

Éva Kovács (Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies/VWI)

Michael L. Miller (Central European University/CEU)

Stephen Naron (Fortunoff Video Archive, Yale University)

Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)

### READINGS:

[Ágnes Eröss, "In memory of victims": Monument and counter-monument in Liberty Square, Budapest. \*Hungarian Geographical Bulletin\*, 65. 2016 \(3\)](#)

Aarons, Victoria. "Teaching Holocaust Literature in the 21st Century," *Understanding and Teaching the Holocaust*.

Bartov, Omer. "Blind Spots of Genocide," *Journal of European History* (2021), 1-5.

Roskies, David. *Literature of Destruction*. Excerpts.

Dean, Carolyn J. "Introduction," *The Moral Witness: Trials and Testimony after Genocide*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019, 1-25.

Hanover, Nathan. *Abyss of Despair* (Yaven oMetzulah). New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983.

Jockusch, Laura. *Collect and Record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012

Kassow, Samuel. *Who Will Write Our History: Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oyneg Shabbes Archive*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007.

[Éva Kovács, \*The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014. Some Remarks\*. SIMON 2017/1](#)

Kovács, Éva. The Sensual Memory of Shoah. The Meaning of Sound, Touch and Taste in the Culture of Testimonies. Sara Jones, Roger Woods (eds): *Palgrave Handbook of Testimony and Culture*. London: Palgrave, 2023

Kunt, Gergely. "The Self-Reflexive Antisemitism of a Young Hungarian Woman During and After World War II (1940-1947)" In *Holocaust. Studii și cercetări*, 2015/VII, Issue 8, pp. 59-80.

Gergely Kunt. Identifying the author of an anonymous diary from the Holocaust in Hungary.

<https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2023/03/01/diary-from-the-holocaust-in-hungary/>

Henry Greenspan, Sara R. Horowitz, Éva Kovács, Berel Lang, Dori Laub, Kenneth Waltzer & Annette Wiewiorka: *Engaging Survivors: Assessing 'Testimony' and 'Trauma' as Foundational Concepts*. Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust, 28:3, 190-226.

Langer, Lawrence. *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991.

Moses, Dirk. "Holocaust Memory, Exemplary Victims, and Permanent Security Today," in Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021, 477-511.

Naron, Stephen. "Archives, Ethics and Influence: How the Fortunoff Video Archive's Methodology Shapes Its Collection's Content." In Werner, Dreier; Angelika, Laumer; Moritz, Wein (eds.) *Interactions: Explorations of Good Practice in Educational Work with Video Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism*. Berlin: Books on Demand GmbH, 41-51.

Pollin-Galay, Hannah. *Ecologies of Witnessing: Language, Place, and Holocaust Testimony*. Yale University Press: 2018.

Pinchevski, Amit. *Transmitted Wounds: Mediation and the Mediation of Trauma*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.

Rosen, Alan. *The Wonder of Their Voices*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Shenker, Noah. *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.

Alexandra M. Szabo and Ildikó Barna. "Excavating Voices in a Cross-Archival Approach. DEGOB Testimonies Aligning to ITS Documentation"

Alexandra M. Szabo and Eszter Katona. "The Initial Stages of the Research Project 'Revisiting Early Testimonies of Hungarian Jewish Holocaust Survivors through a Digital Lens'"

Toronyi, Zsuzsanna. "The Story of a Budapest Garden" In *IMAGES* (Brill) Vol 7/Issue 1 pp. 56-70.

### **COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS:**

For all students, class attendance is mandatory. Completion of the program and the awarding of a certificate requires final presentation. Final presentation: Students are asked to write a lighting talk (PechaKucha) about the testimonial sources they are working with in their own research, alternatively discovered during the course which they intend to use, and to present this during the final week of the class. The presentation should 1) clearly present the provenance, nature and content of the sources 2) demonstrate the significance and uniqueness of these sources for the research project 3) show how the course content has impacted participant's understanding of these sources, and/or methodological approach to testimony.

### **Week 1, July 10      INTRODUCTIONS, HISTORICAL BACKGROUND SEMINAR**

#### **Reading (to be completed, if possible, before course begins):**

Nathan Hanover, *Abyss of Despair (Yaven Metzulah)* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983); H.N. Bialik, "The City of Slaughter" in *Complete Poetic Works of Hayyim Nahman Bialik*, Israel Efros, ed. (New York, 1948): 129-43; Eugene M. Avrutin and Elissa Bemporad, eds., *Pogroms: A Documentary History* (Oxford: OUP), Chapter 3.

10:00-12:00 **Opening Session & Welcome**

*Éva Kovács (VWI) Michael L. Miller (CEU) Stephen Naron (Yale), Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*

Welcome, introduction to the summer course program at CEU, logistics, goals of the course, the syllabus, ancillary events. Brief introductory presentations of core faculty, as well as a group exercise to introduce participants to faculty, and one another. Each core faculty member will present a source (e.g. witness reports, trial documents, oral testimonies) that raises critical methodological questions about source production and source analysis, illustrating different disciplinary approaches to the use of testimony.

12:00-13:00 **Lunch**

13:00-15:00 **Seminar 1/ Pogroms, Poetry, and Posterity**

*Michael L. Miller (CEU)*

This seminar will examine the gathering of eyewitness testimony and its role in historiographic, liturgical, poetic and publicistic responses to anti-Jewish catastrophes in the centuries before the Shoah, from the Khmelnytsky Massacres (1648-49) to the Kishinev Pogrom (1903). It will reflect on the ways in which the impulse to document – and canonize – massacres and martyrdom contributed to the approaches and practices of testimony during and after the Shoah.

15:00-16:00 **Break**

16:00-17:30 **Public Lecture/The Making of the Exemplary Holocaust Witness:  
A Pre-History**

*Carolyn J. Dean (Yale)*

This talk discusses two interwar trials of Armenian and Jewish avengers of murder, the first in Berlin in 1921 and the other in Paris in 1926. It does so to ask about the longer cultural history of how publics imagined genocide as an incomparable radical moral transgression, one now embodied by the experience of Holocaust survivors. It also reflects on how our image of the genocide victim has changed.

**Week 1, July 11 GENEALOGY OF THE MORAL WITNESS**

**Reading (to be completed, if possible, before course begins):**

[Ágnes Erőss, “In memory of victims”: Monument and counter-monument in Liberty Square, Budapest. \*Hungarian Geographical Bulletin\*, 65. 2016 \(3\)](#)

Bartov, Omer. “Blind Spots of Genocide,” *Journal of European History* (2021), 1-5.

Dean, Carolyn J. "Introduction," *The Moral Witness: Trials and Testimony after Genocide* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2019), 1-25.

[Éva Kovács, The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014. Some Remarks. SIMON 2017/1](#)

Moses, Dirk. "Holocaust Memory, Exemplary Victims, and Permanent Security Today," in Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 477-511.

Armenian Political Trials Proceedings 1: The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian, trans. Vartkes Yeghiayan (Los Angeles: A.R.F. Varantian Gomideh, 1985).

Engel, David ed., *The Assassination of Symon Petliura and the Trial of Scholem Schwarzbard 1926-1927: A Selection of Documents* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

9:30-11:00 **Seminar 2, Part 1/The Making of the Exemplary Holocaust Witness:  
A Pre-History**

*Carolyn J. Dean (Yale)*

Based on the readings above, and Dean's public lecture, this seminar will provide an opportunity for students to examine the pre-history of the "Holocaust witness" that later emerges as a seminal figure in Western civilization.

11:00-11:30 **Break**

11:30-13:00 **Seminar 2, Part 2/The Making of the Exemplary Holocaust Witness:  
A Pre-History**

*Carolyn J. Dean (Yale)*

The second part of this seminar will include work with and close readings of sources from the discussion of original sources from the trials presented in Dean's book *The Moral Witness* with a focus on trial testimony from the The Case of Soghomon Tehlirian and the Trial of Scholem Schwarzbard.

13:00-14:30 **Lunch**

14:30-16:30 **Walking Tour of Szabadság Square.**

*Éva Kovács (VWI) and Michael L. Miller (CEU)*

Éva Kovács and Michael L. Miller will take the participants on a walking tour of Freedom Square and its environs, focusing on the statues and memorials that have turned this public square into a site of contested narratives about the turbulent twentieth century. We will visit, inter alia, the "Soviet War Memorial," the "Memorial to the Victims of the German Occupation," as well as a counter-memorial that employs various forms of testimony to contest the official government narrative about Hungarian complicity in the Shoah.

18:00-19:30 **Public Lecture/Reports of Revolt: Early Testimonies on the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising**

*Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*

The talk will analyze the role played by surviving ghetto fighters themselves in shaping a narrative of the revolt immediately in its aftermath, helping turn the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising into the prism through which Jews around the world would remember the Holocaust.

**Week 1, July 12 WARTIME TESTIMONY**

**Reading (to be completed, if possible, before course begins):**

Kassow, Samuel. *Who Will Write Our History? Emanuel Ringelblum, the Warsaw Ghetto, and the Oneg Shabbes Archive*, Indiana University Press, 2007.

Aarons, Victoria, "Teaching Holocaust Literature in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Understanding and Teaching the Holocaust.*" in: L. Hilton and A. Patt (Eds.), *Understanding and teaching the Holocaust* (pp. 228-242). University of Wisconsin Press.

Kunt, Gergely. "The Self-Reflexive Antisemitism of a Young Hungarian Woman During and After World War II (1940-1947)" In *Holocaust. Studii și cercetări*, 2015/VII, Issue 8, pp. 59-80.

Gergely Kunt. Identifying the author of an anonymous diary from the Holocaust in Hungary.

<https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2023/03/01/diary-from-the-holocaust-in-hungary/>

Roskies, David. *The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988.

9:30-11:00 **Seminar 3, Part 1/Ringelblum, Huberband, and the Oneg Shabbes Archive --Documenting the Holocaust**

*Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*

Going beyond his public lecture, Professor Patt will provide a graduate seminar discussion and analysis of the readings, with the goal of examining the Oneg Shabbes Archive.

11:00-11:30 **Break**

11:30-13:00 **Seminar 3, Part 2/Testimonies of Ghetto Fighters**

*Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*

Close reading and discussion of original sources including the wartime testimonies of Marek Edelman and Zivia Lubetkin.

13:00-14:30 **Lunch**

14:30-16:00 **Seminar 3, Part 3/Diaries as Wartime Documentation**

*Gergely Kunt (University of Miskolc)*

Students participating in the course will have the opportunity to analyze a memoir together. The course is divided into three thematic units. As an introduction, Kunt will present his project to rescue unpublished private diaries in Hungary and its main results. In the second part, he will outline the historical and social context of the memoir to be analyzed together. The focus of the collective source analysis will be: firstly, to examine the personal memory of the war; secondly, to explore the specificities of the non-victim perspective and situation; thirdly, to examine how the persecution of Jews and genocide are reflected in this memoir. The memoir is based on a diary written by an unknown bystander schoolboy in 1945, entitled "Budapest in the Storm. How the Capital of our Country Survived the War. 1944-1945". The memoir is drawn from Kunt's private collection of ego documents.

16:00-16:30 **Break**

18:30-19:30 **Public Lecture/Collect and Record! Postwar Historical Commissions**

*Laura Jockusch (Brandeis University)*

This talk will analyze the role of the Central Jewish Historical Commissions work in the immediate postwar effort to document the personal experiences of survivors of the Holocaust.

19:30-21:30 **Reception**

## **Week 1, July 13 TESTIMONY IN THE IMMEDIATE POSTWAR**

### **Reading (to be completed, if possible, before course begins):**

Jockusch, Laura. *Collect and record! Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Early Postwar Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Alexandra M. Szabo and Ildikó Barna. "Excavating Voices in a Cross-Archival Approach. DEGOB Testimonies Aligning to ITS Documentation"

Alexandra M. Szabo and Eszter Katona. "The Initial Stages of the Research Project 'Revisiting Early Testimonies of Hungarian Jewish Holocaust Survivors through a Digital Lens'"

Toronyi, Zsuzsanna. "The Story of a Budapest Garden" In *IMAGES* (Brill) Vol 7/Issue 1 pp. 56-70.

9:30-11:00 **Seminar 4, Part 1/Postwar Historical Commissions**

*Laura Jockusch (Brandeis University)*

Going beyond her public lecture, Professor Jockusch will discuss the readings assigned in a graduate seminar.

- 11:00-11:30 **Break**
- 11:30-13:00 **Seminar 4, Part 2/Postwar Historical Commissions**  
*Laura Jockusch (Brandeis University)*  
 Close reading and discussion of sources in translation from immediate postwar, including historical commissions.
- 13:00-14:30 **Lunch**
- 14:30-17:30 **Visit to the Rumbach Synagogue and the Politzer exhibition**  
*Zsuzsa Toronyi (Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archive)*  
 Éva Kovács (VWI) and Michael L. Miller (CEU) will take the participants on a tour to the Rumbach Synagogue. This will include a guided tour of the Margit Politzer exhibit, which features materials from the Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archives, presented by archive staff including Zsuzsa Toronyi.
- 17:30-18:00 Break
- 18:00-19:30 **Case Study of Application of New Methods to Digital Collections**  
*Ildikó Barna (Research Center for Computational Social Science, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary)*  
*Eszter Katona (Research Center for Computational Social Science, Eötvös Lóránd University, Budapest, Hungary)*  
*Alexandra M. Szabó (Brandeis University/ELTE)*  
 ELTE Research Center for Computational Social Science started a project to examine DEGOB by not only treating it as a source of oral history but approach it with the tools of digital history and computational social science. The main aim of the presentation is to show the potential of these new methods for analyzing such data and the way they can complement our existing knowledge.

**Week 1, July 14 BELATED TESTIMONY IN AUDIOVISUAL FORM**

**Reading (to be completed, if possible, before course begins):**

Naron, Stephen. [Archives, Ethics and Influence: How the Fortunoff Video Archive's Methodology Shapes Its Collection's Content](#). In Werner, Dreier; Angelika, Laumer; Moritz, Wein (eds.) *Interactions: Explorations of Good Practice in Educational Work with Video Testimonies of Victims of National Socialism*. Berlin: Books on Demand GmbH, 41-51.

Rosen, Alan. *The Wonder of Their Voices*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

- 9:30-11:00 **Seminar 5, Part 1/The Fortunoff Video Archive and its Impact**  
*Stephen Naron (Yale)*  
 This session will include a discussion seminar based on the readings for the course, and provide deeper insight into the history, methodology, and impact of the FVAHT over time.
- 11:00-11:30 **Break**
- 11:30-13:00 **Seminar 5, Part 2/Working with the FVAHT**  
*Stephen Naron (Yale)*  
 This session will be a hands-on workshop and tutorial on how to use the Fortunoff Archive's digital collection.
- 13:00-14:30 **Lunch**
- 14:30-15:00 **FILM Screening of first testimony Renee H. (HVT-8047)**  
*Stephen Naron (Yale)*  
 Born in Czechoslovakia in 1934, Renee was deported at age 10 to Bergen-Belsen, along with her younger sister, who was deaf. The two were liberated a year later, in April 1945, the only members of their family to survive. They spent three years in Sweden, and eventually came to New Haven. Renee was one of the first four survivors recorded by the Video Archive's predecessor organization in May 1979.
- 15:00-16:30 Workshop**  
*Éva Kovács (VWI) Michael L. Miller (CEU) Stephen Naron (Yale), Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*  
 Students break into groups to discuss the film with their peers. In part, these workshops are designed to help the students prepare for their final presentations. Modeled on VWIs Methods and Sources seminars (MeSouSe), each student will take a turn presenting their miniproject.
- 16:30-17:00 **Break**
- 17:00-18:30 **Plenary Discussion of the Workshop**  
*Éva Kovács (VWI) Michael L. Miller (CEU) Stephen Naron (Yale), Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*

**Weekend facultative program/Tour Jewish Budapest**  
*Michael L. Miller (CEU)*



**Reading (to be completed, if possible, before course begins):**

Kovács, Éva. The Sensual Memory of Shoah. The Meaning of Sound, Touch and Taste in the Culture of Testimonies. Sara Jones, Roger Woods (eds): *Palgrave Handbook of Testimony and Culture*. London: Palgrave, 2022 (forthcoming).

Henry Greenspan, Sara R. Horowitz, Éva Kovács, Berel Lang, Dori Laub, Kenneth Waltzer & Annette Wieviorka: Engaging Survivors: Assessing 'Testimony' and 'Trauma' as Foundational Concepts. *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust*, 28:3, 190-226.

Shenker, Noah. *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*. Bloomington, 2015.

Pinchas Gutter's Testimony: <https://iwitness.usc.edu/dit/pinchas>

**9:30-11:00 Seminar 6, Part 1/ The Meaning of Sound, Touch and Taste in the Culture of Testimonies**

*Éva Kovács (VWI)*

This session looks into the possibilities and limitations of the artistic use of testimonies of Shoah survivors. It discusses Hungarian progressive experiments in which testimony has become institutionalised, externalised, objectified and therefore translatable, transformable and transmittable from its original language, place, form and personal uniqueness into different registers of art and culture. Three curatorial strategies for using artistic methods to bring the audience back to the performative character of witnessing with the help of testimonies will be analysed. All three examples are unusual because they encourage us to activate those senses that we are less likely to relate to testimony mediated visually for a broader audience: listening (to background noise), touching and tasting.

**11:00-11:30 Break**

**11:30-13:30 Seminar 6, Part 2/Film screening**

*Éva Kovács (VWI)*

*The Euphoria of Being* (2019) Directed by Réka Szabó. With Emese Cuhorka, Éva Pusztai-Fahidi, Réka Szabó and discussion.

**13:30-14:30 Lunch**

**14:30-16:00 Workshop**

*Éva Kovács (VWI) Michael L. Miller (CEU) Stephen Naron (Yale), Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*

Students break into groups to discuss their own research and sources with their peers. In part, these workshops are designed to help the students prepare for their final presentations. Modeled on VWIs Methods and Sources seminars (MeSouSe), each student will take a turn presenting their sources.

16:00-16:30 **Break**

16:30-18:00 **Public Lecture/Beyond the Era of the Witness: The Digital Afterlives of Holocaust Testimony**

*Noah Shenker (Monash University)*

Noah Shenker's talk will explore how the "era of the witness" marked by a consolidation of survivor memory through film, testimonies, and other media, is giving way to a period when witnesses will no longer be present to anchor representations with their living, moral authority. The talk will focus on the USC Shoah Foundation's Dimensions in Testimony Project (DiT), which uses motion-capture technology, intensive interviewing, and database-structured artificial intelligence to create a collection of on-demand virtual, interactive witnesses.

**Week 2, July 18 THE DIGITAL TURN, NEW CHALLENGES AND METHODS**

**Reading (to be completed, if possible, before course begins):**

Noah Shenker. *Reframing Holocaust Testimony*. Bloomington, 2015; Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies* (Preface; Chapter 1)

Amit Pinchevski, *Transmitted Wounds* (Introduction; Chapter 2; Chapter 4).

9:30-11:00 **Seminar 7/New Technology, New Dimensions, New and Old Dilemmas Alike**

*Noah Shenker (Monash University)*

Building on his public presentation, Noah Shenker will engage the class in discussion of how the future prospects of Holocaust testimonies are shaped by the longer history of collecting interviews and other ego documents with survivors. While many scholars focus on the digital dimensions of Holocaust survivor testimonies, this class will explore how those more contemporary practices are intertwined with older, analog forms of documentation.

11:00-11:30 **Break**

11:30-13:00 **Seminar 7, Part 2/Case Study in Digital Use of Testimonies in Educational Context**

*Andrea Szőnyi (USC Shoah Foundation) and Noah Shenker (Monash University)*

A discussion of USC's interactive interviews.

13:00-14:30 **Lunch**

14:30-16:00 **iWalk of Budapest**

*Andrea Szőnyi (USC Shoah Foundation)*

Taking the iWalk will provide an interesting counterpoint to the earlier more traditional tour of Jewish Budapest, with a focus on the Holocaust as well as the potential pedagogical value of testimony in historical locations. Tour and discussion with Andrea Szőnyi.

16:00-18:00 **Office Hours**

**Week 2, July 19      ART AS TESTIMONY/TESTIMONY AS ACTIVISM**

9:30-11:00 **Seminar 8/ Footage as Art: Péter Forgács, film screening in OSA**

*Péter Forgács*

Over the past twenty years, Péter Forgács has created more than thirty films. Most of them examine the private histories of European families, from the Nazi era of the 1930s and 1940s to the Communist era of the postwar period. The home movies from which he compiles his own films are by people who don't know what the future will be but who offer their lives to those who now know what the past has been. We yearn to see in what they saw evidence of the history they had yet to encounter. We also yearn to see the world as they did, with serenity and innocence blind to its own future. Watching these films can produce a certain sense of panic: where are we as we watch this footage and note Forgács's emendations? --Here or there, now or then? And if we are, in some strange way, both here and now and there and then, how is it that such a divided position is both desired and disturbing?

*Danube exodus* (1998) Directed by Péter Forgács

(Register here: [Research Room | OSA Archivum](#), to be able to watch the film online)

11:00-11:30 **Break**

11:30-13:00 **Seminar 8, Part 2: Footage as Testimony**

*Péter Forgács*

A critical exploration of working with testimonies in film-making.

13:00-14:30 **Lunch**

14:30-16:00 **Workshop**

*Éva Kovács (VWI) Michael L. Miller (CEU) Stephen Naron (Yale), Avinoam Patt (University of Connecticut)*

Students break into groups to discuss their own research and sources with their peers. In part, these workshops are designed to help the students prepare for their final presentations. Modeled on VWIs Methods and Sources seminars (MeSouSe), each student will take a turn presenting their sources.

16:00-18:00 **Individual research or preparation of final presentation**

**Week 2, July 20 FINAL PRESENTATIONS; TESTIMONY BEYOND THE SHOAH**

9:30-11:00 **Student Presentations I**

11:00-11:30 **Break**

11:30-13:00 **Student Presentations II**

13:00-14:30 **Lunch**

14:30-16:00 **Core faculty responds to presentations**

16:00-16:30 **Break**

16:30-18:00 **Seminar 9, part 1/Testimony Beyond the Shoah**

*Stephen Naron (Yale)*

A series of zoom presentations by practitioners documenting mass violence in audiovisual form beyond the Holocaust, including Voices of Rwanda, Densho, History Makers, CR/10.

**Week 2, July 21 FINAL PRESENTATIONS; CONCLUDING SESSION**

9:30-11:00 **Closing Discussion or Panel of Core Faculty**