

DH2930, sec. 135E: (Un)Common Read (Spring 2018)  
T | Period 7 (1:55PM – 2:45PM), Little 119

IF THIS IS A MAN (*Se questo è un uomo*)

*Instructor* Sara Agnelli  
*Office* DAU 361 (third floor)  
*Office Hours* T | 12:00PM – 1:30PM  
*Email* saraclassics@ufl.edu

**Course Overview**

“If This Is a Man” is a lasting testament to the indestructibility of the human spirit.

This course will take you on a semester-long journey through a harrowing story of systematic cruelty and miraculous endurance. “If This Is a Man”, also known as “Survival at Auschwitz”, is a memoir written by Primo Levi, first published in 1947. In 1943, Levi, a 25-year-old chemist and “Italian citizen of Jewish race”, was arrested by Italian fascists and deported from his native Turin to Auschwitz. The book describes his 10 months in the German death camp. It is a powerful text, remarkable for its simplicity, restraint, compassion, and even wit.

At a time when it has become the norm to assert differences between persons rather than their commonality, Levi’s text can be read as an important intervention. This work is indispensable, essential, and necessary to confront the reader with the question: how can one deny the concept of a common humanity? From its opening to the end, the reader is charged with the responsibility of thinking deeply about the violations committed to our concept of humanity.

**Course Outline**

Classes will combine student-centered activities with brief introductions to the day’s reading. Accordingly, students will be expected to have read the assigned chapter/s (1/2 chs. per week) and be prepared to comment and participate in a meaningful discussion.

<b>W1</b>	Introduction	01/09
<b>W2</b>	The Journey On the Bottom	01/16
<b>W3</b>	Initiation Ka-Be	01/23
<b>W4</b>	Our Nights The Work	01/30
<b>W5</b>	A Good Day This Side of Good and Evil	02/06
<b>W6</b>	The Drowned and the Saved	02/13
<b>W7</b>	Chemistry Examination	02/20
<b>W8</b>	<b>In-class Test 1</b>	02/27

W9	The Canto of Ulysses	03/13
W10	The Events of the Summer October 1944	03/20
W11	Kraus	03/27
W12	Die Drei Leute vom Labor	04/03
W13	The Last One	04/10
W14	The Story of Ten Days	04/17
W15	In-class Test 2	04/24

### Texts and Resources

Levi, P., Woolf, S. J., Roth, P., *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi assault on humanity*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996 (pp. 186)

In addition, there are some readings which will be placed in canvas during the semester.

### Course Requirements

#### **1. Attendance, Class Participation & Homework Preparation (40%)**

Attendance & Class Participation: Attendance *and informed participation at all class meetings is required*. This means that you show up to class on a regular basis and complete your assignments on time. The entire success of the course is that you *get involved, get interested and get motivated* to the history of a world which in many ways produced our own.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

1. Class begins promptly. A student is counted as being tardy if he/she comes in after class has started.
2. A student is counted as being absent if he/she fails to attend the class.
3. The student's final grade will be deducted by 1% from his/her final grade for each unexcused absence after the second unexcused absence of the semester.

Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class. Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse, there will be no make-up option for missed exams/assignments. Where possible, makes-ups should be arranged prior to absence. Alternatively, students should contact me on their return to classes.

Homework Preparation: you should complete the reading or viewing by the assigned class period and be ready to discuss it.

**The use of cell phones is prohibited. Phones must be silenced and kept in your backpack. Laptops and other electronic devices are to be used for notetaking purposes only.** Failure to comply with these requirements will result in a greatly reduced participation grade.

## **2. In-class Test (30%)**

There will be 2 non-cumulative tests during the semester. These will consist of multiple choice and/or short paragraph answers and are scheduled for February 27 and April 24. Further details will be provided in class closer to the exam dates.

## **3. Final Project (30%)**

For this class, you are required to write an essay about the critical reception of the book: how was “If This Is a Man” received by the public and by critics when it was first published? And how has it been regarded since that time?

Your paper should be 2–3 typed pages long (double-spaced, one-inch margins). It will not due until May 1 (11:59pm, to be emailed to saraclassics@ufl.edu).

Work on this final project will be divided into 3 parts: selection of the topic (due February 20, 7%), preliminary outline & bibliography (due April 3, 13%), and the essay (due May 1, 20%). Your work must be submitted on the due date unless you have asked for and received permission to extend the deadline or unless you have a valid excuse. Essays will be graded with regard not only to content and organization, but also to presentation, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Your research should be documented accurately. Secondary sources, whether textual or internet based, must be acknowledged. Unattributed use of sources will earn you an E for the course. Papers must be emailed to saraclassics@ufl.edu by 11:59pm on Tuesday, May 1.

### **Break-down of final grade**

Attendance, Class Participation & Homework Preparation 40%

2 in-class Exams 30%

Final Essay 30%

### **Grading Scale**

A. 100–93 (4.0)	C. 76–73 (2.0)
A- 92–90 (3.67)	C- 72–70 (1.67)
B+ 89–87 (3.33)	D+ 69–67 (1.33)
B. 86–83 (3.0)	D. 66–63 (1.0)
B- 82–80 (2.67)	D- 62–60 (0.67)
C+ 79–77 (2.33)	E 59– (0)

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF’s Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

<https://student.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

### **Classroom Accommodation**

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must first register with the Disability Resource Center by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter to present to the instructor. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

[dso.ufl.edu/drc](http://dso.ufl.edu/drc) (352) 392 8565

### **Evaluate your Instructor**

Students should provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at [evaluations.ufl.edu](http://evaluations.ufl.edu). The University will announce specific times at the end of the semester for evaluation. Students may view summary results of these assessments at:

[evaluations.ufl.edu/results](http://evaluations.ufl.edu/results)

### **Honor Code**

Familiarize yourself with the University of Florida Student Honor Code and obey it always. You can find the Student Honor Code online at:

[dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code](http://dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code)

### **Counseling and Wellness**

Students who face difficulties completing the course or need counseling or urgent help should call the Counseling and Wellness Center. Do not wait until the end of the semester for help.

[counseling.ufl.edu](http://counseling.ufl.edu)

### **Important Dates**

February 20, Topic Selection

February 27, (in class) Test 1

March 27, Preliminary Outline & Bibliography

April 24, (in class) Test 2

May 1, 11:59pm Final Project (to be emailed to [saraclassics@ufl.edu](mailto:saraclassics@ufl.edu))

### **No classes**

March, 3–10, Spring Break