Teaching with Testimony
Examples of Using the Visual History Archive® in the Class Room

Presented via a landmark partnership with ProQuest and USC Shoah Foundation — The Institute for Visual History and Education

The mission of USC Shoah Foundation is to overcome prejudice, intolerance, and hatred — and the suffering they cause — through the educational use of USC Shoah Foundation’s visual history testimonies.

“No matter how our civilization advances, there are certain values that define us as individuals and as a society... The content of the Visual History Archive is priceless material to teach those core values to our students.”

—C.L. Max Nikias, President, University of Southern California

Genocide survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides have shared their stories and experiences in this collection of 55,000 audio-visual interviews with USC Shoah Foundation to create the Visual History Archive.® These personal voices embody the profound, far-reaching impact of genocide, as well as the political, cultural, and social context surrounding these atrocities.

Reconstructing What Life May Have Been Like

Course title: French IV: Paris as Seen by Writers, Filmmakers, and Photographers
Professor: Colin Keaveney, French and Italian
Institution: University of Southern California

Overview: Professor Keaveney’s upper-level French course explores themes of love, loss, collective and personal memory, and modernity through readings of French literary texts, theoretical readings, films, poems, and songs. One of the texts used in the class is the French novel Dora Bruder, which tells the story of a young girl who was sent to Auschwitz. The book combines different aspects of memory, loss, life, chronology, and French history, and reconstructs what the girl’s life may have been like, even though very little is known about her.

Pedagogical Use of the Visual History Archive: Students are asked to actively imagine Dora Bruder’s experience with the aid of contemporary documents, such as birth certificates, police reports, etc., and are also assigned French-language segments from the VHA based upon topical relevance. Students then have the responsibility to make connections between the segments in the VHA and the text. This involves recounting victim testimonies while putting them in the context of the assigned text. Professor Keaveney uses an example from the text that refers to a particular police report describing the arrest of Louise Jacobson, who was then deported and killed at Auschwitz. The VHA interview with her sister Nadia Kaluski-Jacobson allows students to compare the dry, official account from the text with a personal true story of loss and bereavement.
**Product Features & Benefits**

**Videos expertly catalogued** and indexed by hand (rich metadata), with a thesaurus of index terms covering nearly 65,000 genocide-related concepts and experiences, making it easy to conduct thorough research by searching for keywords and video segments minute-by-minute.

A **standard methodology** is applied to all videos, covering the life span of each interviewee’s memories.

Streaming videos with no need for an on-campus cache server—saves time on downloads and ensures zero wait time; provides cost savings.

**Observations:** Professor Keaveney contends that “the Visual History Archive can provide factual and emotionally powerful information to allow students to better understand those who experienced the German occupation of France in the 1940s.” The content within the Visual History Archive is rich in historical knowledge, which gives students more substance, meaning, and depth to the French literature explored in the course. It also enhances the class discussions for more compelling and productive dialogue. This same methodological approach can be incorporated in other language and literature courses, such as Russian, German, Italian, Spanish, and others.

This collection is a valuable primary source to support researchers studying:

- Genocide
- Health Science
- The Holocaust
- History
- Psychology
- Gender
- Studies
- Sociology
- Public Policy
- Judaism
- Philosophy
- Language
- Media
- Religion
- Anthropology
- Art

– as well as to support faculty designing courses and assignments, or doing their own research.

Learn more and see the testimonials at proquest.com/go/vha

Plus visit http://libguides.usc.edu/vha for course material.