

NDSU NORTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY

FACULTY LECTURESHIP NO 65

April 23

2026

3-4 p.m.

Memorial Union,
Anishinaabe Theatre

also offered via Zoom

Reception to follow

**RETHINKING
HOLOCAUST
EDUCATION:**

CAN WE FIND THE "TRUE WITNESS"?



"Triumph des Todes" by Felix Nussbaum

ADAM GOLDWYN

PROFESSOR

Department of English

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Adam J. Goldwyn is professor of English at North Dakota State University, where he has taught since 2013. He is the author of “Homer, Humanism, Holocaust: Jewish Responses to the Crisis of Enlightenment During World War II” (2022) and “Zero Generation Holocaust Literature and the Art of Non-Survival” (2025).

ABSTRACT

Though a significant majority of American students claim to have heard about the Holocaust, far fewer of them can identify some of its most salient features: the names of ghettos or concentration camps or the number of Jewish people killed. This lecture suggests that these gaps are in part a result of how the Holocaust is taught, with a focus on survivor witness testimonies like Elie Wiesel’s “Night” and Primo Levi’s “If This is a Man”, which avoid the subject of Jewish death by foregrounding survivors. Primo Levi himself noted this, claiming that survivors were not the “true witnesses.” Literature, art, music and other forms of cultural production by Jewish people who died during the Holocaust can offer a complementary perspective by foregrounding the works of Jews who not only knew they were going to die, but who believed the Nazis would win and that they would be the last Jewish generation on earth. Works examined include the ghetto poems of Yitzchak Katznelson, transit camp paintings by Felix Nussbaum and the Auschwitz diaries of Zalmen Gradowski.

