

Teaching with Testimony

Visual History Archive® Brings Content to Advanced Language Course

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 Visual History Archive based upon topical relevance. Students then have the responsibility to make connections between the segments in the Visual History Archive 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 Visual History Archive 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

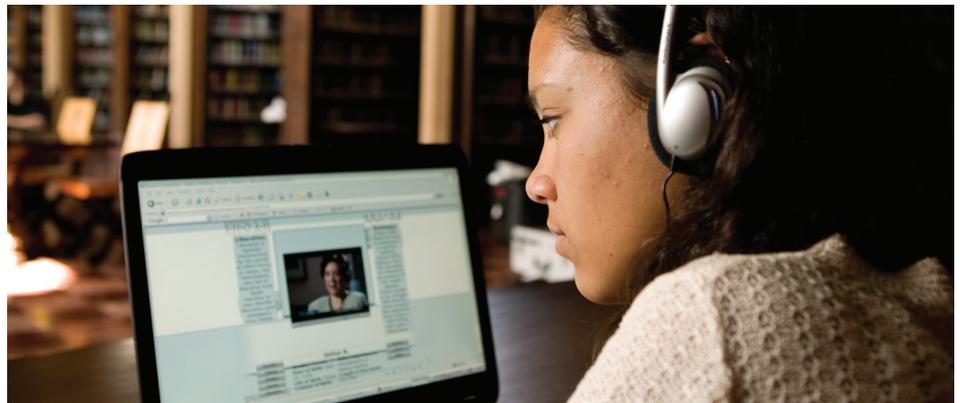
Streaming, 24x7, video testimonies means no infrastructure like a dedicated cache server or Internet2 line required—eliminates download delays and provides cost savings.

Expert indexing, with terms covering nearly 65,000 genocide-related concepts and experiences—discover testimony content at the one-minute segment level and build customized searches.

Transcription of 900 German language testimonies now available, with thousands of English transcripts due in 2017 and beyond—enables a more granular level of research.

Related ProQuest content available at both the testimony- and segment-level—provides historical context to the primary source video testimonies.

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 more.



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

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| Genocide | Public Policy | Political |
| Health Science | Judaism | Science |
| The Holocaust | Philosophy | International |
| History | Language | Relations |
| Psychology | Media | Literature |
| Gender | Religion | Education |
| Studies | Anthropology | |
| Sociology | Art | |

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