The University of Florida has a superb collection of Holocaust survivors’ testimonies in its Judaica Library. This is housed apart from the main section of history books on the ground floor of Smathers Library West. Here is my recommendation: determine where books on the Holocaust are grouped, and then **browse!** This is always a useful strategy in a library, and you are sure to turn up at least ten other books that you would love to read if you had the time! You may also carry out an advanced search online at the Smathers Library website at: [http://uf.catalog.fcla.edu/uf.jsp?S0771326823665405&ADV=S](http://uf.catalog.fcla.edu/uf.jsp?S0771326823665405&ADV=S) for a combination of the words “holocaust” and “personal”. You’ll find over 1,850 titles; of which some 1,350 are in English, and we have books in German, French, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, and other languages if you feel really adventurous.

A further hint for real-time, non-virtual, physical browsing among the book stacks: you may find pertinent materials under the call number DS 135, which will be grouped together with each other, but do not assume that this is the only place. Survivors from different countries will be in different spots, because of the way the Library of Congress catalogs books. Choose a book that represents the **memoir of a single person**, not one of the several collections containing many brief reminiscences of only a few pages. And please do **not** pick the well-known books by Elie Wiesel or Primo Levi as your assignment. You have probably already read these in high school. I’d like you to find another, perhaps unknown person as your survivor. Please also **do not borrow an armful of books from the library** before making your final choice, but remember that there are 140 people in our class, all trying to find one too.

What next? Please check the list of testimonies on my website at [http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/ggiles/holcst/testilist12.pdf](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/ggiles/holcst/testilist12.pdf), in order to see that no-one else has taken your chosen title. I really do want the class to review 140 different books. **The TAs will collect titles** by email, and forward them to me for weekly updating of the website list. If someone else has already chosen your title that week, then you will have to pick another book. The list of possible books posted on my web page is only a partial one, even though it currently runs to about 330 titles. However, you are perfectly at liberty to take a book that is not on this list. Such books must be approved by me personally, in order to make sure that they are suitable (—I have also noted the titles of some unsuitable books on my long list). Please do not just show it to me after class, but stop by during my office hours, so that I can add all the bibliographical details to the list through my office computer.
(—I can only update my webpage there). I am very happy to do this, and it gives me a welcome opportunity both to meet you and to catch a glimpse of some new books. The **absolute deadline** for completing approval of your book is **Thursday, 16 February 2011**, or your grade will be lowered for this assignment. Again, **send your book choice to your TA, not me**, so that we can avoid confusion. I will ignore emails from students, proposing book titles that are already on my list, but I receive them every year!

In your paper, I would like you to give some of the details of the survivor’s experience, *without* however simply regurgitating whole pages of direct quotations. Where possible, paraphrase in your own words. Direct quotations in any paper should only be more than five lines long in exceptional cases (-- they should also be indented and single-spaced).

Beyond that, I expect you also to check secondary sources to fit these memories into a broader picture of what we know about a particular action, or event, or camp, or prison. In other words, place the testimony in context through some extra research of your own. Again, the Judaica Library is the place to go, but please do remember your fellow-students, and refrain from borrowing armfuls of standard works on the Holocaust. There is a reference section in the Judaica Library—the shelves closest to the windows on University Avenue, whose books may not be taken out of the library. You already have some reference sources among the books you have bought for this course. If, for example, your witness mentions the Nuremberg Laws, then explain briefly what these were. There is no need to quote the text of the laws in their entirety, but the reader needs to be made aware that you know what you are talking about. Similarly, if there is a mention of Reichskristallnacht, then please explain in a sentence what this was. Finally, you need to weave into all of this some of your own commentary, reaction, or even criticism (—the memories of older people play tricks on them . Does it lessen the value of the testimony, if some of the facts are wrong, based on your research in the secondary literature?).

In short: **summarize the testimony** (tell the story, but in your own words, and not in full), place it in context, and comment on these events and this person from your own perspective. This is also an exercise in editing your thoughts—papers should **not exceed 1,500 words**. Many students find this the most rewarding piece of reading for the whole class, but please do not write more than the limit. If everyone were to write just one extra page, that makes 140 pages more to grade, and we want to strive to return papers to you in as timely a fashion as possible.

I assume that you know what plagiarism is. If uncertain, please ask me or your TA. Do not even think of submitting a paper written in a previous year by a friend or someone in your fraternity or sorority. We will use the very latest web-based technology to identify academic dishonesty. And you should know that I react with enthusiastic severity against cheaters, as a means of rewarding the integrity of the overwhelming majority of students.
Again, most students find this a highly rewarding exercise that allows you to explore in depth the personal dimensions of how people dealt with the onslaught of the Nazis, as well as how they experienced the kindness of strangers who supported or rescued victims. I’m sure it will be satisfying for you, if you choose your book carefully, and have a preliminary look at several before settling on one that seems of most interest to you.