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JSP/LIT/REL 335 & ETS 315
T/Th 2-3:20 p.m., Fall 2008

Israeli Literature and Culture

A study of modern Hebrew prose in the context of Zionism, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the continuing Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In addition to reading major Israeli fiction and historical accounts, we will analyze ways in which contemporary sources report news from the Middle East. The course will include screenings of pertinent segments from documentaries and feature films.

Texts:

Appelfeld, Aharon. *Badenheim 1939* (short story version). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001.

Grossman, David. *The Yellow Wind*. Trans. Haim Watzman. New York: The Noonday Press, 1998.

Israel: A Traveler's Literary Companion. Ed. Michael Gluzman and Naomi Seidman. San Francisco: Whereabouts Press, 1996.

The Jerusalem Anthology: A Literary Guide. Ed. Reuven Hammer. Philadelphia: JPS, 1995.

Kashua, Sayed. *Dancing Arabs*. Trans. Miriam Shlesinger. New York: Grove Press, 2004.

Modern Hebrew Literature. Ed. Robert Alter. New York: Behrman House, 1975.

Course Reader #20083-1040 at The Copy Centers, Marshall Square Mall, indicated by * below

Additional requirement: Daily reading of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* (English Edition) on the web (www.haaretzdaily.com) and pertinent articles in *The New York Times* (www.nytimes.com). News analyses may also draw from pieces in sources such as *The Jerusalem Report* (www.jrep.com), the CNN website (cnn.com), or others.

Schedule:

26 August--Introductions

FILM: *Hitchhikers*

Zionism and Post-Zionism

28 August

Ahad Ha-am, "Imitation and Assimilation," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

Shlomo Avineri, "The Zionist Legacy and the Future of Israel" (photocopy)

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 3-8, 121

2 September—**News Analysis #1 Due** (Contrast two accounts of an event from different sources)

*Ludwig Lewisohn, "Holy Land"

*Theodor Herzl et al., in *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 421-432

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 217-222

FILM: Selections from *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*

Pre-State Literature

4 September

Mendele Mocher Sforim [S. Y. Abramovitch], “Shem and Japhet on the Train,” in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 222-235

9 September—**News Analysis #2 Due**

*Moshe Smilansky, “Latifa”

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 235-249 and 252-265

FILM: Selections from *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*

11 September

Y. H. Brenner, “The Way Out,” in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

*Documents 7, 12, and 13 in *The Israel-Arab Reader*

16 September--**PAPER #1 DUE**

Haim Hazaz, “The Sermon,” in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

What are the essential arguments or theses in “The Sermon”? Does the implied author appear to agree with Yudke, or does he use irony at Yudke’s expense? What does Hazaz accomplish by presenting these issues in a short story, rather than in an essay?

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 265-275

18 September

Agnon’s letter to S. Z. Schocken, in *The Jerusalem Anthology*, pp. 276-284

S. Y. Agnon, “At the Outset of the Day,” in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

A Palestinian Perspective

23 September— **News Analysis #3 Due**

*Raja Shehadeh, *Samed*, pp. 16-39

FILM: *Wedding in Galilee*

25 September

*Raja Shehadeh, *Strangers in the House*, pp. 3-9

FILM: *Wedding in Galilee*

The 1948 War of Independence and Its Aftermath

30 September--NO CLASS (Rosh Ha-shana & Eid Ul Fitr)

2 October

*Benjamin Tammuz, “The Swimming Race”

**The Jew in the Modern World*, 472-479; *I. F. Stone, “The Other Zionism”

7 October

S. Yizhar, “The Prisoner,” in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 297-320

9 October—NO CLASS (Yom Kippur)

14 October [Sukkot]

Amos Oz, "Before His Time," in *Modern Hebrew Literature The Jerusalem Anthology*, pp. 345-348 and 396-400

16 October—**PAPER #2 DUE**

A. B. Yehoshua, "Facing the Forests," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

Analyze one character in the political allegory—such as the Arab, the girl, the father; or analyze another very specific allegorical element such as the Crusades, the hikers, the map.

Avoid discussing the fire watcher or the forest in general and trying to cover the entire story.

The 1967 War and Its Aftermath

21 October [Shmini Atzeret and Simhat Torah]

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 293-297 and 323-356

FILM: Selections from *Late Summer Blues* ("It is good to die for our country")

23 October

*Ian Lustick, "Israel and the West Bank..." in *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands*

*Yaron Ezrahi, Introduction to *Rubber Bullets*

28 October

*Jacob Buchan, "Sleepwalkers"

The Jerusalem Anthology, pp. 372-375

After the Shoah

30 October

Yitzchak Laor, "Rachely's Father Who Was an Actor," in *Israel*

Amos Oz, "Thank God for His Daily Blessings," in *Israel*

FILM: *The Summer of Avia*

4 November—**PAPER #3 DUE**

Aharon Appelfeld, "Badenheim 1939"

Analyze the significance of one character in "Badenheim 1939." How does

Appelfeld's use of allegory differ from that of A. B. Yehoshua?

FILM: *The Summer of Avia*

6 November

Yehuda Amichai, "The Times My Father Died" and *The Jerusalem Anthology*, p. 444

FILM: Selections from *Fictitious Marriage*

The First Intifada: 1987-93

11 November

Etgar Kerrett, "Cocked and Locked," in *Israel*

David Grossman, *The Yellow Wind*, chapters 2, 3, 6

13 November

David Grossman, *The Yellow Wind*, chapters 8, 10

Israel Today

18 November

Sayed Kashua, *Dancing Arabs*

20 November

Sayed Kashua, *Dancing Arabs*

25 November—**PAPER #4 due today or in the first week of December**

Open topic on any story we have not yet discussed in *Israel*

Gafi Amir, “By the Time You’re Twenty-One You’ll Reach the Moon,” in *Israel*

Gadi Taub, “You Never Can Tell,” in *Israel*

27 November—NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)

2 December

David Ehrlich, “The Store,” in *Israel*

Possible topic: How might this story be read as a social or political allegory? Does

Ehrlich’s use of allegorical elements differ from that of Yehoshua and Appelfeld?

Orly Castel-Bloom, “Someone Else’s Story,” in *Israel*

Yoram Kolerstein, “Idolatry,” in *Israel*

4 December

Yosl Birstein, “The Writer A. M. Fuchs Was Already Old...,” in *Israel*

*Ronit Matalon, “Little Brother”

NOTE: * refers to photocopied materials that are included in our Course Reader

Requirements: Regular attendance, class participation, three analyses of current news from Israel, four short essays, and final examination (at 2:45 p.m. on Thursday, December 11th; no rescheduling).

Grading: Participation (20%), news analyses (20%), papers (40%), and final exam (20%).

Goals: To better understand aspects of Israeli life and literature since 1948, to reach a greater understanding of Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to balance our own views with other perspectives, and to enter into the current debates over a possible “end to the conflict.”

News Analyses: For the first analysis, contrast ways in which different newspapers report the same event. After that, print out two or three articles from newspapers during the week and write brief analyses of them. Pay special attention to rhetoric: how does each article present the news, for example, using metaphors or other literary techniques? Is there a clear bias?

Films: If you miss a film screening, you should see it independently. Most films for this course are available for individual or group viewing at Bird Library (Lower Level, from the Media Desk) or in video format at the Winnick Hillel Center

Plagiarism: Always acknowledge your sources. Plagiarism is very easy to detect and results in a failing grade, so why not just use quotation marks and refer to every source you cite?

Attendance: Your final grade will be adversely affected if you miss more than two classes. Save these permissible absences for when you really need them!