

COURSE: HEBREW STUDIES 401  
SURVEY OF MODERN HEBREW LITERATURE  
Fall 2011

Instructor: Prof. Rachel F. Brenner  
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Classes: MWF 1:20-2:10  
Office Hours: Wednesday and Friday 2.15-3.15, or by appointment

### MAJOR THEMES

1. Introduction - What is a living language?
2. The Biblical view – The story of the Tower of Babel
3. The European Enlightenment -- Emmanuel Kant
4. Haskalah and the revival of Hebrew – Moses Mendelssohn
5. Modern Hebrew Literature Y. L. Gordon, Tchernichovsky, Bialik.
6. The collapse of the Haskalah ideal and the beginning of Zionism: Theodor Herzl.

**Objectives:** We shall focus on developing the skills of reading, discussing, and writing in the context of the studied texts. Comprehension of the influence of European Enlightenment on the Haskalah and of the ensuing revival of the Hebrew language and Modern Hebrew literature is the conceptual focus of the course. The course also examines the role Modern Hebrew literature played in shaping the Zionist movement.

### Requirements:

This is an intensive writing course. Exact directions concerning submission of the assignments will be given in the first class of the term. The students will pick up graded papers before each class. There is **always** the option of correcting the assignment and improving the grade, if it is below B. The corrected assignment **must** be handed in within a week. **Your work must be your own. Do not** seek outside help to edit/correct/do your assignment. You have the opportunity to discuss the assignments before class time, since I am in class well ahead of time to answer students' questions. In addition to regular homework assignments, a mid-term essay, lecture assignments, and the final essay are mandatory. The students are required to sign up for three presentations - summaries of previous classes, and three presentations of current events.

**Please Note:** Attendance and participation in class on regular basis are important components of the final grade. Our classes start **exactly at 1:20** and students are expected to be **on time**. You are expected to inform me ahead of time of any planned lateness or absence. **Do not use any electronic devices during class time.**

**Grading** (the distribution is approximate and is subject to change)

Written assignments - 35%

Mid-term essay - 15%

Lecture Assignments - 5%

Final essay – 25%

Participation (including presentations): - 15%

**Required Text:** Multi-Dictionary: Bilingual Learners' Dictionary  
Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary  
501 Hebrew Verbs

Other texts will be distributed in class.

Please write the check for \$25 for the photocopy expenses to The Dept. of Hebrew and Semitic Studies.

Sept. 30 (Rosh Hashana) class will be cancelled.

Please note: There won't be classes on Friday, Sept. 16 and Friday, Nov. 18.

**Instead** students are expected to attend the lectures listed below and write a report on each lecture:

**Monday, September 26, 4:00 pm**

Jonathan Sarna (Brandeis University): "That Obnoxious Order": Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews"

Location: Union South, 1308 West Dayton Street

**Monday, October 24, 4:00 pm**

Nathaniel Deutsch (UC-Santa Cruz): "Exploring the Jewish Dark Continent: Life, Death, and Ethnography in the Pale of Settlement"

Location: Union South, 1308 West Dayton Street