

Modern Jewish Literature

Hebrew Studies 318/ Jewish Studies 318

University of Wisconsin- Madison
Spring 2011

Lecture: MW 4:00-5:15, Ingraham 19
Section 301: W 12:05-12:55, Van Hise 491
Section 302: M 1:20-2:10, Soc Sci 4322
Section 303: W 2:25-3:15, Van Hise 591

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Course Overview: This course will provide students with a conceptual framework for the understanding of Modern Jewish Literature and the derivation of greater aesthetic pleasure and cultural understanding from its varied works. Following a discussion of the work of Jewish cultural theorist Benjamin Harshav, students will gain exposure to fictional and poetic works originally written in Hebrew, Yiddish, German, Russian, and English by fourteen prominent modern Jewish writers, including Nobel Laureate Shmuel Yosef Agnon. Through their study, students will see how the breakdown of pre-Modern Jewish society, immigration, the challenges of Jewish integration and exclusion, and the establishment of new Jewish communities, influenced the creation of literature during what Harshav refers to as the "Modern Jewish Revolution."

Attendance, Tardiness, and Preparedness Policy: Students are expected to attend **every** class and to arrive **on time**. Attendance will be taken in section and monitored by the TA every lecture. Excessive unexcused absences will lower student grades (more than five discussion section and lecture absences). In addition, students should **always** bring paper or electronic copies of assigned readings to class and discussion section for reference and be prepared to discuss them. Such preparedness will be an important component of the participation grade.

Breakdown of Grades (approximate):

Reading Quizzes: 25% - While lecture and discussion section will provide students with possible interpretations and approaches to the assigned literary texts, lecture and class discussion are not intended as a substitute for direct encounter with the assigned readings. For this reason, reading quizzes will be administered throughout the semester to test student familiarity with assigned readings. Students will be asked short factual questions whose answers should be evident to those who have read the material. Quiz administration will take place at the beginning of class and tardy or absent students will not be given the opportunity to retake the quizzes without prior notification of tardiness or absence. *The lowest 2 quiz scores will be dropped* (including zeroes for absences or tardiness). In cases of illness or personal emergency, *a maximum of 2 quiz scores may be replaced* by attending a Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) lecture and writing a double-spaced, one-page summary/response. Students must, if at all possible, notify Prof. Hollander or their TA before the time of the quiz in order to be able to exercise this option. (N.B. This option is in addition to the lowest 2 scores that will be dropped. Also, students who choose to write their response paper on the two CJS lectures described in the syllabus may not use those lectures for quiz replacement summaries. Approved lectures will be listed on the CJS website, <http://jewishstudies.wisc.edu/lectures/>.) Approximately 17 quizzes will be administered over the course of the semester.

Mid-Semester Paper (5 Pages): 25% - The literature read over the course of the semester will be divided into five thematic sections. After the completion of the first two sections, students will be assigned a paper where they will be asked to compare and contrast two works from the same thematic unit. Students will be expected to develop a thesis and argue it in their papers. If you have difficulty doing this, it is recommended that you meeting with your TA or contact **The Writing Center** (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Individual/index.html>) to set up a meeting. Papers should also be proofread prior to submission. **Due on Wed., March 23.** Late papers will be accepted, but every twenty-four hour delay in submission will reduce the grade 5%.

Final: 25% - The final exam will be held from 7:45AM to 9:45AM on May 10th, and must be taken at this time. It will have two parts. Students will be asked to identify and discuss the significance of passages drawn from the literary works read over the course of the semester in the first section. Students will be asked to write two short essays comparing and contrasting works read over the course of the semester in the second part.

Attendance and Participation: 15% - Class and section attendance proves integral to student success. Attendance will be taken in section and monitored by the TA every lecture. Excessive unexcused absences will lower student grades (more than five discussion section and lecture absences). Active engagement in class and discussion section constitute an important part of the learning process and students will be rewarded for asking meaningful questions and making significant contributions to lecture and class discussion through their comments. Students will be provided with questions to guide their reading and should, at a minimum, be prepared to respond to these questions if called upon in lecture or section. While preferable to surfing the web, texting, or talking with fellow students, listening in lecture and class discussion constitutes only a starting point to student involvement

Response Paper(s): 10%

Option 1 – Shalom Aleichem’s story cycle “Tevye the Dairyman” serves as the inspiration for the famed musical and film *Fiddler on the Roof*. Students may view the filmic adaptation and write a 2-3 page paper comparing it with the literary original. Students will be asked to write a clearly organized and argued essay reflecting on the changes made in the filmic adaptation and what they can teach about the Americanization of East European Jewry. Papers will be **due on Mon., May 2nd**.

Option 2 – At 7 PM on February 9th Prof. Arieh Saposnik will deliver a lecture entitled “Holy Tongues, Holy Lands: Contesting the Sacred in the Making of a Hebrew National Culture” and at 7:30 PM on April 27th John J. Collins will deliver a lecture entitled “Shifting Perspectives on the Dead Sea Scrolls”. Students may attend these two lectures and write one-page papers summarizing the speakers’ arguments. For further information on these lectures see the Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies website (<http://hebrew.wisc.edu/?q=node/33>). **Due on Mon., May 2nd**.

Disability Policy:

Students registered with disabilities at McBurney Disability Resource Center can receive accommodations with the presentation of the proper forms. Disabled students should meet with their TA during office hours or by appointment to arrange these accommodations. Such meetings should be arranged as early in the semester as possible.

Code of Academic Integrity:

All students are expected to conduct their academic work according to university standards. Students should be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and do their best to avoid it. To learn more on what constitutes academic misconduct see (<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/pdf/UWS14.pdf>).

Food, Drink, Cell Phone, and Laptop Policy:

Students are asked to refrain from eating and drinking during class. Cell phones should be turned off before class and laptops should be employed for class purposes only.

Jewish Holidays: Class will be cancelled on April 18th, 20th, and 25th to allow for observance of the Jewish holiday Passover.

Required Texts:

- Agnon, S. Y. *A Simple Story*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2000.
- Roth, Philip. *Goodbye Columbus: And Five Other Stories*. New York: Vintage International, 1994.
- Shalom Aleichem. *Tevye the Dairyman and The Railroad Stories*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. New York: Schocken, 1987, 3-134.
- Schnitzler, Arthur. *Fraülein Else*. Trans. F. H. Lyon. London: Pushkin Press, 2006.
- Yeziarska, Anzia. *Bread Givers*. New York: Persea Books, 1975.

Optional Film:

Fiddler on the Roof. Dir. Norman Jewison. 1971. DVD. MGM, 1998.

Reserves and Electronic Reserves:

Copies of the required texts will be placed on reserve as College Library. The remaining readings will be placed on Learn@UW, but students are encouraged to purchase the books from which longer readings are drawn.

Schedule:***Contextualizing Modern Jewish Literature (January 19-26)***

January 19 General Introduction

January 24 The Modern Jewish Revolution

Reading: Harshav, Language in Time of Revolution, 3-75 (Learn@UW).

Quiz

January 26 The Modern Jewish Revolution (cont.); "The God of Israel" by A. Leyeles

Reading: Leyeles, American Yiddish Poetry, 70-73, 76-79 (Learn@UW).

Quiz

East European Jewry in Crisis (January 31 – February 23)

January 31 "The Brief Travels of Benjamin the Third" by S. Y. Abramovitch

Reading: Abramovitch, Tales of Mendele, 299-391 (Learn@UW).

Quiz

February 2 "The Brief Travels of Benjamin the Third" (continued)

February 7 "Tevye the Dairyman" by Shalom Aleichem

Reading: Aleichem, Tevye the Dairyman and The Railroad Stories, 3-134.

Quiz

February 9 "Tevye the Dairyman" (continued)

(Optional) Lecture for response paper, option 2

February 14 A Simple Story by S. Y. Agnon – PART 1

Reading: Agnon, A Simple Story, 3-100.

Quiz

February 16 A Simple Story - PART 1 (continued)

February 21 A Simple Story by S. Y. Agnon – PART 2

Reading: Agnon, A Simple Story, 100-230.

Quiz

February 23 A Simple Story - PART 2 (continued)

Assimilation and Its Discontents (February 28 – March 9)

February 28 “Serkele, or, In Mourning for a Brother” by Shloyme Ettinger

Reading: Ettinger, Landmark Yiddish Plays, 113-200 (Learn@UW).

Quiz

March 2 “Serkele, or, In Mourning for a Brother” (continued)

March 7 “Fraülein Else” by Arthur Schnitzler

Reading: Schnitzler, Fraülein Else, 1-112.

Quiz

March 9 “Fraülein Else” (continued)

March 14 & 16 SPRING BREAK

Immigration as Solution: Leaving Europe (March 21-April 6)

America

March 21 Breadgivers by Anzia Yeziarska - PART I

Reading: Yeziarska, Bread Givers, 1-151.

Quiz

March 23 Breadgivers – PART I (continued); Jacob Glatshetyn “Sheeny Mike” & “On The Butcher Block”

Reading: Glatshetyn, American Yiddish Poetry, 203-7, 240-5, & 313-317 (Learn@UW).

Quiz

March 23 MID-SEMESTER PAPER DUE

March 28 Breadgivers by Anzia Yeziarska - PART II

Reading: Yeziarska, Bread Givers, 155-297.

Quiz

March 30 Breadgivers – PART II (continued); Moyshe-Leyb Halpern “Salute” and “Sacco-Vanzetti”

Reading: Halpern, American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology, 388-391, 430-3, & 436-9 (Learn@UW).

Quiz

Palestine

April 4 “Nerves” by Yosef Chaim Brenner

Reading: Brenner, Eight Great Hebrew Short Novels, 31-58 (Learn@UW).

Quiz

April 6 “Until Daybreak” by Moshe Shamir
Reading: Shamir, Until Daybreak, 114-137 (Learn@UW).
Quiz

World Revolution as Solution (April 11-13)

Russian Revolution

April 11 Red Cavalry by Isaac Babel
Reading: Babel, The Collected Stories of Isaac Babel, 197-204, 208-212, 227-236, 290-310, 331-333, 362 (Learn@UW).
Quiz

April 13 Red Cavalry (continued)

April 18 EREV PASSOVER - CLASS CANCELLED

April 20 PASSOVER - CLASS CANCELLED

April 25 PASSOVER - CLASS CANCELLED

Winding Down The Revolution (April 27- May 4)

America

April 27 “Goodbye, Columbus” by Philip Roth
Reading: Roth, Goodbye Columbus, 1-136.
Quiz
(Optional) Lecture for response paper, option 2

May 2 “Goodbye, Columbus” (continued)

May 2 RESPONSE PAPER(S) DUE

Israel

May 4 “Departure” by Yaakov Shabtai; Conclusions
Reading: Shabtai, Uncle Peretz Takes Off, 217-227 (Learn@UW).
Quiz