

Israeli Fiction in Translation

Jewish Studies 367/ Lit Trans 367/ Hebrew Studies 343

University of Wisconsin- Madison

Fall 2014

Lecture: TuTh 1:00-2:15, Ingraham 222

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Office Hours: TuTh 2:15-3:15 or by appointment

Course Overview: Through analysis of eight leading Israeli authors' literary works this course explores major themes pertaining to Israeli society's contemporary character. Surveyed topics include Zionism and post-Zionism; Globalization; Israel as a Jewish and democratic state; the Israeli military's influence on civilian life; terrorism and its effects on national life.

Learning Goals:

- 1) Students will achieve grounding in Israeli literature through encounter with eight of its leading authors.
- 2) Students will explore important themes that will deepen their understanding of contemporary Israel.
- 3) Students will learn strategies for analyzing literary texts intended to improve their critical thinking.
- 4) Students will learn how to more effectively communicate their analytical insights in writing.

Attendance, Tardiness, and Preparedness Policy: Students are expected to attend **every** class and to arrive **on time**. Attendance will be taken. Excessive unexcused absences will lower student grades (four absences or more). In addition, students should **always** bring paper or electronic copies of assigned readings to class for reference and be prepared to discuss them. Such preparedness will be an important component of the participation grade. *Laptops will only be permitted during class discussion of literary texts.*

Breakdown of Grades (approximate):

Reading Quizzes: 20% - While lecture will provide students with possible interpretations and approaches to the assigned literary texts, it is not intended as a substitute for direct encounter with them. Consequently proficiency quizzes will be administered throughout the semester to test student familiarity with assigned readings. Nonetheless such encounter is not always easy. Consequently students will be provided with reading questions or short response prompts to help them

start thinking and preparing for class discussion. To test student preparation reading quizzes, based on the supplied reading questions and an additional deep thought question, will be administered throughout the semester. Quiz administration will take place during class and absent students will not be given the opportunity to retake the quizzes without providing prior notification of tardiness or absence to the professor. The *lowest 2 quiz scores will be dropped* (including zeroes for absences or tardiness). *Students may also attend two Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) lectures and write two double-spaced, one-page summary/response papers whose grades will substitute for 2 quiz scores.* Approved lectures will be listed on the CJS website, ([http://jewishstudies.wisc.edu/events/.](http://jewishstudies.wisc.edu/events/)) Approximately 18 quizzes will be administered over the course of the semester.

Final: 20% - **The final exam will be held from 12:25PM to 2:25PM on December 19th.** 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: 10% - Class attendance proves integral to student success. Attendance will be taken in lecture. Excessive unexcused absences will lower student grades (four absences or more). Active engagement in class constitutes an important part of the learning process and students will be rewarded for asking meaningful questions and making significant contributions to lecture 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. Listening in lecture only constitutes a starting point to student involvement. **Finally students observed surfing the web, texting, or talking with fellow students will have their participation grade lowered.**

Independent Research Component: 50% Total -General Instructions: If you have difficulty preparing these assignments, it is recommended that you contact **The Writing Center** (<http://writing.wisc.edu/Individual/index.html>) or the instructor to set up a meeting. Papers should be proofread prior to submission. Late papers will be accepted, but every twenty-four hour delay in submission will reduce the grade 5%.

A) Secondary Literature Survey Paper (500-750 Words): 15% - Individuals can read and enjoy literature dealing with themes with which they are unfamiliar, but broader cultural knowledge can deepen a reader's understanding and enjoyment of a given text. To illustrate this students will be asked to select a theme pertinent to Israeli literature and explore it through readings in secondary literature on the topic. Themes to be explored include Zionism and Post-Zionism; the Israeli military experience; Globalization; the Post 9/11 world; Israel as a Jewish State; Palestinian Israelis. Additional topics may be selected with instructor approval. Students will need to select two academic articles or book chapters dealing with this topic and read them. In their papers students will be asked to present the argument

and primary supporting evidence of each author and the authors' primary points of agreement and disagreement. **The Paper is due on November 6th.** [*Students will be visiting the library to meet with a reference librarian in preparation for this assignment*]

B) *Textual Echo Paper (500-750 Words): 15%* - The aim of this assignment is to give students the opportunity to practice making observations and claims about ideas and arguments embedded in literary texts. This assignment allows students to gain analytical traction with a text by discerning textual "echoes" around which to build a focused analysis. For purposes of this paper, a "textual echo" can be understood as a sequence of details, passages, textual features, or moments that the narrator, author, or director invite the reader to compare and contrast. Every text is laced with numerous echoes and they may include repeated images, phrases, plot points, references, scene structures, or stylistic features. After identifying such textual echoes, students will be asked to explore how a particular textual echo considered interesting or important serves to illuminate a topic, concept, or literary or aesthetic feature that the text seems to be exploring or commenting upon. Further written and oral instructions, as well as examples of effective assignments, will be provided over the course of the semester. **The Paper is due on November 20th.**

C) *Thematic Analysis Paper (1250-1500 Words): 20%* - More formal than the secondary literature survey and textual echo papers, this paper requires students to provide an extended analysis of a prominent theme in an individual work. After making a claim concerning the author's position, students will be asked to supply textual support for their claim. Students can draw on their secondary literature survey and textual echo papers in composition of this paper. **It is due on December 5th.**

Disability Policy:

Students registered with disabilities at McBurney Disability Resource Center can receive accommodations with presentation of proper documentation. Disabled students should meet with the instructor 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 will only be permitted during class discussion of literary texts.*

Required Texts:

- Castel-Bloom, Orly. Human Parts. Trans. Dalya Bilu. Jaffrey, New Hampshire: David R. Godine, 2003.
- Kashua, Sayed. Second Person Singular. Trans. Mitch Ginsburg. New York: Grove Press, 2013.
- Oz, Amos. Between Friends. Trans. Sondra Silverston. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013.
- S. Yizhar. Khirbet Khizeh. Trans. Nicholas de Lange and Yaakov Dweck. Jerusalem: Ibis Editions, 2008.
- Yehoshua, A. B. A Woman In Jerusalem. New York: Mariner Books, 2007.

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.

Class Schedule:

Introduction

September 2 General Introduction

September 4 1 Etgar Keret's Contemporary Israel

Reading: Etgar Keret, Suddenly a Knock on the Door: Stories, 3-9, 117-124.

Quiz 1

Zionism and Post-Zionism

September 9 Zionism and Its Discontents in "Uncle Peretz Takes Off" by Yaakov Shabtai

Reading: Yaakov Shabtai, Uncle Peretz Takes Off: Short Stories, 171-207.

Quiz 2

September 11 Zionism's Founders and Sons in "The Way of the Wind" by Amos Oz

Reading: Amos Oz, Where the Jackals Howl, and other stories, 39-60.

Quiz 3

September 16 Post-Zionism and Reinterpretation of the Past in Amos Oz's *Between Friends*

Reading: Oz, Between Friends, 1-80.

Quiz 4

September 18 Post-Zionism and Reinterpretation of the Past in Amos Oz's *Between Friends* (Continued)

Reading: Oz, Between Friends, 81-124.

Quiz 5

September 23 Post-Zionism and Reinterpretation of the Past in Amos Oz's *Between Friends* (Conclusions)

Reading: Oz, *Between Friends*, 125-192.

Quiz 6

September 25 CLASS CANCELLED ROSH HASHANAH

The Israeli Military Experience

September 30 Compromised Morality and the Experience of War in S. Yizhar "The Prisoner"

Reading: Robert Alter, Ed. *Modern Hebrew Literature*, 291-312.

Quiz 7

October 2 S. Yizhar's "Khirbet Khizeh" and the Trauma of National Creation

Reading: S. Yizhar, *Khirbet Khizeh*, 3-73.

Quiz 8

October 7 "Khirbet Khizeh" and the Trauma of National Creation (Continued)

Reading: S. Yizhar, *Khirbet Khizeh*, 73-118.

Quiz 9

October 9 CLASS CANCELLED SUKKOT

October 14 The Military and Peacetime Trauma in Gadi Taub's "You Can Never Tell"

Reading: Zisi Stavi, Ed. *50 Stories From Israel*, 699-721.

Quiz 10

October 16 CLASS CANCELLED SHMINI ATZERET

Globalization and the Terrorist Age

October 21 LIBRARY VISIT

October 23 Orly Castel-Bloom's *Human Parts* – An Effort to Make Sense During the Second Intifada

Reading: Orly Castel-Bloom, *Human Parts*, 1-122.

Quiz 11

October 28 *Human Parts* – An Effort to Make Sense During the Second Intifada (Continued)

Reading: Orly Castel-Bloom, *Human Parts*, 123-249.

Quiz 12

October 30 Human Parts – An Effort to Make Sense During the Second Intifada (Concluded)

November 4 Globalization, Terrorism, and the Rediscovery of Self in A. B.

Yehoshua's A Woman in Jerusalem

Reading: A. B. Yehoshua, A Woman in Jerusalem, 1-115.

Quiz 13

November 6 Globalization, Terrorism, and the Rediscovery of Self in A Woman in Jerusalem (Continued)

November 6 Secondary Literature Survey Paper Due

November 11 Globalization, Terrorism, and the Rediscovery of Self in A Woman in Jerusalem (Continued)

Reading: A. B. Yehoshua, A Woman in Jerusalem, 116-237.

Quiz 14

November 13 Globalization, Terrorism, and the Rediscovery of Self in A Woman in Jerusalem (Concluded)

Israelis, Palestinians and Israeli Palestinians

November 18 The Palestinian as Metaphor in A. B. Yehoshua's "Facing the Forests"

Reading: Robert Alter, Ed. Modern Hebrew Literature, 357-392.

Quiz 15

November 20 The Palestinian as Metaphor in "Facing the Forests" (Continued)

November 20 Texual Echo Paper Due

November 25 More Than Metaphors: Flesh and Blood Palestinian Israelis in Sayed Kashua's Second Person Plural

Reading: Sayed Kashua, Second Person Plural, 1-120

Quiz 16

November 27 – NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

December 2 More Than Metaphors: Flesh and Blood Palestinian Israelis in Second Person Plural (Continued)

Reading: Sayed Kashua, Second Person Plural, 121-240

Quiz 17

December 4 More Than Metaphors: Flesh and Blood Palestinian Israelis in Second Person Plural (Continued)

December 4 Textual Analysis Paper Due

December 9 More Than Metaphors: Flesh and Blood Palestinian Israelis in Second Person Plural (Concluded)

Reading: Sayed Kashua, Second Person Plural, 241-352.

Quiz 18

Conclusions

December 11 Conclusions; Final Review

December 19 FINAL 12:25-2:25PM