

Readings in Contemporary Hebrew Literature (Hebrew Studies 534/ Jewish Studies 534)

University of Wisconsin- Madison

Van Hise 474 MW 2:30-3:45

Spring 2012

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Office Hours: MW 12:00-1:00 or by appointment

Course Overview: By and large doubtful of God's role as a meaningful actor in human history, Zionists embraced human action and placed faith in the ability of individual Jews and a Jewish nation to alter their fate. This changed attitude has long been viewed as the basis for a severing of Zionism from the Jewish religious past and its various cultural manifestations. No longer viewing Jewish religious culture as sufficient, Zionists looked to create a Jewish secular culture offering pleasure to its Hebrew-speaking adherents while endowing their lives with meaning. Modern Hebrew literature proved central to this new culture that became synonymous with Israeli culture following the establishment of the state of Israel. After decades of ascendancy, however, the confidence that underlay Israeli culture waivered and elements of Jewish religiosity and a desire for renewed connection with the divine assumed greater importance amongst Israeli Jews and their impact on Israeli culture has only continued to grow in the new century. Through viewing of films and the reading of poetry, prose, and secondary literature, pertaining to this topic, this course will explore the changing place of the secular and the religious in Hebrew and Israel culture. Simultaneously students will develop greater fluency in the Hebrew language. Students will strengthen their reading skills through the reading of unadapted Hebrew texts that will be accompanied by vocabulary lists. Hebrew listening and speaking skills will be developed through participation in class discussion, oral presentations, and the viewing of Hebrew films. Completion of Hebrew homework assignments and papers in Hebrew will improve student writing skills.

Attendance, Tardiness, and Preparedness Policy: Students are expected to attend **every** class and to arrive **on time**. Attendance will be taken every class and students with more than three undocumented absences will be penalized. Please notify the instructor of any expected tardiness or absence. In addition, students should **always** bring assigned readings to class for reference and be prepared to discuss them. Such preparedness will be an important component of the participation grade.

Breakdown of Grades (approximate):

Regular Homework Assignments: 25% - Students will be required to complete short written assignments pertaining to assigned scholarly, literary, and filmic texts (one - two per week). Students will usually be required to provide short responses to questions testing comprehension and analysis. Occasionally they will be asked to write short essays or response papers to material read or viewed independently. Evaluation of these assignments will be based upon the quality of student comprehension and analysis, as well as proper Hebrew linguistic usage. **Students are expected to employ dictionaries prior to submission to help insure proper spelling and usage. Students are also expected to check graded work in order to learn from their mistakes and achieve improved writing skills.** Late assignments will not be accepted. Lowest 10% of grades will be dropped.

Midterm Paper: 20% - Students will be asked to write a two-page paper on literary and filmic representations of Jewish religiosity and secularism in Israel. **Midterm Paper will be due April 11.**

Take-Home Final: 25% - Students will be asked to write a three page essay comparing and contrasting the treatment of the course's them in two literary or filmic works treated over the course of the semester. **A paper copy of the final will be due by 12:05 PM on May 14th.** Final grades will be reduced by ten percent for every day late.

Attendance: 10% - Class attendance proves integral to student success. This portion of the grade is meant to reward those who take this responsibility seriously and penalize those with more than three undocumented absences.

Participation: 10% - Students will be expected to exhibit their linguistic comprehension through participation in class discussion or through the asking of questions.

Oral Presentation: 10% - Each student will be asked to prepare a 5-10 minute Hebrew talk related to Jewish secularism and religiosity in Israel. Available online Hebrew newspapers [Haaretz (www.haaretz.co.il), Yediot Ahronot (www.ynet.co.il), and Maariv (www.nrg.co.il)] can assist in topic selection. Additionally students should feel free to consult the instructor directly or through email when looking for a theme. All topics must be approved by the instructor and presentations should meet the following conditions. Presenters will be expected to check pronunciation of all words intended for use in their presentations and they are expected to provide each member of the class with a vocabulary list with important Hebrew words pertaining to their theme. Presentations should display organization and conclude with 2-3 relevant questions capable of generating class discussion.

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 me during office hours or by appointment to arrange these accommodations.

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, and Cell Phone Policy:

Students are asked to refrain from eating and drinking during class. Cell phones should be turned off before class and laptops should be used exclusively for class related activities.

Recommended Dictionaries:

*These dictionaries will assist in improvement of student writing and are worth the investment. **Google Translator and Online Dictionaries are not wholly reliable.*** Edna Lauden and Liora Weinbach, eds. Multi Dictionary Bilingual Learners Dictionary Hebrew-Hebrew-English English-Hebrew. Tel Aviv: Ad Publishers, 1993. A. Kahane, ed. The Oxford English-Hebrew Dictionary. New York: Oxford, 1998.

Accessing Course Materials: Class readings, as well as assigned films, will be posted on *Learn@UW*. Students will be asked to either bring copies of written materials, or computers upon which they can access these materials, to class.

Class Cancellations: Class will not be held on March 5 or March 12.

Guest Instructor: Hamutal Bar-Yosef, professor emerita of Hebrew Literature at Ben-Gurion University in the Negev, will be the Halls Visiting Scholar for Spring 2012. During her time in Madison, she will be visiting our class, and, on March 26th and March 28th, she will lead our discussion of the poetry of Zelda. To say thank you to Professor Bar-Yosef, the class will take her out to dinner at 7PM on March 28th. Please mark the date on your calendar. Dinner will be free of charge.

Course Schedule: (Tentative schedule subject to change with due notice):

Introduction - Hebrew Culture Between the Religious and the Secular

January 23 General Introduction

January 25 Jewishness in Israel Today; Psalms as Religious Poetry

Reading: Shlomit Levy, Hanna Levinsohn, and Elihu Katz, "The Many Faces of Jewishness in Israel," in *Jews in Israel: Contemporary Social and Cultural Patterns*, ed. Uzi Rebhun and Chaim Waxman (Hanover: Brandeis UP, 2004), 165-185.

קריאה: תהילים נבחרים

January 30 Traditional Religion vs. Civil Religion; the Literariness of the Siddur and Machzor

Reading: Charles Liebman and Eliezer Don-Yehiya, *Civil Religion in Israel* (Berkeley: California UP, 1983), 1-58.

קריאה: תפילות נבחרות מהסידור ומהמחזור

February 1 The Secular and Religious in Modern Hebrew and Israeli Literature; Religious Poetry of the Middle Ages

Reading: Shahar Pinsker, "The Construction of Secular and Religious in Modern Hebrew Literature" in *Religion or Ethnicity?: Jewish Identities in Evolution*, ed. Zvi Gitelman (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2009), 221-238.

Shahar Pinsker, "And Suddenly We Reached God? The Construction of 'Religious' and 'Secular' in Israeli Literature," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 5.1 (March 2006), 21-41.

קריאה: שירים נבחרים של משוררי ספרד

Representing Israeli Jewish Religious Experience - Comparing Secular and Religious Points of View

February 6 *Kadosh* directed by Amos Gitai

צפייה: קדוש. במאי: עמוס גיתאי. 1999. די.וי.די. קינו אינטרניונל. 2000.

February 8 *Kadosh* directed by Amos Gitai - (continued)

February 13 *Ushpizin* directed by Giddi Dar

צפייה: אושפיזין. במאי: גידי דר. 2004. די.וי.די. ניו ליין. 2006.

February 15 *Ushpizin* directed by Giddi Dar - (continued)

The Rebirth Period - Emergent Secular Culture or Transformed Religiosity?

February 20 Hayyim Nachman Bialik, "Akhen hatzir ha-am" and "Lo zakhiti be-or min hahefker"

קריאה: חיים נחמן ביאליק, *השירים* (אור יהודה: דביר, 2004), 110-108 & 233-232.

February 22 Hayyim Nachman Bialik, "Achen hatzir ha-am" and "Lo zahiti be-or min hahefker" - (continued)

February 27 Shaul Tchernichovsky, "Be-leil hannukah" and "Le-ashtoret shir ve-la-bel"

קריאה: שאול טשרניחובסקי, כל כתבי שאול טשרניחובסקי, כרך א' (תל אביב: עם עובד, 1990),
173-171 & 56-55.

February 29 Shaul Tchernichovsky, "Be-leil hannukah" and "Le-ashtoret shir ve-la-bel"

March 5 CLASS CANCELLED

Powerful Voices of Religiosity in a Secular Sea

March 7 Shmuel Yosef Agnon, "Min ha-shamayim"
קריאה: שמואל יוסף עגנון, כל סיפוריו של שמואל יוסף עגנון, כרך ב' (תל אביב: שוקן, 1964),
181-171.

March 12 Shmuel Yosef Agnon, "Min ha-shamayim" - (continued)

March 14 CLASS CANCELLED

March 19 Shmuel Yosef Agnon, "Pat Shleimah"
קריאה: שמואל יוסף עגנון, כל סיפוריו של שמואל יוסף עגנון, כרך ו' (תל אביב: שוקן, 1994),
155-143.

March 21 Shmuel Yosef Agnon, "Pat Shleimah" - (continued)

March 26 Zelda, "Me-heichal le-heichal" and "ee" - **Guest Instructor: Prof. Hamutal Bar-Yosef**
קריאה: זלדה, שירי זלדה (תל אביב: הקיבוץ המאוחד, 1985), 192 & 19-18.

March 28 Zelda, "Shnei yesodot" and "Tzel Ha-har Ha-lavan" - **Guest Instructor: Prof. Hamutal Bar-Yosef**
קריאה: זלדה, שירי זלדה (תל אביב: הקיבוץ המאוחד, 1985), 225 & 141.

April 2 No Class - SPRING BREAK

April 4 No Class - SPRING BREAK

Secularism Crumbling From the Core

April 9 *Hatzilu et ha-matzil* directed by Uri Zohar
צפייה: הצילו את המציל. במאי: אורי זוהר.

April 11 *Hatzilu et ha-matzil* directed by Uri Zohar - (continued)

April 11 MIDTERM PAPER DUE

The Renewed Quest for Religious Experience

April 16 Admiel Kosman “Et ha-torah she-al ha-peh shelach ani yonek” and “Installing You My Lord”
קריאה: אדמיאל קוסמן, *סידור אלטרנטיבי* (תל אביב: הקביוץ המאוחד, 2007), 21 & 53.

April 18 Admiel Kosman, “Geshem she-yored al beit ha-knesset” and “Tfilah”
קריאה: אדמיאל קוסמן, *סידור אלטרנטיבי* (תל אביב: הקביוץ המאוחד, 2007), 40 & 126.

April 23 Hava Pinchas-Cohen, “Lech ba-kivun ha-hetz” and “Ikvei Nashim”
קריאה: חוה פנחס-כהן, שביעית (תל אביב: הקביוץ המאוחד, 2008), 14 & 25-24.

April 25 Hava Pinchas Cohen, “Shem meforash” and “Erev Hag A”
קריאה: חוה פנחס-כהן, שביעית (תל אביב: הקביוץ המאוחד, 2008), 47 & 50.

Religion, Religiosity, and Community

April 30 Tali Vishne “Malkah”
קריאה: טלי וישנה, "מלכה" באהבה ומצוות אחרות, ערך. עדי גרסיאל ואסתי רמתי (תל אביב: ידיעות אחרונות, 2008), 45-54.

May 2 Tali Vishne “Malkah” - (continued)

May 7 *Medurat ha-shevet* directed by Yosef Cider
צפייה: מדורת השבט. במאי: יוסף סידר. 2004. די.וי.די. פילם מוזמנט. 2004

May 9 Conclusions