

## **Studying Conflict via Cultural Texts: The Israeli Case**

ISRL448T; GVPT378T

**Instructor: Yuval Benziman, PhD.**

Office hours: Tuesday, 12:30-13:30, Thursday, 12:30-13:30

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Israeli novels, short stories, films, plays, TV shows, poems and songs, tell a fascinating story about the Israeli-Arab conflict. Although dealing with fiction and not obligated to a mimetic representation of "reality", the cultural texts tell the story of Israel's perception of the conflict from 1948 till our days.

Sometimes the story told by cultural texts is similar to the Israeli political narrative, sometime they differ. There are times when the cultural texts provide a narrative that the political system will embrace after a few years, and yet sometime they show pictures that the political realm refuses to accept.

The course will examine the changes in the Israel-Arab conflict since the establishment of the state of Israel till today. The texts learned will all be canonical mainstream texts which are, therefore, influential and tell a story that reflects the mainstream Israeli culture and society. Since the influential mediums changed throughout the years, the course will move from poems and songs to short stories, novels, films and TV shows. We will examine the changes in the narrative shown in these cultural texts, what are the interactions between them and the changes in "reality", and what does this tell us about Israeli society and how it perceives the conflict.

### **Course requirements**

The course is based on discussions about the cultural texts. The students are required to know the texts studied and participate in the discussions about them in class. Students will also have to choose their own text and prepare a presentation/discussion about it.

Class participation (20%)

Class presentation (20%)

10 short 200-300 word papers (10 X 3% = 30%)

Final exam (30%)

## **Calendar, course topics and reading**

The calendar and the required reading are subject to changes due to the progress of the discussions in class and to student's requests for expanding or reducing discussion about specific texts.

Most of the texts taught can be found on e-reserve.

Texts that could not be put on e-reserve are:

S. Yizhar (2008). Khirbet Khizeh, translated by Nicholas de Lange and Yaacob Dweck ; afterword by David Shulman. Jerusalem, Israel: Ibis Editions.  
UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5053.Y55 K55 2008

The Smile of the Lamb / David Grossman

Grossman, D. (1990). The smile of the lamb, translated by Betsy Rosenberg.  
New York : Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5054.G728 H513 1990

Habiby, E. (2002). The secret life of Saeed the Pessoptimist, translated by Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Trevor LeGassick. New York : Interlink Books.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ7828.B53 W313 2002

**6 September:** Conflict and culture

**13 September:** The 1948 Generation

Required reading:

-Bar-Tal, D. & Teichman, Y. (2005). Stereotypes and prejudice in conflict: representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish society. Cambridge; New York : Cambridge University Press, pp. 92-124.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks DS113.7 .B366 2005

-Shohat, E. (1989). Israeli cinema : East/West and the politics of representation. Austin : University of Texas Press. pp. 57-76.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PN1993.5.I86 S56 1989

-Tamuz, B. (1999). "The Swimming Race", in: Ben-Ezer, E. (ed.), Sleepwalkers and other stories : the Arab in Hebrew fiction. Boulder : Lynne Rienner, pp. 73-84

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5059.E8 S54 1999

-S. Yizhar (2007). "The Prisoner", in: Midnight convoy & other stories. 2nd rev. ed. New Milford, CT : Toby, pp. 65-88

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5053.Y55 M53 2007

**20 September:** Other voices in the 1948 Generation

Required reading:

S. Yizhar (2008). Khirbet Khizeh, translated by Nicholas de Lange and Yaacob Dweck ; afterword by David Shulman. Jerusalem, Israel : Ibis Editions.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5053.Y55 K55 2008

## **27 September:** The State Generation

Required reading:

-Yehoshua, A. B. (1970) "Facing the Forests", in: Three days and a child, translated from by Miriam Arad. Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PZ4.Y387 Th, pp. 131-174

-Ben-Ezer, E. (1999). "Introduction", in: Ben-Ezer, E. (ed.) Sleepwalkers and other stories : the Arab in Hebrew fiction. Boulder : Lynne Rienner, pp. 1-17

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5059.E8 S54 1999

-Oz, A. (1981). "Nomad and Viper", in: Where the jackals howl, and other stories, translated by Nicholas de Lange and Philip Simpson. New York:: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, pp. 21-38.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5054.O9 A8713 198

## **4 October:** The 1980s

Required reading:

-Shohat, E. (1989). Israeli cinema: East/West and the politics of representation. Austin : University of Texas Press, pp. 237-273.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PN1993.5.I86 S56 1989

## **11 October:** The 1980s

Required reading:

-Grossman, D. (1990). The smile of the lamb, translated by Betsy Rosenberg. New York : Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5054.G728 H513 1990

## **18 October:** The 1980s: A view from an Arab/Palestinian Israeli

Habiby, E. (2002). The secret life of Saeed the Pessoptimist, translated by Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Trevor LeGassick. New York : Interlink Books

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ7828.B53 W313 2002

-Benziman, Y. (2011). "More Real than Reality: Israeli Cultural Texts of the 1980s and the Israeli-Arab Conflict", Israeli Studies Review, 26(1): 88-106.

**25 October:** Students presentations

Required reading:

To be decided by presenters

**1 November:** The Israeli "Lebanon situation"

Required reading:

-Benziman, Y. (2010). "Contradictory Representation of the IDF in Cultural Texts of the 1980s", in: Sheffer G. & Barak O. (eds.) Militarism and Israeli society. Bloomington, IN : Indiana University Press, pp. 329-345.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks JQ1830.A38 C5853 2010

-Bar-Tal, D. (2010). Culture of Conflict: Evolvement, institutionalization, and consequences. In: Schwarzer R. and Frensch P. (Eds.). Personality, Human Development, and Culture: International Perspectives on Psychological Science (Vol. 2). New York: Psychology Press, pp. 183-198.

**8 November:** Students presentations

Required reading:

To be decided by presenters

**15 November:** Trends since the 1990s

Required reading:

-Ben Porat, G. et al. (2008). Israel since 1980. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, pp. 9-41, 169-177

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks DS128.2 .I875 2008

Keret, E. (2008). "Gaza Blues", "Not Human Beings", in: The girl on the fridge. translated from the Hebrew by Miriam Shlesinger and Sondra Silverston. New York : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 165-168

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5054.K375 G5713 2008

Keret, E. (2001). "Cocked and locked", The bus driver who wanted to be good and other stories. Thomas Dunne Books st. Martin's Press: New-York, pp. 37-42

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5054.K375 A23 2001

**22 November:** Students presentations

Required reading:

To be decided by presenters

**29 November:** Current Palestinian-Arab-Israeli perspective

Required reading:

Kashua, S. (2004). Dancing Arabs, translated by Miriam Shlesinger. New York : Grove Press.

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5055.38.A84 A8713 2004

Part 1 – chapters 5, 8, 12

Part 2 – chapters 2, 6

Part 3 – chapters 1, 2, 3, 4

Part 4 – chapters 4, 5, 10

Part 5 – chapters 1, 4, 5, 8

**6 December:** Students presentations

Required reading:

To be decided by presenters

**13 December:** Current Jewish-Israeli perspective