

Lewis Glinert, Dartmouth College  
Israeli Culture: A Survey

### Description

This course is a survey of Israeli-Jewish culture in the broad sense of the word. We study major themes and forms in Israeli literature, film, popular music, language and public ritual – setting them in social-historical context, with particular attention to the construction of cultural meaning in an emerging Jewish state. In seeking to build a society on a radically self-reliant, secular Jewish self-image, Israelis have created a culture that is a complex interplay of traditional Jewish cultures, Middle Eastern, Western and Eastern European themes and forms, as well as features that are uniquely Israeli -- all this against a backdrop of war, secular-religious strife, and the Holocaust. We will first study the construction of a Zionist collective memory and a Hebrew culture in the pre-State period, producing new rituals and communal forms, notably Tel Hai, Masada, the Sabra, the Kibbutz, and a folk music and literature celebrating landscape, labor, and Biblical memory. The 50s and 60s saw a mounting preoccupation with the Other (Ashkenazi and Sephardi, Jew and Arab), along with a transformation of folk traditions. The arts of the last three decades reflect a rapid Westernization -- with a disenchantment with Zionist ideals and a turning from national to personal existential concerns -- and a reappropriation of Middle Eastern forms. The traumas of Saddam's Scuds and Arab terror are reflected in a sombre, vacuous cultural mood, reinforced by the murder of Yitzhak Rabin, who has been memorialized by an album of popular songs which you will study in depth.

No knowledge of Hebrew is required.

### Books referred to in this syllabus:

- Alter, Robert. Modern Hebrew Literature, Behrman House, 1975  
Amichai. Yehuda. Poems of Jerusalem and Love Poems. Sheep Meadow Press, 1988  
Avruch, Kevin & Walter Zenner (eds) Critical Essays on Israeli Society, SUNY Press, 1999  
Ben-Ami, Issachar (ed) The Sephardi and Oriental Jewish Heritage, Magnes, 1982.  
Bermant, Chaim. What's the joke? A study of Jewish humor through the ages.  
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986.  
Carmi, T (ed) The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse , Penguin, 1981  
Diament, Carol (ed) Ribcage : Israeli women's fiction Hadassah, 1994.  
Elon, Amos The Israelis: Founders And Sons, New York : Penguin, 1983.  
Gadalnu yachad (set of 11 CDs of Israeli music), Hed Arzi, 1998.  
Gans, Herbert. Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste.  
Basic Books (rev.ed.), 1999  
Gerber, Jane S. The Jews of Spain : a history of the Sephardic experience. Free Press, 1992  
Geertz, Clifford. The Interpretation of Cultures. Basic Books, 1973.

- Gertz, Nurith. Myths in Israeli culture : captives of a dream. Vallentine Mitchell, 2000.
- Glinert, Lewis (ed.). Hebrew in Ashkenaz: A Language in Exile. Oxford University Press, 1993
- Goldberg, Harvey E (ed), Judaism Viewed from Within and Without, Albany: SUNY Press, 1987
- Goldberg, Harvey E (ed), Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries : history and culture in the modern era. Indiana University Press, 1996.
- Handelman, Don (ed) Models and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events. Cambridge University Press 1990.
- Harshav, Binyamin. Language in time of revolution. University of California Press, 1993.
- Katriel, Tamar. Communal webs: Communication and culture in contemporary Israel. SUNY Press, 1991.
- Keret, Etgar. The bus driver who wanted to be God and other stories St. Martin's Press, 2001.
- Kishon, Ephraim. Unfair to Goliath. Penguin, 1971.
- Lazin, Frederick and Gregory Mahler (eds) Israel in the Nineties: Development and Conflict, University Press of Florida, 1998.
- Liebman, Charles and Don-Yehiya, Eliezer, Civil religion in Israel, University of California Press, 1983.
- Medding, Peter (ed.), Studies in contemporary Jewry, vol. 2. Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Mintz, Alan. (ed.) The Boom in Contemporary Israeli Fiction. Brandeis University Press, 1997.
- Mintz, Alan & Anne Golomb Hoffman (eds) A Book that was Lost and other Stories by S Y Agnon, Schocken 1995.
- Mintz, Alan., The Boom in Contemporary Israeli Fiction., Brandeis University Press, 1997
- Noy, Dov (ed). Folktales of Israel. University of Chicago Press, 1963.
- Oring, Elliott, Israeli Humor: The Content and Structure of the Chizbat of the Palmah, SUNY Press, 1981
- Oz, Amos Where the Jackals Howl and Other Stories , Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981.
- Schwartz, Howard. Gates to the New City. Avon Books, 1983.
- Schweid, Eliezer. The Land of Israel. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1985
- Shaked, Gershon. The Shadows Within. JPS, 1987.
- Shalev, Meir. The Blue Mountain. Aaron Asher Books, 1991
- Shami, Yitzhak. Hebron Stories. Labyrinthos, 2000
- Shamir, Moshe. He Walked Through the Fields (play). Jerusalem, World Zionist Organization, 1959
- Shemer, Naomi. Simaney Derekh. (3 CDs)
- Sobol, Yehoshua. Soul of a Jew. Tel Aviv: Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature, 1983
- Spicehandler, E (ed.) Modern Hebrew Stories, Bantam 1971
- Troen, S I & Noah Lucas, Israel: The First Decade of Independence, SUNY Press, 1997
- Yehoshua, A.B. Mr. Mani.
- Zerubavel, Yael. Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition, University of Chicago Press, 1995

Audio materials are available on campus on the Dartmouth Jewish Sound Archive ([www.dartmouth.edu/~djsa](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~djsa)) or from Paddock Music Library

Poetry indicated as 'online' is to be found at Israel - Poetry International Web:  
[http://israel.poetryinternationalweb.org/piw\\_cms/cms/cms\\_module/index.php?obj\\_id=12](http://israel.poetryinternationalweb.org/piw_cms/cms/cms_module/index.php?obj_id=12)

## Syllabus

### 1. Culture and memory

Reading Geertz, ch. 1  
Gans, new introduction, 1-26  
Zerubavel, ch. 1 (3-12)

### 2. Historical background: Sephardim, Ashkenazim and their Diaspora culture

Reading

Primary sources

Noy, foreword and introduction; 5-7, 113-117, 179-182.  
Schwartz, 35-48, 349-354, 683-4  
Berdycewski Without Hope in Abramson, 28-39  
Bialik, At Twilight, in Carmi, 509-10  
Bialik, On the Slaughter, in Carmi, 512

Secondary sources

Elon, Foreword and ch 1-4 (3-81)  
Goldberg, Introduction to Goldberg, Sephardi and Middle Eastern Jewries  
Alter, 1-12

Listening Tongue of Tongues, BBC Radio documentary, 1991

### 3. 1880-1948 -- the construction of a Yishuv culture

Reading:

Primary sources

Shalev, Meir. The Blue Mountain [novel]  
Hazaz The Sermon (Alter 267-287)  
Shenhar Israel Zvi (Penuei, 2, 9-15)  
Shaham Inside the Room (Penuei, 2, 138-150)

Secondary sources

Elon, ch 5-6 (82-147)  
Morag, Shelomo 'The emergence of Modern Hebrew'. In Glinert 208-221  
Harshav, 81-88, 104-112, 115-119, 133-152  
Zerubavel, ch. 2 (13-36), ch. 3 (39-47), ch. 6 (79-95)  
Even-Zohar, Itamar. 'The emergence of a native Hebrew culture in  
Palestine: 1882-1948', Studies in Zionism 4, 1981, 167-84.

Schweid, 198-208

- Listening Bracha Zfirah: Shne shoshanim; Adarim:  
“Songs of the Defenders of Israel” (album)  
Viewing They Were Ten

#### 4. Judaism refashioned or preserved

Reading:

Primary sources

- Agnon Agunot in Mintz & Hoffman 33-47  
Ratosh The Soul Of, in Carmi, 544-6  
Gilboa Isaac; Moses in Carmi, 560-1  
Zelda Then my Soul Cried Out, in Carmi, 557  
Amihai in Poems of Jerusalem and Love Poems 139-143

Secondary sources

- Liebman and Don-Yehiya, 25-80  
Aini, Lea. ‘Not only spiritual leaders, but also the moon can teach Bible’.  
Accessed at  
[http://israel.poetryinternationalweb.org/piw/cms/cms/cms\\_module/index.php?obj\\_id=3099](http://israel.poetryinternationalweb.org/piw/cms/cms/cms_module/index.php?obj_id=3099)  
Zerubavel, ch.4 (48-59), ch 7 (96-113)

- Listening: Naomi Zuri: Folkdances of Israel (album)  
Viewing: Ushpizin

#### 5. Early statehood: New rituals and communal forms

Reading:

Primary sources

- Shamir, M He Walked Through the Fields  
Guri Heritage in Carmi, 565  
Kovner My sister in Carmi, 563-4

Secondary sources

- Elon, ch 9-1 ( 222-289)  
Handelman and Katz, 'State ceremonies of Israel: Remembrance Day and Independence Day' in Handelman, Models and Mirrors 191-233.  
Ben-Rafael ‘The Kibbutz in the 1950s; A transformation of identity’ in Troen & Lucas, 265-278  
Spicehandler ‘The fiction of the “Generation in the Land”’ in Troen & Lucas, 313-329

Lenz, Dubi, Hebrew popular song, Ariel 92, 1993, 50-66

Viewing: Noa at 17

Listening: Shir haPalmach; Re'ut; Hey daroma; Shir eres negbi; Mul har sinai; Hayu leylot

## 6. In the shadow of the Holocaust : bonding a society of immigrants

Reading:

Primary sources

Appelfeld, A. Kitty in Spicehandler, 219-248

Amihai, My father; Out of Three or Four in a Room; Half the people; The city in which I was born, in Carmi 568-572

Pagis Written in Pencil in Carmi 575

Greenberg The Severing of a Wing, in Carmi 531-2

Liebrecht Morning in the Park with Nannies in Abramson 387-96

Secondary sources

Shaked, The Shadows Within, pp 145-180

Katriel, Communal webs 11-34, 51-70, 151-166

Viewing: The Summer of Aviya

Wooden Gun

Because of that War

Listening: Od nitra'eh; Rinah (Gadalnu Yachad, vol. 2: Salon music)

## 7. Tel Aviv vs Jerusalem and the loss of innocence

Reading:

Primary sources

Goldberg Tel-Aviv 1935, in Carmi 553-4

Greenberg [poem] On a Night of Rain in Jerusalem in Carmi 530-1

Amihai On the Day of Atonement in Carmi 571

Amihai in Poems of Jerusalem and Love Poems 3-9

Zach A Moment in Carmi 576

Ravikovitch Mechanical Doll in Carmi 578

Shabtai The Visit in Abramson 213-9

Secondary sources

Zerubavel, ch.9 (147-177)  
Shaked, Gershon 'Waves and currents in Hebrew fiction in the past 40 years', Modern Hebrew Literature 1, 1988, 4-12.  
Bermant, 148-164  
Ofrat, Gideon 'Tel-Aviv and Jerusalem art', Ariel 50, 1979, 45-62.

Viewing: Late Summer Blues

Listening: Al chof achziv; sippurey pugi; hachayal sheli hazar Gadalnu Yahad v. 3-4: Army troupes and the beginning of Israeli pop and rock.  
Naomi Shemer: Yerushalayim shel Zahav (song on Shemer, CD 1)

## 8. Facing the Other: Jew and Arab, Ashkenazi and Sephardi

Reading:

Primary sources

Shami, "The Vengeance of the Fathers," in Shami Hebron Stories.  
Tammuz The Swimming Contest in Abramson, 127-138  
Oz, Where the Jackals Howl in Oz Where the Jackals Howl and Other Stories  
Amihai On the Day of Atonement in Carmi 571  
Liebrecht, Room on the Roof in Diament 231-258  
Shamir Doctor Schmidt in Abramson, 147-159  
Kishon, Unfair to Goliath, 43-52

Secondary sources

Morag, Gileadh, 'New images of the Arab in Israeli fiction', Prooftext 6, 1986, 147-62.  
Hever, Hannan "Yitzhak Shami: Ethnicity as an Unresolved Conflict" Shofar, 24(2), 2006, 124-139  
Hakak, Lev, 'The image of Sephardim in the Modern Hebrew short story' in Ben-Ami, 297-310.  
Berg, Nancy. Sephardi writing: From the margins to the mainstream. In Mintz, 114-142.

Viewing: Sallah Shabati  
Hamsin (1983)  
Nadia (1987)

## 9. Sephardi tradition retrieved/transformed

Reading:

Primary sources

Yehoshua, A.B. Mr.Mani [novel]

Secondary sources

- Krausz, Ernest, 'Edah and 'ethnic group' in Israel', Journal of Jewish Sociology 28, pp. 5-18, 1986
- Bentolila, Yaakov, 'Bilingualism in a Moroccan settlement in the South of Israel', Israel Social Science Research 9(1,2), 1994, 89-108.
- Sered, Susan Starr, 'Ritual, morality, and gender: The religious lives of Oriental Jewish women in Jerusalem', Israel Social Science Research 5(1,2), 1987, 87-96.
- Halper, F, E Seroussi & P Squires-Kidron, 'Musika Mizrahit: Ethnicity and class culture in Israel', Popular Music 8, 1989, 131-41.
- Goldberg, Harvey, 'The Mimouna and the minority status of Moroccan Jews', Ethnology 17, 1978, 75-87.

Listening: Gadalnu Yachad, vol 9: East and West Meet (1990-1998)

## 10. The Israeli woman

Reading:

Primary sources

- Rachel. Meeting, hardly meeting; My dead; To my country [on-line poetry]
- Wallach, Yona. Hebrew; Jonathan; When you come... [on-line poetry]
- Ravikovitch, Dahlia. A dress of fire; In the year to come... [on-line poetry]
- Kahana-Carmon, Amalia. N'ima Sassoon writes poems. In Diament, 48-70
- Ravikovitch, Dahlia. A slight delay. In Diament, 151-159.
- Hendel, Yehudit. Apples in honey. In Diament, 263-274.
- Zelda, Light a candle; Cast me not away; [online]
- Castel-Bloom, High Tide in Abramson 331-5

Secondary sources

- Fuchs, Esther. 'Images of love and war in contemporary Israeli fiction: Toward a feminist re-vision,' Modern Judaism, 6(2), 1986, 189-196.
- Feldman, Yael. From feminist romance to an anatomy of freedom: Israeli women novelists. In Mintz 71-113.

Listening: Naomi Shemer: Shir nolad; Bedamayich chayi (songs on Shemer CD 3)

Viewing: My Michael  
Siege  
Broken Wings



## 11. Haredi, Hiloni, Dati-Leumi, Postzionist: War within and without

Reading:

Primary sources

- Sobol, Soul of a Jew. [drama]  
Liebrecht, Savyon. Apples from the desert. In Diament, 71-80  
Keret, Etgar. The story about a bus driver who wanted to be God; Missing Kissinger. In Keret 2001.  
Koren Together with Them in Abramson 336-340  
Mishol, Agi. A little prayer for Sunday; Woman martyr [on-line poetry]  
Someck, Roni. Arabic work [on-line poetry]  
Kosman, Admiel. Games. at <http://www.thedrunkenboat.com/kosman.html>

Secondary sources

- Shapira, Anita. 'From the Palmach Generation to the Candle Children: Changing Patterns in Israeli Identity', Partisan Review 67(4), 2000, 622-636  
Gertz, Nurith. ch.7  
Friedman, Menakhem. 'Haredim confront the Modern City', in Medding, 74-96  
Shaked, Gershon 'Hebrew prose in the 1990s: Darkness under the sun', Modern Hebrew Literature 11, 1993, 4-8  
Mintz, The Boom in Contemporary Israeli Fiction, Introduction (17-34)  
Avigal, S 'Hebrew theatre in the 1990s: Everyone wants to live', Modern Hebrew Literature 11, 1993, 23-25  
Avisar, Ilan. 'Israeli cinema and the ending of Zionist ideology', in Lazin & Mahler, 153-168.  
Glinert, Lewis. The Israeli Popular Love Song, Notes from Zamir. Spring 2004, 9-16.  
Glinert, Lewis. 'And in his death they were divided', Midstream, Jan 1998  
Halkin, Talya. "Satire or entertainment?" Jerusalem Post, Dec. 9, 2004

Listening: Naomi Shemer: Sfirat melody (song on Shemer CD 2)

Shalom Haver (CD)

Yosef Karduner: Shir laMaalot, (song on CD Road Marks)

Avraham Ben David: Mashiach Mashiach

Dag Nachash: Shirat ha-Stiker

Viewing: Cup Final

As if Nothing Happened

Evacuation Order

Yalla Ya Nasrallah. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8epm1aRAHFk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8epm1aRAHFk)

