

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
DEPARTMENT OF HEBREW AND SEMITIC STUDIES

ISRAELI FICTION IN TRANSLATION

HEBR ST 343/LITTRANS 367

Dr. Miri Talmon-Bohm

Tuesday and Thursday: 09:30 AM-10:45 AM

Classroom: Stirling Hall 1335

Office Hours: Thursdays 2-3 PM. Please coordinate appointments in advance by Email.

Dr. Talmon-Bohm's office: 7137 Social Science Bldg

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SYLLABUS

Fall Semester, 2009

Course Description

This course explores the diversity, complexity and richness of the Israeli cultural scene. Through a discussion and analysis of diverse literary texts, we shall discover different trends in Israeli literature and cultural history from the first decade of the state of Israel to the present. The texts we shall study offer a view of diverse social, ethnic and gendered experiences, generational sensibilities, and fundamental contradictions which underlie the Israeli experience. The fictional characters- religious and secular, masculine and feminine, lovers and enemies, native and new comers, insiders and outsiders- clash and interact, creating a fascinating cultural tapestry. Important aspects of this fictional world relate to Israeli history, to the national and social formations that shape the individual experience: Jewish history in the Diasporas, the Holocaust, immigration, war, conflict and terror, militarism and bereavement, different spatial arenas and forms of life, such as *kibbutz*, army base, old and new cities.

Class Lectures and Discussions: Preparation and Attendance.

This Course requires active participation, and an ongoing dialog between students and texts. It is therefore absolutely vital that you prepare for each and every class. This means you have to read carefully the literary text assigned in advance, and prepare it for the designated date, as scheduled in the class syllabus and reading schedule. Attendance and participation in class discussions comprise 10 % of the course grade. Students who miss over 2 classes will lose this component of the grade.

Course Reader

The course focuses on short stories. In addition, there will be poems, and additional sources, which shed light on the literary, cultural, historical, or social context of the literary pieces. All the texts, for which full references are given in the syllabus below, are compiled in a reader. The reader will be available as class packet from the L&S copy center at the Social Science Building, and you are expected to bring it to every class. The texts in the reader will be available in the library on reserve as well.

Course Requirements

Oral presentation in class

At the beginning of each class students will be asked to talk about their preparation of the text to be discussed in class and their understanding of it. Presentations will be up to 5 minutes long each. If you choose not to present orally you have to submit your written summary of the text you prepared at the beginning of class: 2-3 pages long. The grade for this oral presentation in class comprises 20% of your final grade.

Written Analysis Assignment (mid-term)

This written assignment requires a comparative analysis of two texts- poems or stories, according to guidelines provided specifically when it is assigned. This assignment should be typed, 4-5 pages long (a maximum of 2000 words). You will be required to submit one such written analysis, 20 % for this component of your final grade.

Critique of UW Madison Israeli Film Festival

You are required to write one critical essay about one Israeli film screened in the Israeli film festival. Your essay should be 1-2 pages long; in it you should describe the film's narrative and themes, and explain in what ways it is relevant to our discussions of Israeli literature. This film review of one UW Madison Israeli Film Festival comprises 10% of your final grade.

Final Paper

The final paper is an analysis of one story we have NOT discussed in class. The story will be assigned by me in advance. In your analysis you'll be asked to apply the insights and tools you have acquired throughout the semester for the discussion of this new text, and compare it to other relevant texts we have discussed. The final paper should be submitted no later than December 12 2009, 12 PM. This final paper should be 4-6 pages long. It comprises 30% of your final grade.

Fall 2009 Jewish Heritage Lecture Series

You are required to attend one lecture offered by the Mosse-Weinstein Center for Jewish Studies as Jewish Heritage Lecture Series, and it is highly recommended that you consider attending all of them. The program is detailed as an appendix to this syllabus. A typed summary of the lecture you attended, 1-2 pages long, should be submitted to me no later than one week after the lecture event. This summary comprises 10% of your final grade.

Course Grade:

1. Attendance: 10%
2. One Oral presentation in class: 20%.
3. One written comparative analysis assignment [mid term]: 20 %
4. One written Israeli Film Festival Review: 10%
5. One written final Paper: 30% (to be submitted by December 12 2009, 12 PM, 4-6 pages).
6. One Jewish Heritage Lecture Series lecture summary: 10%

Class Syllabus and Reading Schedule *

* You should read and prepare in advance the text/s designated for each date, except for the first class, September 3, 2009.

September 3

Keret, Etgar: "The Story About a Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God. In: Keret, Etgar. THE BUS DRIVER WHO WANTED TO BE GOD & OTHER STORIES. Translated By Miriam Shlesinger. New Milford: The Toby Press, 2004: 1-4.

September 8

Keret, Etgar: "Journey". In: Keret, Etgar. THE GIRL ON THE FRIDGE-STORIES. Translated By Miriam Shlesinger. Ct, New Milford: The Toby Press, 2004: 105-108.

September 10,15

Zarchi, Nurit. (1993) "Madame Bovary in Neve Tsedek" translated by Miriyam Glazer. In:

DREAMING THE ACTUAL-CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY BY ISRAELI WOMEN WRITERS.
Edited by Miriyam Glazer. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000: 27-32.

Additional reading: "Introduction to Nurit Zarchi's "Madame Bovary in Neve Tzedek" In:
DREAMING THE ACTUAL-CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY BY ISRAELI WOMEN WRITERS.
Edited by Miriyam Glazer. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000: 24-26.

September 17, 2008

Bar Yosef, Hamutal "Jaffa, July 1948"(1981) translated by Shirley Kaufman. In: DREAMING THE
ACTUAL-CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY BY ISRAELI WOMEN WRITERS. Edited by
Miriyam Glazer. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000: 327.

Amichai, Yehuda THE GREAT TRANQUILITY: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. Translated from the
Hebrew by Glenda Abramson and Tudor Parfitt. The Sheep Meadow Press, Riverdale-on-
Hudson, New York, 1998: "An Arab shepherd is seeking a kid on Mount Zion", p.3.

September 22, 24

Tammuz, Benjamin. "The Swimming Race" (1951)translated by Joseph Schachter. in:
SLEEPWALKERS AND OTHER STORIES-THE ARAB IN HEBREW FICTION" edited by Ehud Ben-Ezer.
Boulder and London: Lyne Rienner Publishers, 1999: 73-84.

September 29, October 1

S. Yizhar, "The Prisoner" (1949) translated by V.C. Rycus in: SLEEPWALKERS AND OTHER
STORIES-THE ARAB IN HEBREW FICTION" edited by Ehud Ben-Ezer. Boulder and London: Lyne
Rienner Publishers, 1999: 57-72.

October 6, 8

Oz, Amos. Nomad and Viper" (1963), translated by Nicholas de Lange. In:
SLEEPWALKERS&OTHER STORIES edited by Ehud Ben-Ezer. Boulder Colorado: Lynne Rienner
Publishers1999:119-134.

October 13,15

Yehoshua, Avraham B. "The Last Commander"(1957), translated by Pauline Shrier. In: THE
OXFORD BOOK OF HEBREW SHORT STORIES, edited by Glenda Abramson. Oxford and New
York: Oxford University Press, 1996: pp. 220-236.

October 20, 22

Oz, Amos. "Where the Jackals Howl" (1963) translated by Nicholas de Lange. In: WHERE THE
JACKALS HOWL AND OTHER STORIES UK Random House, Vintage, 2005: pp. 3-20

October 27

Ravikovitz, Dahlia (1992) "An Unusual Autumn", translated by Chana Bloch. In: DREAMING THE ACTUAL-CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY BY ISRAELI WOMEN WRITERS. Edited by Miriyam Glazer. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000: 260-261

Ravikovitz, Dahlia "Hovering at a Low Altitude" (1987/1993), translated by Ariel Bloch and Chana Bloch. In: DREAMING THE ACTUAL-CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY BY ISRAELI WOMEN WRITERS. Edited by Miriyam Glazer. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000: 262-264.

October 27,29

Liebrecht, Savyon. "Apples from the Desert". (1986) Translated by Barbara Harshav. In: RIBCAGE-ISRAELI WOMEN'S FICTION. Edited by Carol Diament and Lilly Rattok, Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, 1994: 71-78.

November 3,5

Kahan-Carmon, Amalia. "N'ima Sasson Writes Poems". (1966) translated by Arthur Jacobs. In: RIBCAGE-ISRAELI WOMEN'S FICTION. Edited by Carol Diament and Lilly Rattok, Hadassah-The Women's Zionist Organization of America, 1994:48-66

Additional reading:

Rattok, Lily "Introduction: The Other Voice" In: RIBCAGE-ISRAELI WOMEN'S FICTION. Edited by Carol Diament and Lilly Rattok, Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, 1994pp. xvi-xxxiv.

November 10, 12

Amichai, Yehuda Selected poems from: THE GREAT TRANQUILITY: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS. Translated from the Hebrew by Glenda Abramson and Tudor Parfitt. The Sheep Meadow Press, Riverdale-on-Hudson, New York, 1998

"Since Then", p. 1, "An Arab shepherd is seeking a kid on Mount Zion", p.3, "In the Old City", p.5, "In the Mountains of Jerusalem", p. 9-10, "The narrow valley", p. 11, "The Sufla spring in the mountains of Judea", p. 23, "A Tourist", p. 24, "Jerusalem is full of used Jews", p. 36," A Young Girl in the Negev", p. 54"Tourists", p. 58.

November 17, 19

Librecht, Savyon. "It's Greek to You", She Said to Him"(1993), translated by Marganit Weinberger-Rotman. In: DREAMING THE ACTUAL-CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY BY ISRAELI WOMEN WRITERS. Edited by Miriyam Glazer. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000: 83-98.

Additional Reading:

"An Introduction to: "It's Greek to You", She Said to Him' In: DREAMING THE ACTUAL-

CONTEMPORARY FICTION AND POETRY BY ISRAELI WOMEN WRITERS. Edited by Miriyam Glazer. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000: 81-82.

Additional Reading:

Liebrecht, Savyon. "The Influence of the Holocaust on my Work". In: Leon Yudkin, editor. HEBREW LITERATURE IN THE WAKE OF THE HOLOCAUST. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1993: 125-130.

November 24

Keret, Etgar. "Rabin's Dead" In: Keret, Etgar. THE BUS DRIVER WHO WANTED TO BE GOD & OTHER STORIES. Translated By Miriam Shlesinger. New Milford: The Toby Press, 204:49-51.

December 1

Keret, Etgar. "Siren" Translated by: Anthony Berries In: Keret, Etgar. THE BUS DRIVER WHO WANTED TO BE GOD & OTHER STORIES. Translated By. Ct, New Milford: The Toby Press, 204 pp. 57-60.

December 3

Keret, Etgar. "Shoes" translated by Marganit Weinberger-Rotman. In: Keret, Etgar. THE BUS DRIVER WHO WANTED TO BE GOD & OTHER STORIES. Translated By. Ct, New Milford: The Toby Press, 204: 41-43.

December 8, 10,

Aini, Leah. "Until the Entire Guard has Passed". Translated by Philip Simpson. In: NEW WOMEN'S WRITING FROM ISRAEL, edited by Risa Domb, Portland, OR: Vallentine Mitchell, 1996: 11-20.

December 15

Keret, Etgar. "The Summer of '76" (1992), translated by Sondra Silverston. In: THE GIRL ON THE FRIDGE. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008: 169-171.

Appendix 1:

Academic Calendar for 2009 Fall

Instruction begins	Sep 2 (W)
Labor Day§	Sep 7 (M)
Rosh Hashanah***	Sep 19-20 (S-N)*
Ramadan ends (Eid-al-Fitr)***	Sep 20 (N)**
Yom Kippur***	Sep 28 (M)*

Thanksgiving recess
Eid-al-Adha***
Last class day

Nov 26-29 (R-N)
Nov 27 (F)**
Dec 15 (T)

§No classes

*Observances of Jewish holidays begin at sunset on the day preceding that which is listed as the holiday.

**Islamic holidays are based on the lunar cycle, and dates may vary by one day from those listed.

***RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES POLICY

In accordance with regent and faculty policy, faculty are asked not to schedule mandatory exercises on days when religious observances may cause substantial numbers of students to be absent from the university. Some religions mark observances over multiple days, which may begin at sunset on the day preceding the posted date(s) of the holiday. Conflicts may occur for religious observances other than those identified in the calendar. A listing, though not exhaustive, of religious holidays is available at www.interfaithcalendar.org. Any student with a conflict between an academic requirement and any religious observance must be given an alternative means of meeting the academic requirement. A student's claim of a religious conflict, which may include travel time, should be accepted at face value.

Appendix 2: CJS Lectures and Screenings Fall 2009