Instructor: Yuval Benziman, PhD.
Office hours: Tuesday, 12:30-13:30, Thursday, 12:30-13:30
Joseph and Alma Gildenhorn Institute for Israeli Studies, 0140 Holzpafel Hall
Email: benziman@umd.edu

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:


The Smile of the Lamb / David Grossman

6 September: Conflict and culture

13 September: The 1948 Generation

Required reading:
UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks DS113.7 .B366 2005

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PN1993.5.I86 S56 1989

UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5059.E8 S54 1999


20 September: Other voices in the 1948 Generation

Required reading:
UMCP McKeldin Library Stacks PJ5053.Y55 K55 2008
27 September: The State Generation

Required reading:

4 October: The 1980s

Required reading:

11 October: The 1980s

Required reading:

25 October: Students presentations
Required reading:
To be decided by presenters

1 November: The Israeli “Lebanon situation”
Required reading:

8 November: Students presentations
Required reading:
To be decided by presenters

15 November: Trends since the 1990s
Required reading:
22 November: Students presentations
Required reading:
To be decided by presenters

29 November: Current Palestinian-Arab-Israeli perspective
Required reading:
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