This course examines fiction and film, as well as selected poetry, popular songs, and essays, to explore the experience of diverse groups within contemporary Israeli society. Among the topics to be considered: the sabra ideal; Holocaust survivors and the second generation; Sephardic/Mizrahi communities; religious/secular divides in Israeli culture; Israel’s Arab minority; and questions of gender, including gay and lesbian life.

The readings include examples from the extraordinary boom of Hebrew fiction produced in the 1980s and 1990s. By looking at changing assumptions about Israeli identity, the course will consider changing voices in Israeli literature, changing literary norms, and artistic innovation and experiment, especially in narrative. One trend of particular note is the dramatic emergence of women writers onto the literary scene in recent years. Readings will also cover background information on Israeli history and society.

All readings will be in English. Students wishing to receive additional credits for doing work in Hebrew should contact the instructor.

Required Texts

David Grossman, *See Under: Love*
A. B. Yehoshua, *Mr. Mani_
Anton Shammas, *Arabesques_*
Charles D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*

Photocopies

Recommended readings
Recommended readings are listed in the syllabus. These readings are useful for bolstering understanding of the primary material and as resources for the writing assignments.

Course Requirements

Students are expected to complete the reading assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussion. Students will be required to write three 5-6 page essays during the quarter (1250-1500 words). Students will turn in drafts of their essays, receive feedback from the instructor and from classmates, and then revise and rewrite. Practice at drafting, revising and editing written work is one of the most valuable opportunities that a humanities course can offer. (This is a “W” course.) In addition, students will complete brief in-class writing exercises on a regular basis and take a final exam.

Due dates:

   Essay #1 – Jan. 29
   Essay #2 – Feb. 19
   Essay #3 – March 11

NO CLASS:

   Martin Luther King Jr. Day
   Presidents Day

Final grades will be determined as follows:

In-class writing exercises and class participation: 10%
Essays: 75%
Final exam: 15%

Students who wish to have their final essays returned to them should provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 543-8914 (V/TDD). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to the instructor and discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

WEEK I -- Reconsidering the Sabra Ideal
Required reading:

Yizhak Lamdan, “Night Bonfires” from “Masada” (1927/1971)
Charles D. Smith, pp. 1-37

Recommended reading:


WEEK II -- Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation

Required reading

Charles D. Smith, pp. 38-111

Film: Gila Almagor, “Under the Domim Tree” (1994)

Recommended reading:


WEEK III -- Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation

Savyon Liebrecht, “Excision;” and Leah Aini, “Until the Entire Guard has Passed” in New Women’s Writing from Israel (1998)
Charles D. Smith, pp. 112-148

Recommended reading:


Assignment: Essay #1 (due Jan. 29)

WEEK IV -- Sephardi/Mizrahi Experience

Required reading:

Charles D. Smith, pp. 152-178

Documentary film: Tekumah – “The Ingathering”

Recommended reading:


WEEK V -- Sephardi/Mizrahi Experience

Required reading:

A.B. Yehoshua, Mr. Mani (1990/1992), chapters 1-3
Charles D. Smith, pp. 179-226

Recommended reading:

**WEEK VI -- Sephardic/Mizrahi Experience cont.**

**Required reading:**

A.B. Yehoshua, *Mr. Mani*, Chapters 4-5
Charles D. Smith, pp. 227-241

**Assignment:** Essay #2 (due: February 19)

**Recommended reading:**

Benjamin Harshav, *Language in Time of Revolution*, pp. 81-152

**WEEK VII -- Religious and Secular Divides**

**Required reading:**

Haya Esther, “Nechama Gittel” in *New Women’s Writing from Israel* (1998)
Hava Pinchas-Cohen, “Remembering Our Fathers” (1990)

**Recommended Reading:**

Ruth Kartun-Blum, *Profane Scriptures*, pp. 1-14
WEEK VIII -- Israel’s Arab Minority

Required reading:

Charles D. Smith, pp. 242-280

Recommended reading:


WEEK IX– Israel's Arab Minority, cont.

Required reading:

Anton Shammas, *Arabesques*, pp. 110-263

Assignment #3: (Due March 11)

WEEK X -- Gay/Lesbian/Transgendered Life

Required reading:


Film: “Hitchhikers” (1998)

Recommended Reading: