

LCM 257 – HOLOCAUST IN ISRAELI LITERATURE

Fall 2016, Mon/Wed/Thurs 16:45 -17:35

3 credits

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Course Description:

LCM 257 is an overview of Israeli literature written by survivors and the children of survivors of the Holocaust living and writing in Israel, with a specific look at how the Holocaust has been experienced in a country whose very creation was born in the ashes of this epic tragedy.

From the early 1940s to this very day, the mass murder of the Jews in Europe during WW11 has been a major theme in Hebrew/Israeli fiction, poetry and drama. Given the impact of the Holocaust on Israel's political history and on the personal histories of so many of its Jewish inhabitants, one would expect the experiences of this devastation to figure very centrally in the literature in Israel. The many gifted individuals who have contributed to Israeli "Holocaust literature" come from many varied backgrounds from cultural groups across Europe. And now a whole new modern generation directly influenced by the Holocaust has been born: the Israeli children of survivors, who have their own stories to tell.

The aim of this course is to draw a broad picture of this literary-cultural phenomenon, based on selected reading of novels, short stories, poems and plays, all available in English translation. By reading and discussing selected fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays not only of those writers who experienced the Holocaust first hand and later settled in Israel, but also of those writers in Israel and who are the children of survivors, students will begin to see trends in how the Holocaust is experienced in Israel, how it has affected Israeli culture and literature, and the complex attitude of Israeli society towards the Holocaust.

Reading List:

1st half of the semester, with a concentration of survivors with direct experience of the Holocaust, who later settled in Israel:

Langer, Lawrence L. *Art From the Ashes*. New York, NY, USA: Oxford U. Press, 1995.

And selections from the following:

Appelfeld, Aharon. *Tzili: The Story of a Life*. Trans. Dalya Bilu. New York, NY, USA: Shoken Books, 1983.

Sobol, Joshua. *Ghetto*. Trans. Kathleen Komar. New York, NY, USA: ICM Partners, 1983.

Hareven, Shulamith. "On Being a Levant." *PN Review* 84, Volume 18 Number 4, March - April 1992.

Kovner, Abba. *My Little Sister and Selected Poems*. Trans. Shirley Kaufman. Ohio, USA: Oberlin College Press, 1986.

Kovner, Abba. *Scrolls of Testimony*. Trans. Eddie Levenson. Philadelphia, Penn., USA: Jewish Publication Society, 2001.

Pagis, Dan. *The Selected Poetry of Dan Pagis*. Trans. Stephen Mitchell. Philadelphia, Penn., USA: Jewish Publication Society, 1981.

Sutkever, Abraham. *Burnt Pearls: Ghetto Poems*. Trans. Seymour Mayne. Oakville, Ontario, Canada: Mosaic Press, 1981.

We will see the movie *The Summer of Aviya*

2nd half of the semester, with a concentration on the writings of Israeli children of Holocaust survivors: the Second Generation:

We will read selections from the following:

Grossman, David. *See Under Love*. Trans. Betsy Rosenberg. New York, NY, USA: St Martin's Press, 2002.

Semel, Nava. *And the Rat Laughed*. Trans. Miriam Shlesinger. Ormond, Australia: Hybrid Publishers, 2008.

Keret, Etgar. "Imaginary Homeland." *The Seven Good Years*. London, UK: Granta Publications, 2015.

"La Promenade," by Michal Govrin plus the poem, "Can't You See?"

Modan, Rutu. *The Property*. Trans. Jessica Cohen. Montreal, Canada: Drawn and Quarterly Press, 2013.

And selected poems from:

Mishol, Agi. *Less Like a Dove*. Trans. Joanna Chen. London, UK: Shearsman Books, 2016.

Miriam, Rivke. *These Mountains*. Trans. Linda Zisquit. London, UK: Toby Press, 2009.

Oded Peled, Yael Globberman (selections from the internet)

Course Goals:

- To familiarize the students with a wide overview of Israeli Holocaust literature.
- To enrich the student's understanding of the influence of the Holocaust on Israeli literature and therefore on Israeli culture and society.
- To explore the diversity, as well as the trends in the literature utilizing various literary analysis tools.
- To watch how such trends changed or remained in the second generation.
- Improve students critical thinking and writing skills.

Course Requirements:

Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions.

To get an excused absence one must be ill and bring a doctor's note.

- Attendance & Reading-Informed Class Participation 35%
- Papers and Midterm Essay Test 30%
- Final Project or Essay Exam 35%

Evaluation:

The students' presence in the classes is mandatory. Regular participation in the class is expected of all students. The students will be asked to keep a journal during the class. They will be tested orally on material throughout the semester. An essay based midterm based on our reading will be administered in Week 7. Papers will be due approximately the fifth and tenth weeks of class. The final paper topic will be handed out during week 13 and will be due during finals week. More information will be given in class. The papers must be complete and submitted by the due date announced in class.

Students will write **two short Critical Response Essays (max. 3 pages)**, which will be critical responses to the reading. They will be properly formatted, and support a thesis statement. Students will bring drafts to class for editing. The midterm will be a critical thought essay. For the final project students will have the choice of an essay exam or a creative project.