

*In Conjunction with*



## **Israeli Literature and Culture in Conflict**

**Instructor:** Professor Ken Frieden

### **Course Description**

A study of modern Hebrew literature in the historical context of Zionism, the establishment of the State of Israel, and the continued Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In addition to reading major Israeli fiction, we will analyze ways in which contemporary sources report news from the Middle East. The course will include screenings of pertinent documentaries and feature films.

### **Texts:**

Appelfeld, Aharon. *Badenheim 1939* (short story version). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001.

Friedman, Thomas L. *From Beirut to Jerusalem*. New York: Anchor Books, 1990.

Grossman, David. *The Yellow Wind*. Trans. Haim Watzman. New York: The Noonday Press, 1998.

*Israel: A Traveler's Literary Companion*. Ed. Michael Gluzman and Naomi Seidman. San Francisco: Whereabouts Press, 1996.

*The Jerusalem Anthology: A Literary Guide*. Ed. Reuven Hammer. Philadelphia: JPS, 1995.

*Modern Hebrew Literature*. Ed. Robert Alter. New York: Behrman House, 1975.

Additional requirement: Daily reading of the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* (English Edition) on the web ([www.haaretzdaily.com](http://www.haaretzdaily.com)) and pertinent articles in *The New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)). News analyses may also draw from pieces in *The Jerusalem Report* ([www.jrep.com](http://www.jrep.com)), on the CNN website ([cnn.com](http://cnn.com)), or elsewhere.

## **Sections:**

### **Introduction**

FILM: *Hitchhikers* (check availability from local library, Blockbuster, Netflix, etc.)

### **Zionism and Post-Zionism**

Shlomo Avineri, "The Zionist Legacy and the Future of Israel"

Theodor Herzl et al., in *The Jew in the Modern World*, 421-432

FILM: *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*

### **Pre-State Literature**

Moshe Smilansky, "Latifa"

Documents 7, 12, and 13 in *The Israel-Arab Reader*

FILM: *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*

Y. H. Brenner, "The Way Out," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

Haim Hazaz, "The Sermon," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

Agnon's letter to Salman Schocken, in *The Jerusalem Anthology*, pp. 242-255

S. Y. Agnon, "At the Outset of the Day," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

### **A Palestinian Perspective**

Raja Shehadeh, *Samed*, pp. 16-39

FILM: *Wedding in Galilee*

### **The 1948 War of Independence and Its Aftermath**

Benjamin Tammuz, "The Swimming Race"

*The Jew in the Modern World*, 472-479

*The Jerusalem Anthology*, pp. 259-286

S. Yizhar, "The Prisoner," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

Amos Oz, "Before His Time," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

A. B. Yehoshua, "Facing the Forests," in *Modern Hebrew Literature*

FILM: *Late Summer Blues*

*The Jerusalem Anthology*, pp. 286-296

FILM: *Late Summer Blues*

Ian Lustick, "Israel and the West Bank..." in *Unsettled States, Disputed Lands*

Yaron Ezrahi, Introduction to *Rubber Bullets*

### **The 1967 War and Its Aftermath**

FILM: *Fictitious Marriage*

Jacob Buchan, "Sleepwalkers"

### **After the Shoah**

Yitzchak Laor, "Rachely's Father Who Was an Actor," in *Israel*

*The Summer of Avia*

Aharon Appelfeld, "Badenheim 1939"

FILM: *The Summer of Avia*

**The First Intifada: 1987-93**

Etgar Kerrett, "Cocked and Locked," in *Israel*

David Grossman, *The Yellow Wind*, chapters 2, 3, 6

David Grossman, *The Yellow Wind*, chapters 8, 10

Thomas Friedman, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, chapters 11, 13, 14

Danny Rubenstein, "Palestinian Frustration and the Road to Baghdad"

**Israel Today**

Gafi Amir, "By the Time You're Twenty-One You'll Reach the Moon," in *Israel*

Amos Oz, "Thank God for His Daily Blessings," in *Israel*

Gadi Taub, "You Never Can Tell," in *Israel*

David Ehrlich, "The Store," in *Israel*

Orly Castel-Bloom, "Someone Else's Story," in *Israel*

Yoram Kolerstein, "Idolatry," in *Israel*

Yosl Birstein, "The Writer A. M. Fuchs Was Already Old....," in *Israel*

Ronit Matalon, "Little Brother"

**Requirements:** Four analyses of current news from Israel. Print out articles from newspapers and write brief analyses of them. Pay special attention to rhetoric: how does each article present the news, for example, using metaphors or other literary techniques? Is there a clear bias? Contrast the ways different newspapers report the same event.

**Goals:** To better understand aspects of Israeli life and literature since 1948, to reach a greater understanding of Zionism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, to balance our own prior views with other perspectives, and to enter into the current debates over a possible "end to the conflict."

**Films:** Most films for this course are available at local libraries of Jewish centers.