

Israeli Poetry: War and Peace

A Nation through its poetry

[JST 272/372]

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War has been a constant shadow over the lives of Israelis. The purpose of this course is to present an overview of the history of attitudes to war in Israel as they have been presented through poetry, film and short stories. This course explores the plurality of voices and experiences in Israel.

Each section of this course asks the student to look at a number of themes.

The Role of the *Sabra*

Who is the ideal soldier?
How is sacrifice part of the soldier-pioneer narrative?

Memory and Memorials

How are fallen soldiers remembered?
What is burden of memory for a society and who decides on the monuments?

Contested Land

What is the relationship between Israel and its military past?
Where does the Arab fit in?

Human Relations

Love, family and friendship, the true victims of war?

Daily Life

Living in the shadow of terror
If everyone in the state has handled a gun, how do Israelis view violence?

War Cries and Peace Songs

What are we singing about?

A Perfect Peace

Understanding peace the way Israelis view it.

Students are expected to read a selection of literary texts in and critical literature in English each week. There will also be three films screened as part of the course.

Required Texts

A course reader is for sale at Shipmates (at Stuyvesant Plaza, 458-7758) and on Electronic Reserve at the library. Books can be purchased in the Campus Bookstore or borrowed from the University Library.

Course Requirements:

Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Attendance will be taken periodically. Without proper notification and documentation *ahead* of time when feasible, failure to attend more than two class meetings will result in your final grade being lowered by one full letter grade.

There will be no quizzes, but all material is to have been prepared before hand, class participation is a requirement! Each week one student will prepare a brief presentation about the relevant theme or specific text, to be prearranged.

This class is cross-listed at two different levels. Make sure that you take care in preparing the correct material for the level at which you have entered the course.

Students studying for 272:

Grade made up of:

2 assessed essays 20% each

Mid term 20%

Final exam 20%

20% class mark, made up of attendance, participation and presentation

Students studying for 372:

As for 272, with additional assignments: Students are expected to produce one short papers with a close reading of a film for the course. (Two pages per assignment). Due: 29th March 2007

Grade made up of:

2 assessed essays 20% each

Mid term 20%

Final exam 20%

20% class mark, made up of attendance, participation, presentation and close readings.

A list of questions will be provided for the essays alternatively, students may suggest a substitute title which must be approved in advance with me. Each essay will be 1500-2000 words (6-8 pages double spaced). A comprehensive guide to essay writing and presentation can be found in the course reader.

ESSAYS:

Choose one question to answer and discuss in reference to at least one literary prose text studied in class or at least two poems.

First essay: Due Thursday 15th February 2007 at the start of class

Second essay: Due Thursday 26th April 2007 start of class

Essay Questions

1. Who is 'Samson' and how is he portrayed in Hebrew poetry?
2. Discuss the presentation of *heroism* in Hebrew literature.
3. Memory is at the centre of war poetry. Discuss questions of commemoration in Hebrew literature.
4. What are the main themes in Yehuda Amichai's poetry about war?
5. According to the poems studied, who are the true victims of war?
6. Does music influence our perception of war?
7. There are different views of peace represented in the war poetry. Discuss
8. Is the Holocaust always in the back ground when discussing war poetry in Israel?
9. Women are excluded from the military narrative. Do you agree?
10. The 'entertainment' branches of the military exist to justify war. Discuss.

EXAMS:

The midterm will be made up of a close reading of one poem, and a choice of essay questions, students must write two essays, one responding to a general question relating to themes studied in the course and one in relation to a specific text(s) or texts studied in the first half of the semester. **In class, Tuesday 13th March 2006**

The final will take the same format.

Other information:

Respect and tolerance for all viewpoints as well as courteous and attentive behaviour are expected from all class participants. Anyone who fails to adhere to these standards may be required to leave the class at my discretion.

Support: If you are having any difficulties in the course, I encourage you to contact me sooner rather than later so that we can devise a work plan and strategies so that you can be successful in the course.

Grading: I strive to be fair and accurate in grading student assignments. If you are dissatisfied with a grade that you have received, please present to me *in writing* what error you feel has been made and what course of action you propose for remedying it. Then, please visit my office during regular office hours (or contact me to make an appointment) and we will discuss your concerns. Additionally, if you wish to have your final exam returned, please contact me during the first week of the new semester to arrange for the exam to be returned to you. It is my policy *not* to leave student work in public places for pick up. I do not give out or discuss grades over email.

Percentage %	Grading Bands	
96-100	A+	Excellent knowledge of subject. Critical awareness of academic debate with excellent use of evidence to illustrate argument. Appropriate contextualization of material.
91-95	A	
86-90	A-	
81-85	B+	Good knowledge of subject. Clear awareness of debate, with appropriate use of evidence. Some awareness of larger historical context. Accurate use of appropriate terms.
76-80	B	
71-75	B-	
66-70	C+	Displays factual knowledge of subject. Some evidence of discussion and awareness of different points of view.
61-65	C	
56-60	C-	Adequate documentation. Some use of appropriate terms
51-55	D+	Poor knowledge of subject. Poor presentation of work.
46-50	D	Limited, incorrect or no use of appropriate terms.
41-45	D-	Minimal discussion.
40 or below	FAIL	Work below minimum standard required.

Academic Integrity: The University at Albany adheres to the following policy regarding intellectual honesty: “It is every student’s responsibility to become familiar with the standards of academic integrity at the University. Claims of ignorance, of unintentional error or of academic or personal pressures are not sufficient reasons for violations of academic integrity.” Plagiarism and other violations of the rules of academic integrity are treated seriously. See the university’s policy on plagiarism at: http://www.albany.edu/undergraduate_bulletin/regulations.html#plagiarism

Learning Disabilities: If you are a student with a documented learning disability, please inform me immediately so that we can make arrangements to accommodate your needs. If you suspect that you may have learning disability but do not have it documented, please contact the Disabled Student Services located in Campus Center, Room 127 (442-5490).

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