

# **The Arab in Israeli Literature**

**JST 273/373/373z**

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The Arab has always been the 'other' in Hebrew literary discourse. This course will look at the differing depictions of the Arab in Hebrew literature from the early years of Zionism to the twenty-first-century. Various depictions of the Arab will be examined such as the noble, heroic Bedouin, the sexual predator, the suicide bomber and the ally. Arab-Jewish writing and writing by non-Jews writing in Hebrew will also be explored. Critical readings will focus on the theoretical ideas of Orientalism and post-colonialism enabling students to understand Hebrew literature within the wider context of world literature.

Students are expected to read a selection of literary texts in translation and critical literature in English each week. There will also be two 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.

## **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 (or a small group) will prepare a brief presentation about the relevant theme or specific text, to be prearranged.

**This class is cross-listed at three 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 273:**

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 373:**

As for 273, with additional assignments: Students are expected to produce three short papers with a close reading of a poem from the course or of the films screened in class. (Two pages per assignment).

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.

**Students studying for 373z:**

As for 373 with two additional written essays of 6-8 pages. These papers will be marked and then rewritten following critical feedback.

Grade made up of:

4 assessed essays 10% 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.

**FOR ESSAY DEADLINES SEE: CLASS TIMETABLE**

**Essays must be handed in at the start of a class.**

## Essay Questions

1. How do Hebrew writers before 1950 depict the Arab? Discuss in relation to Edward Said's ideas about Orientalism. (Choose one short story studied in class)
2. What does the orchard represent in Binyamin Tammuz's *The Orchard*?
3. Compare and contrast the treatment of victor and victim in S. Yizhar's *The Prisoner* and Binyamin Tammuz's *The Swimming Race*.
4. Does Amos Oz challenge or support the traditional representation of the Arab in *Nomad and Viper*?
5. Discuss the treatment of Zionism in A. B. Yehoshua's *Facing the Forests*?
6. How do Mizrahi writers treat depictions of the Arab in Israeli society?
7. Discuss the difference between the treatment of Jewish and Arab characters in *Trumpet in the Wadi*?
8. Compare the treatment of the Arab in two works by Palestinian writers.
9. In what way can the protagonist of Samir El-Youssef's novella *The Day the Beast got Thirsty* be considered outside mainstream Arab culture? What is the significance of such a depiction?
10. New theories in post-colonial studies have arisen that pay attention to issues of authenticity, patriarchy, language, feminism, imperialism and cultural hegemony. Choosing one of these theories discuss its applicability in relation to one of the texts examined in this course. (Please see me before you tackle this question.)

## **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.

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
91-95	A	academic debate with excellent use of evidence to
86-90	A-	illustrate argument. Appropriate contextualization of
		material.
81-85	B+	Good knowledge of subject. Clear awareness of debate,
76-80	B	with appropriate use of evidence. Some awareness of
71-75	B-	larger historical context. Accurate use of appropriate
		terms.
66-70	C+	Displays factual knowledge of subject. Some evidence of
61-65	C	discussion and awareness of different points of view.
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](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).

## CLASS TIMETABLE

<b><u>Week 1</u></b> Monday 4 Sep	<b>LABOUR DAY</b>	
Wednesday 6 Sep	Introduction	
<b><u>Week 2</u></b> Monday 11 Sep	Ramras-Rauch, Gilah. "Cultural Background." In <i>The Arab in Israeli Literature</i> . Moshe Smilansky - <i>Barhash</i>	
Wednesday 13 Sep	Yitzhak Shami - <i>Hamamah: A tale of the Arabian Desert</i>	
<b><u>Week 3</u></b> Monday 18 Sep	Said, Edward W. "Introduction." In <i>Orientalism</i> .	
Wednesday 20 Sep	Yehuda Burla - <i>Man and Wife</i>	
<b><u>Week 4</u></b> Monday 25 Sep	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
Wednesday 27 Sep	Amir Coffin, Edna. "The Image of the Arab in Modern Hebrew Literature." S. Yizhar - <i>The Prisoner</i>	273,373,373z Essay due
<b><u>Week 5</u></b> Monday 2 Oct	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
Wednesday 4 Oct	Oppenheimer, Yochai. "The Arab in the Mirror: The Image of the Arab in Israeli Fiction." Hammutal Bar Yosef "Jaffa, July 1948"	
<b><u>Week 6</u></b> Monday 9 Oct	Benjamin (Binyamin) Tammuz - <i>The Orchard</i>	
Wednesday 11 Oct		373z essay due
<b><u>Week 7</u></b> Monday 16 Oct	Benjamin (Binyamin) Tammuz - <i>The Swimming Contest</i>	
Wednesday 18 Oct	Perry, Menakhem. "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as a Metaphor in Recent Israeli Fiction." Amos Oz - <i>Nomad and Viper</i>	373 special assignment
<b><u>Week 8</u></b> Monday 23 Oct	Morahg, Gilead. "New Images of Arabs in Israeli Fiction" A. B. Yehoshua - <i>Facing the Forests</i>	
Wednesday 25 Oct	<b>MIDTERM</b>	273,373,373z Midterm
<b><u>Week 9</u></b> Monday 30 Oct	Savyon Leibrecht - <i>A Room on the Roof</i>	
Wednesday 2 Nov	David Grossman - <i>The Other Barta'a</i> Etgar Keret - <i>Cocked and Locked</i>	

<b><u>Week 10</u></b> Monday 7 Nov	Yehuda Amichai "An Arab Shepherd is searching for his goat on Mount Zion" Dahlia Rabikovitch "You don't kill babies twice"	373z essay due
Wednesday 9 Nov	FILM: LEHEM	
<b><u>Week 11</u></b> Monday 13 Nov	Tikva Levi "Land Day"	373 Special assignment
Wednesday 15 Nov	Sami Shalom Chetrit – Biography "Who is a Jew and What Kind of a Jew?" "At an Auditorium of a Local University"	
<b><u>Week 12</u></b> Monday 20 Nov	FILM: TRUMPET IN THE WADI	273,373,373z Essay due
Wednesday 22 Nov	<b>NO CLASS</b>	
<b><u>Week 13</u></b> Monday 27 Nov	Snir, Reuven. ""We Were Like Those Who Dream:" Iraqi-Jewish Writers in Israel in the 1950s." Michael, Sami. "On Being an Iraqi-Jewish Writer in Israel." FILM: TRUMPET IN THE WADI	
Wednesday 29 Nov	Khadra Jayyusi, Salma. "Palestinian Identity in Literature." "The Worst of Two Choices; or, The Forsaken Olive Trees"	373 special assignment
<b><u>Week 14</u></b> Monday 4 Dec	Elad-Bouskila, Ami. "Arabic and/or Hebrew: The Languages of Arab Writers in Israel." Emile Habiby - <i>The Odds-and-Ends Woman</i> "	
Wednesday 6 Dec	Samir El-Youssef - <i>The Day the Beast Got Thirsty</i>	
<b><u>Week 15</u></b> Monday 11 Dec	<b>FINAL CLASS - EXAM IN CLASS</b>	

## **Additional Reading**

- Abdel-Malek, Kamal, and David C. Jacobson. *Israeli and Palestinian Identities in History and Literature*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.
- Alcalay, Ammiel. *Keys to the Garden*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1996.
- Amir Coffin, Edna. "The Image of the Arab in Modern Hebrew Literature." *Michigan Quarterly Review* XXI, no. 2 Spring (1982).
- Berg, Nancy E. *Exile from Exile: Israeli Writers from Iraq, Suny Series in Israeli Studies*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996.
- Brenner, Rachel Feldhay. *Inextricably Bonded: Israeli Arab and Jewish Writers Re-Visioning Culture, Studies on Israel*. Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.
- Caspi, Mishael, and Jerome David Weltsch. *From Slumber to Awakening: Culture and Identity of Arab Israeli Literati*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1998.
- Horn, Bernard, and Abraham B. Yehoshua. *Facing the Fires: Conversations with A.B. Yehoshua*. 1st ed, *Judaic Traditions in Literature, Music, and Art*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1997.
- Loshitzky, Yosefa. *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen*. Texas: University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Mintz, Alan L. *The Boom in Contemporary Israeli Fiction, Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry Series; 24*. Hanover, N.H.: Brandeis University Press published by University Press of New England, 1997.
- Negev, Eilat. *Close Encounters with Twenty Israeli Writers*. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2003.
- Omer-Sherman, Ranen. *Israel in Exile: Jewish Writing and the Desert*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006.
- Peleg, Yaron. *Orientalism and the Hebrew Imagination*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Ramras-Rauch, Gilah. *The Arab in Israeli Literature*. Bloomington, Ind London: Indiana University Press; Tauris, 1989.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978.
- Sharafuddin, Mohammad. *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient*. London: Tauris, 1994.
- Turner, Bryan S. *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism*. London: Routledge, 1994.

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## **Critical Literature**

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Amir Coffin, Edna. "The Image of the Arab in Modern Hebrew Literature." <i>Michigan Quarterly Review</i> XXI, no. 2 Spring (1982).	316-327
Oppenheimer, Yochai. "The Arab in the Mirror: The Image of the Arab in Israeli Fiction." <i>Prooftexts</i> 19, no. 3 (1999): 205-34. Abdel-Malek, Kamal. "Living on Boderlines: War and Exile in Selected Works by	328-343
Perry, Menakhem. "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict as a Metaphor in Recent Israeli Fiction." <i>Poetics Today</i> 7, no. 4 (1986): 603-19.	344-360
Morahg, Gilead. "New Images of Arabs in Israeli Fiction." <i>Prooftexts</i> 6, no. 2 (1986): 147-62	361-396
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1950s." Prooftexts 11, no. 2 (1991): 153-73.

Michael, Sami. "On Being an Iraqi-Jewish Writer in Israel." Prooftexts 4, no. 1 (1984): 23-33. 381-368

Elad-Bouskila, Ami. "Arabic and/or Hebrew: The Languages of Arab Writers in Israel." In Israeli and Palestinian Identities in History and Literature, edited by Kamal Abdel-Malek and David C. Jacobson, 133-58. New York: St Martin's Press, 1999. 387-400

Khadra Jayyusi, Salma. "Palestinian Identity in Literature." In Israeli and Palestinian Identities in History and Literature, edited by Kamal Abdel-Malek and David C. Jacobson, 167-77. New York: St Martin's Press, 1999. 401-405

Ghassan Kanafani, Fawaz Turki and Mahmud Darwish." In Israeli and Palestinian Identities in History and Literature, edited by Kamal Abdel-Malek and David C. Jacobson, 179-93. New York: St Martin's Press, 1999. 406-413

Snir, Reuven. "'Postcards in the Morning' Palestinian's Writing in Hebrew." Prooftexts 22, no. 1 (2001): 197-224. 414-428

Snir, Reuven. "'Hebrew as the Language of Grace' Arab-Palestinian Writers in Hebrew." Prooftexts 15, no. 2 (1995): 163-83. 429-439