Loyola Marymount University, Spring 2011

English 398.03/Jewish Studies 398.05/Literature in the Land of Israel

Dr. Holli Levitsky, University Hall 3863, M 2-4, T/R 1:30-2:30 and by appt.

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The land variously known by the names of Zion, Palestine, Israel, and more is not just a place. It is a realm of the imagination, envisioned and re-envisioned throughout history. It is at once real and surreal, sturdy and fragile, all-enduring and ephemeral. Symbol of origin, exile, and return, this land echoes and informs our very concepts of time and space themselves. In this challenging, controversial, but optimistic course, we will examine selected works of literature, film, and other texts by artists who live or have lived in the region as well as those with an interest in the region. As this is a literature course, our focus will be on aesthetic representations of this region, now known as the country of Israel.

During our Spring Break trip to Israel (February 26-March 6), we will challenge insights filtered through the poetic imagination and classroom discussion and honestly explore this deeply historical land together.

Pre-requisite: $1000.00 lab fee required before class begins.

Student Work.

Reflection on Israel, 2 Summary/Responses (Herzl/Agnon)-15%

Midterm Essay (Agnon)-15%

Group Presentation on Israel Itinerary-15%

Attendance/Participation-15%

5 Blogs About Israel/In Israel-20%

*The Lions of Judah: Creative Reflections of an LMU Interfaith Class in Israel*-20% (10% Creative Participation and 10% Production Work). Each student will contribute a creative reflection to and participate in the production of the class journal, composed during the final 6 weeks of class.

Active participation in class before and after and on-site in Israel is required (additional scheduled or ad hoc readings/informal writing may be scheduled for our time in Israel).
SCHEDULE OF CLASSES:


1/17:  Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday: NO CLASS.

Please read the Hebrew Bible Genesis-Exodus 21 and Ezra (entire)

Assignment: 1-2 page essay: “In my imagination, Israel is…”

Reflect on your vision of Israel and what the sources are for that vision (i.e the Bible, film, literature, art, media, etc.)

The Ancient Land

1/24:  Discussion of ancient texts/land (guest speaker)

Between the Old and the New

1/31:  Excerpts from Theodore Herzl, Old New Land (handout)

Summary/response #1

2/7:  Shmuel Agnon, Only Yesterday (Prologue and Book One)

Summary/Response #2

Love in the Land of Israel

2/14:  Only Yesterday (Jerusalem)

Rabbi Mark Diamond/Fr. Alexei Smith visit class

2/21:  Only Yesterday (From One Issue to Another and Epilogue)

Student presentations on Israel: Students will be assigned a site on our Israel itinerary to research and present to the class in pairs.

Prepare for trip to Israel; Israeli Consul Visits.

2/25:  Midterm paper due. 750 words on Agnon. Please leave a HARD-COPY only in my English department mailbox or under my office door.
2/26-March 6: Class meets in ISRAEL; Bring Yehuda Amichai book, laptop (if possible) or journal notebook to map your journey in Israel

3/7

NO CLASS

Reflecting on the Land


Production Duties Will Be Assigned/Discussed in Class, and can include organizing, editing, graphic, layout, photo, business, pr and marketing, fundraising, distribution and other duties as needed.

Choose from the following creative options:

1) Creative Non-Fiction: a branch of writing that employs the literary techniques usually associated with fiction or poetry to report on actual persons, places, or events. This includes literary non-fiction, travel writing, nature writing, science writing, biography, autobiography, memoir, interview (a conversation between 2 people where questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee—student and Fr. Alexie, Holli, other students, David our Keshet guide, etc.), personal essay

2) Political Essay: Choose one of Aldous Huxley’s 3 Poles:

   Personal and the autobiographical essays: these use "fragments of reflective autobiography" to "look at the world through the keyhole of anecdote and description".

   Objective and factual: in these essays, the authors "do not speak directly of themselves, but turn their attention outward to some literary or scientific or political theme".

   Abstract-universal: these essays "make the best ... of all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist".

3) Reflection: Essay which reflects on your Israel blogs, analyzing themes, patterns, motifs while drawing an observational conclusion about your experience within the larger context of the trip.

4) Academic Paper: Conventional English class paper which would analyze a literary text/poem/film chosen under my direction. This could be a close reading of the text or a more researched analysis.

5) Poetry: Poetry is an imaginative awareness of experience expressed through meaning, sound, and rhythmic language choices so as to evoke an emotional response. Poetry may employ meter and rhyme, but this is by no means necessary.

6) Blog Collage: Pulling images and/or lines from each student’s blog in order to form a new blog that represents some intentional form of integration of the Israel experience

7) Short Scene: a subdivision of an act of a play—it should include enough background and context to know the place of the scene within the order of the entire drama.
8) Syllabus for Israeli Literature Course: A plan or program of what is to be taught. It should include a written overview listing course objectives and expectations, themes to be covered, course readings and assignments, grading system, and instructional calendar, including a trip to Israel.

9) Comic Strip: A series of illustrations, in sequence, often but not necessarily depicting something funny or political in nature, and focusing on either a personal or universal feature of our trip to Israel.

10) Map of Israel: Visual representation of an area, or the entire space we inhabited—a symbolic depiction highlighting relationships between elements of that space such as objects, regions and themes. This can be done individually or as a small group.

11) Creative Map (of Israel or of Israel within a larger context—the class, the region, the political conflict, etc): Mixed media or alternative media rather than simply a visual representation.

12) Drawing, etc.: A Visual representation relating to the artist’s experience in Israel that also speaks to a larger theme or issue.


3/28: Please attend both events if possible: Marek Halter, 6 pm MacIntosh Center 3rd Floor UHall

Foreign Minister of Israel, 1 pm, UHall 1000

4/4: Workshop

4/11: Workshop and Pre-Production

4/18: Interfaith Passover Seder.

4/25: Final Production

5/2: Production Party!

Course Materials

All required books are available at LMU Bookstore or online new and used.

Required texts:
Hebrew Bible, any edition

Only Yesterday. Shmuel Agnon.


Handouts: Herzl, Oz, Hebrew Lessons, and more.

Recommended texts:

Writing in the Dark: Essay on Literature and Politics, David Grossman

Modern Hebrew for Beginners, Esther Raizen (U-Texas Press)

Every Person's Guide to Judaism, Stephen Einstein and Lydia Kukoff

Hebrew for Dummies

Exodus, Leon Uris

Old New Land, Theodor Herzl

Tale of Love and Darkness, Amos Oz

All readings in English. Syllabus may be subject to change.