



אוניברסיטת בן-גוריון בנגב  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev  
The Department of Foreign Literature and Linguistics

Fall and Spring Semesters

2021-2022

Name of the course: Body Parts: Bodies, Disability and Poetics in American Culture

Name of the Lecturer: Ron Ben-Tovim

Office hours: Thursdays, 10-12, Room 515

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**Courses' goals:**

What is the source of literature's ongoing fascination with the deformed and disabled human figure? What role can impediment could be said to have in the act of reading and writing literature? Is there a link between the incomplete, disabled, and disfigured and that which we may call the beautiful or aesthetic? These are only some of the questions to be addressed in this course, which aims to serve as a general introduction to the contemporary theoretical field of disability studies as well as a discussion of the role of disability in American literature.

Theoretical texts include works by Tobin Siebers, James Berger, and Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, Donna Haraway and others, with primary texts including Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, which will take up a good portion of our discussion, along with the works of Emily Dickinson, H.D., Flannery O'Connor and others.

**Course program:**

**Semester A**

21.10 Introduction: Disability, Prosthesis, Poetics; Alice Hall, "Literature and Disability."

28.10 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*

4.11 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*; Tobin Siebers, "Introducing Disability Aesthetics."

11.11 Emily Dickenson

18.11 Emily Dickenson

- 25.11 *Moby Dick* Introduction to *Moby Dick* - Etymology, Extracts, Loomings.
- 2.12 *Moby Dick*: 2-32
- 9.12 *Moby Dick*: 33-45; Mitchell and Snyder: Introduction to *Narrative Prosthesis*
- 16.12 *Moby Dick*: 46-59
- 23.12 *Moby Dick*: 60-71
- 30.12 *Moby Dick*: 72-84; David Wills, "Hamilton 1970"; Jacques Derrida, from  
*Monolingualism of the Other*. **Short paper assigned**
- 6.1 *Moby Dick*: 85-98
- 13.1 *Moby Dick*: 98-110 – Ahab's Leg – Carpenter; Donna Harway, "The Cyborg Manifesto."  
**Short paper due**

## Semester B

- 3.3 *Moby Dick*: 111-120 – Forge/Blacksmith
- 10.3 *Moby Dick*: 121-135 - Conclusion
- 17.3 **Purim Break**
- 24.3 Body Rise: Freud, Gender, Race
- 31.3 William and Ellen Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*.
- 7.4 *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*; Michael Bérubé, "Disability and Narrative"
- 14.4 Wallace Stevens, "The Noble Rider and the Sound of Words" **Short paper assigned**
- 21.4 Passover Break**
- 28.4 Stevens Poetry; Gertrude Stein. **Short paper due**
- 5.5 Memorial Day**
- 12.5 H.D., *Notes on Thought and Vision*
- 19.5 *Notes on Thought and Vision*
- 26.5 Anne Sexton, Sylvia Plath; Elaine Shoalwater, "Representing Ophelia."
- 2.6 Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"
- 9.6 "Good Country People"
- 16.6 David Foster Wallace, "The Depressed Person," Amelia Baggs, "In My Language"
- 23.6 Conclusion

### **Courses' requirements and grade distribution:**

Attendance + Forum: 15%

Two Short Papers: 30%

Final paper: 55%

### **Reading List:**

Emily Dickinson, from *The Complete Poems*

Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*

William and Ellen Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom*

Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People"

Select Poetry

H.D., *Notes on Thought and Vision*

Tobin Siebers, from *Disability Aesthetics*

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder, from *Narrative Prosthesis*

James Berger, from *The Disarticulate*

Michael Bérubé, from *The Secret Life of Stories; Life As We Know It*

Rosemarie Garland Thomson, from *Extraordinary Bodies*

Wallace Stevens, from *The Necessary Angel*

