

Academic year 2022-23 (תשפ"ג)

Course title (English): Literary Theories in the Twentieth Century

Course title (Hebrew): תאוריות ספרותיות במאה ה-20

Course number: 132.1.3161 & 132.1.3171

Course slot (semester/s, weekday/s, hours): Yearly, Mondays, 12-2pm

Lecturer: Dr. Ron Ben-Tovim (Fall Semester), Dr. Yael Segalovitz (Spring Semester), TA: Sagi Felendler

Lecturer's conference hour and contact details: Office Hours by appointment.
Contact details: ronbent@bgu.ac.il; yalsega@bgu.ac.il; sagif@post.bgu.ac.il

Course description & objectives:

The course surveys the intellectual history of literature as an independent discipline, from the early 20th century and into the new millennium. The course strives to present students with seminal theoretical works in the study of literature, and to develop their abilities to work with theoretical text and to analyze literature with and through them.

Course requirements:

Grade Distribution:

Participation 10% (lecture 5%; Targil 5%)
Pre-Class Questions 10%
Four quizzes 10%
Four Short Assignments 20%
Midterm Paper 20%
Final Exam 30%

Attendance

- **Attendance is mandatory.** Both the lecture and the Targil will be taught in the classroom rather than online (unless BGU regulations change).
- You are allowed – for the whole year – **up to five absences from the lecture and five absences from the Targil**, including *Tkufat Hashinuyim*.
- Any additional absence will have consequences for your final grade, and may preclude you from taking the final exam.
- **Arriving to class late** more than two times will count as an absence.
- We expect that you **budget your own absences** to account for holidays, travel, sick-days and academic overload. If you must be absent due to a medical or a family emergency (including Covid-19 related issues), **please get in touch with us** as soon as possible about possible arrangements.

- If you miss class material, please consult other students for the missed material, or email us to schedule office hours. **You are responsible to make up whatever material you miss!**

Participation

- **Follow the syllabus** and **read the assigned material** for each class.
- **Arrive to class prepared**, with question, thoughts and ideas about the material.
- **Take part in class discussions.** This, along with your own engagement with the reading material, are incredibly important aspects of the course, and a good way to **assess your understanding without direct implications to your grade.**
- You may bring your reading material in digital format (computer/tablet) to class, but keep in mind that **engagement with the computer/tablet outside of class material will affect your grade.**
- **Phones are not allowed in class for any reason!** If you have pressing matters, let us know before class, and step outside to text/talk on the phone there.

Assignments

- Each week, you are required to **submit a few lines on Moodle concerning the assigned reading.** These must be submitted each **Sunday by midnight.**
- In the course of the year, you are required to **submit four (two each semester) 2-page assignments.** The due dates are available in the syllabus.
- In the course of the year, there will be **four (two each semester) quizzes.**
- Note that, according to BGU's protocol, **failing the exam means failing the course.**

Topics & bibliography

Semester A (Fall Semester):

24.10 Introduction

What is Theory?

31.10 Marxism

Karl Marx: Theses on Feuerbach (1845)

Targil Text: Maxim Gorky, Chapters 5 and 6 of *Mother* (1906)

7.11 Formalism

Victor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique" (1917)

Targil Text: Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" (1976)

1st short assignment – due 24.11

14.11 Woolf and First Wave Feminism

Virginia Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own* (1929)

Targil Text: Virginia Woolf, from *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

21.11 Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny" (1919)

Targil Text: E.T.A Hoffmann, "The Sandman" (1817)

28.11 New Criticism

Cleanth Brooks, "Keats's Sylvan Historian: History without Footnotes" (1947)

John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820)

Targil Text: Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" (1820)

5.12 Reader Response

Wolfgang Iser: "The Play of the Text"

Targil Text: Wolfgang Iser, "Interaction between Text and Reader" (1980)

James Joyce, "Clay" (1914)

Quiz 1: New Criticism & Reader-Response

2nd short assignment – due 22.12

12.12 Structuralism - Linguistics (De Saussure)

De Saussure, "Course in General Linguistics" (1916)

Targil Text: e.e. cummings, "anyone lived in a pretty how town" (1940)

19.12 Structuralism - Semiotics (Barthes)

Roland Barthes, "Myth Today," in *Mythologies* (1957)

Targil Text: Barthes, "The World of Wrestling" and "Soap-powders and Detergents," in *Mythologies* (1957)

26.12 Structuralism - Narratology

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, "Narrative Levels and Voices" (1983)

Targil Text: Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Final Problem" (1893)

2.1 Post-Structuralism (Barthes)

Barthes, "From Work to Text" (1971)

Targil Text: Jorge Luis Borges, "The Garden of Forking Paths" (1941)

9.1 Deconstruction (Derrida)

Jacques Derrida, from "Of Grammatology" (1967)

Targil Text: Edgar Allen Poe, "The Purloined Letter" (1844)

Quiz 2: Structuralist theories

16.1 Conclusion

Semester B (Spring Semester):

6.3 - no class (Purim)

13.3 "Second Wave" Psychoanalysis – Bloom:

Harold Bloom, "Introduction" from *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973)

Targil Text: Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"

20.3 "Second Wave" Psychoanalysis, Psychoanalytic Feminist Criticism:

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Infection in the Sentence" (1979)

Targil Text: Emma Lazarus, "Echoes"

27.3 Foucault:

Quiz on Freud, Bloom & G&G

Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," in *Technologies of the Self* (1988) [Interview is optional]

Targil text: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, from Book I of *The Confessions* (1769 [1782])

3.4 New Historicism:

Stephen Greenblatt, "Shakespeare and the Exorcists," in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (1988) – **visiting lecturer**

Targil text: Virginia Woolf – Chapter II of *A Room of One's Own* (1929)

10.4- no class (Passover)

17.4 French Feminism:

Hélène Cixous, "'Felicidade Clandestina': The Promise of Having What One Will Have" in *Reading with Clarice Lispector* (1989)

Targil text: Clarice Lispector – "Covert Joy" (1971)

3rd short assignment – due 11.5

24.4 Gender Theory:

Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (1988)

Targil text: Charlotte Perkins Gilman – "If I Were a Man" (1914)

1.5 Trans Theory:

Susan Stryker, "My Words to Victor Frankenstein above the Village of Chamonix: Performing Transgender Rage" (1994)

Targil text: "My Words to Victor Frankenstein" (cont.)

8.5 African American Literary Criticism:

Henry Louis Gates Jr. "Talking Black: Critical Signs of the Times," in *Loose Canons: Notes on the Culture Wars* (1992)

Targil text: Langston Hughes – "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1920)

15.5 Orientalism:

Edward Said, "Introduction," in *Orientalism* (1978)

Targil text: George Gordon (Lord) Byron – "She Walks in Beauty" (1814)

22.5 Post-Colonial Theory:

Quiz on Gates & Said

Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," in *The Location of Culture* (1994)

Targil text: Louise Bennet – "Dry-Foot Bwoy" (1957)

29.5 New-Ethics:

Dorothy Hale, "The New Ethics and Contemporary Fiction," in *The Novel and the New Ethics* (2020)

Targil text: Henry James – "The Real Right Thing" (1899)

5.6 Posthumanism:

N. Katherine Hayles, "Toward Embodied Virtuality," in *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics* (1999)

Targil text: Philip K. Dick – "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" (1966)

4th short assignment – due 22.6

12.6 Distant Reading:

Franco Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature" (2000)

Targil text: Online Resources (Literary Lab/ Blake Archive/ Google Ngram)

19.6 Review Class + Review Targil

