



Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures & Linguistics

Academic year 2022-23 (תשפ"ג)

Course title (English): Reading Women's Literary and Life Writing

Course title (Hebrew): עיון בספרות ובכתיבת חיים של נשים

Course number: 132.1.0313

Course slot:

Monday 10:00-12:00. Semesters 1 and 2

Lecturer's Office Hours and contact details:

Prof. Chanita Goodblatt

Monday 12:30-13:30. Or by Appointment. Building 74/Room 508

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Course Description & Objectives:

Life writing is an open and flexible term for a wide variety of texts, which record personal memories and experiences. It is a critical practice, which encourages both writer and reader to develop and foster her/his own self-consciousness in order to make the self-in-the-writing less abstract. This course will focus on five women writers, in order to study how this concept of self is developed within a dialogic relationship between literary works—fiction and poetry—and the genres of autobiography, letters and memoirs. The writers to be studied are both American and English: Louisa May Alcott, Vera Brittain, Hilda Doolittle (H.D.), Sylvia Plath and Elizabeth Bishop. Their respective works respond to major experiences of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: the struggle of women against the conventional boundaries of family and society; the violence of war (both World War 1 and 2) and its traumatic consequences; and the process of creative, artistic development within these historic and cultural venues.

Course Requirements

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| 1. | Attendance and Reading (3 absences allowed) | |
| 2. | Oral Referat. | 15% |
| 3. | Written Referat (4-5 pages) | 20% |
| 4. | Seminar Paper | |
| | a. Outline and Annotated Bibliography | 15% |
| | b. Completed Paper (15-18 pages) | 50% |

Topics & Bibliography

Primary Sources

1. A Woman's Novel of Education
Alcott, Louisa May. 1868-1869. *Little Women*. Boston: Roberts Brothers.
Cheney, Ednah D. Ed. 1890. *Louisa May Alcott: Her Life, Letters and Journals*. Boston: Roberts Brothers.
2. Women and World War I
Brittain, Vera. 1918. *Verses of a V.A.D.* London: Erskine Macdonald.
Brittain, Vera. 1933. *Testament of Youth: An Autobiographical Study of the Years 1900-1925*. London: Victor Gollancz
3. Trauma and War
Doolittle, Hilda. 1984c.1944. *Tribute to Freud*. New York: New Directions.
Doolittle, Hilda. 1986c.1944. "The Walls Do Not Fall." In *H.D.: Collected Poems: 1912-1944*. Ed. Louis L. Martz. 507-43. New York: New Directions.
4. Independence and Mental Health
Plath, Sylvia. 1963. *The Bell Jar*. London: Faber and Faber.
Plath, Sylvia. 1981. *The Complete Poems*. New York: Harper & Row.
5. Sexuality and Privacy
Bishop, Elizabeth. 1984. *Poems, Prose, and Letters*. New York: Library of America.
Bishop, Elizabeth. 2006. *Edgar Allan Poe & The Juke-Box*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Select Critical Sources

- Barros, Carolyn A. 1998. *Autobiography: A Narrative of Transformation*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. 1988. *Writing a Woman's Life*. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. 1999. *Women's Lives: The View from the Threshold*. Toronto: U of Toronto P.
- Jolly, Margaretta and Liz Stanley. 2005. "Letters As/Not a Genre." *Life Writing* 2.2:91-118.
- Stanton, Maureen. 2012. "The Examined Life: Re/search in Memoir." *Lifewriting Annual* 3: 87-93.