



## **Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures & Linguistics**

**Academic year 2022-23 (תשפ"ג)**

**Course title (English):** Survey of 20th-Century Literature

**Course title (Hebrew):** סקירת הספרות האנגלו-אמריקאית של המאה ה-20

**Course number:** 132-1-0299

**Course slot (semester/s, weekday/s, hours):** Yearly (Semester A+B), Mondays 12:00-14:00

**Lecturer:** Dr. Ruth Wenske

**Lecturer's conference hour and contact details:** [noruthie@gmail.com](mailto:noruthie@gmail.com) (to be updated; office hours TBA)

### **Course description & objectives:**

Twentieth-century literature in English captures a seminal development in the era of globalization: the transition from the British Empire to the empire of English. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, English-language literature grew to be a global phenomenon in dialogue with key historical events, including the world wars, the Cold War, the fall and rise of empires, and the appearance of world-spanning media and communication. In this course, we will read influential works of Anglo-American literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, taking the modernist and post-modernist movements as our primary lens for interrogating the historical and global positionality of texts. Reading poetry, short stories, novels, drama, and speculative fiction, we will ask how literary works' generic conventions and aesthetic choices register the central political and ethical questions of their times. The first semester will focus on works from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, following influential writers and poets such as T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, and Zora Neale Hurston. The second semester will be more global in its scope, moving between English-speaking metropolises and the so-called margins of the Anglophone world, with texts by authors including John Barth, Samuel Becket, Doris Lessing, Wole Soyinka, and Salman Rushdie. We will ask: how are modernist and postmodernist styles and epistemologies expressed through different genres? What were the possible motivations propelling modernist and postmodernist aesthetics as these spread throughout the world? And how do issues of race, gender, and class make themselves felt in these works?

## Course requirements:

Mandatory attendance (with up to three unexcused absences during the semester).

Participation and writing assignments on Moodle	10%
Midyear essay (4-5 pages)	20%
Two quizzes (to be announced in advance)	20%
Final paper (6-8 pages)	50%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Topics & bibliography

### Fall Semester | First Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Introduction Class:** from Romanticism to Modernism; William Carlos Williams, “This is Just to Say” (1923), “The Red Wheelbarrow” (1934) | 24.10

#### Section One: Poems

W. B. Yeats, selected poems including “Easter 1916,” “The Second Coming,” “Leda and the Swan.” | 31.10

T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land” (1922) | 7.11

T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land” (1922) | 14.11

Langston Hughes, selected poems from *Collected Poems* including “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “Negro,” “Bitter River” (1920-1942) | 21.11

#### Section Two: Short Stories

Franz Kafka, “The Metamorphosis” (1915) | 28.11

Pericles Lewis, “Introduction,” in *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*, pp. 1-33 | 5.12

William Faulkner, “Barn Burning” (1938) | 12.12

#### Section Three: Novels

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927) | 12.12

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927) | 19.12 – **quiz (date might change)**

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927) | 26.12

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929) | 2.1

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (1929) | 9.1

Concluding class | 16.1

### 23.2 Midyear essay due

### Spring Semester | Second Half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

No class (Purim) 6.3

**Introduction class:** Postmodernism, empire, and the Cold War. Steven Connor, "Postmodernist Literature" in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism* | 13.3

#### Section One: Poems

Alan Ginsburg, “Howl” (1956) | 20.3

Seamus Heaney, “Digging,” “Death of a Naturalist,” and other poems from *Death of a Naturalist* (1966) | 27.3

Okot p’Bitek, *Song of Lawino* (selections, 1966); ; Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), “Ka ’Ba” (1969); Derek Walcott, “The Sea Is History” (1979); Linton Kwesi Johnson, “If I Woz a Tap-Natch Poet” (1996) | 3.4

## **Section Two: Novel**

No Class, Passover | 10.4

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977) | 17.4

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977) | 24.4

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977) | 1.5 - **quiz (date might change)**

## **Section three: Short Stories**

John Barth, "Lost in the Funhouse," from *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968) | 8.5

Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl" (1978) | 15.5

Jorge Luis Borges, "Shakespeare's Memory" (1983) | 22.5

## **Section Four: Drama**

Samuel Becket, *Waiting for Godot* (1952) | 29.5

Samuel Becket, *Waiting for Godot* (1952) | 5.6

Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975) | 12.6

Concluding class | 19.6

**Final paper due 1.9.2023**