



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

Semester A

2023-24

Name of the course: The Poetics of War and Loss

Name of the Lecturer: Ron Ben-Tovim

Office hours: Monday (34, Room 124) and Thursday (34, Room 303), 14:00-16:00

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Course's goals:

The course will focus on the war writing tradition from classical times to the present moment, with an emphasis on the interplay between the classical tradition and the modern and contemporary war writing tradition. Discussion will focus both on the role of war and war writing in establishing and undermining mainstream American and British cultures, as well as the manner with which the literary works bear the marks of the effect of violence and the fear of death on participating individuals. Writers to be discussed include Homer, Virgil, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Randall Jarrell, Simone Weil, H.D., Virginia Woolf, Tim O'Brien, Bruce Weigl, and others.

Course program:

- 1.1 Introduction: War
- 4.1 Selections from the *Iliad*; Simone Weil, "*The Iliad, or the Poem of Force*"
- 8.1 Selections from the *Odyssey*.
- 11.1 Anglo Saxon Poetry: "Battle of Brunanburh"; "The Battle of Maldon"
- 15.1 J. R. R. Tolkein, "The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth Beorhthelm's Son."
- 18.1 Poetry and Trauma - Geoffry of Monmouth, from *Vita Merlini*; Freud, from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*

Short paper assigned

- 22.1 The Twentieth Century: Trauma and Tradition
- 25.1 David Jones, *In Parenthesis*
- 29.1 David Jones, *In Parenthesis*; Vincent Sherry: "A New Measure."
- Short paper due**
- 1.2 David Jones, *In Parenthesis*
- 5.2 David Jones, *In Parenthesis*
- 12.2 David Jones, *In Parenthesis*
- 15.2 Wilfred Owen, Sigmund Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, W.B. Yeats; Tennyson, "Charge of the Light Brigade;" Julia Stimson, from *Finding Themselves*
- 19.2 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 22.2 *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 26.2 *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 29.2 *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 4.3 *Mrs. Dalloway*; Barbara Andrew, "The Psychology of Tyranny"
- 7.3 *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 11.3 Randall Jarrell, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," H.D., "The Walls Do Not Fall."
- 14.3 Gerardo Mena, Chantelle Bateman, Riverbend Blog; Kate Gaskin, Elyse Fenton

- 4.1 Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried"; Bruce Weigl, from *The Circle of Hanh* (prologue and Chapter 48), and "Song of Napalm."
- 11.1 Abu Seif, from *The Drone Eats with Me*, and from Hassan Blassim - *The corpse Exhibition*.

Course's requirements and grade distribution:

- Attendance: 10%
- Responses
(three per semester): 10%
- Short Paper: 25%

Take-Home Exam: 55%

Partial Reading List:

Homer, *The Iliad*

Homer, *The Odyssey*

J. R. R Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*

David Jones, *In Parenthesis*

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*