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Office hours: Thursdays 3-4:15

MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE
LIT 7034, Mondays, 10:20-12:10/Kripke 312

The purpose of this course is threefold. The first concerns the canon of modern Hebrew literature. The revival of Hebrew and its use in literary art to represent in the transformations of Jewish life in modern times constitute one of the greatest cultural moments in the life of the Jewish people. As rabbis, it is important for you to have first-hand familiarity with, if not mastery of, this achievement. The course aims to acquaint you with some of the key authors and their works.

Second, the course will aim to consolidate and advance your Hebrew skills in the areas of reading and verbal comprehension and oral expression of conceptual material. (We will not work on writing skills; analytic papers will be written in English.) Many of you are returning from the year in Israel and from participation in courses taught in Hebrew. This course will help you hold on to the proficiency you worked hard to achieve in those courses. I recognize at the outset that there will be many levels of Hebrew represented by the participants in the course. This is a challenge that calls forth the best efforts on the part of all of us. I have to strive to communicate clearly and the build on repeated vocabulary and key concepts; and you will have to display persistence, the willingness sometimes to sound less accomplished than you would in English, and, above all, patience with other students. *If you are not yet ready to take a literature course taught in Hebrew, then you should consider taking the course in a future semester.* As for the texts themselves, you will be reading original sources that will vary in their linguistic difficulty. For almost all the readings, translations will be available, and you may use these as aids in working through the Hebrew texts.

Third, this is a literature course that will strengthen your familiarity with key concepts in literary theory and modes of analysis as well as giving you the chance to sharpen your analytic and expository writing skills. Through a series of short papers, you will work on the clear communication of significant ideas. You will come away from the course with greater confidence in how to approach, discuss and evaluate works of literature; these are skills that will stand you in good stead in your future work in the Jewish community.

Requirements. You are required to prepare the readings and be present on time in class and participate in discussions. If you miss a class, you are still responsible for preparing the text and submitting required written work. Two absences put you in danger of failing the course. There are three five-page analytic papers in addition to occasional brief response papers. The analytic papers must, with no exceptions, be submitted on the day assigned, which will be the day that that work of literature is being discussed in class. There will be a final examination; students can petition to substitute a term paper for the final.

Texts. All the texts and their translations can be found on the Blackboard website for the course. In addition, you are asked to purchase *The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself* at the Labyrinth Bookstore.

Jan. 23	Introduction; Bialik, "Levadi" in <i>The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself (MHPI)</i>
30	Sh. Y. Abramovitch (Mendele Mokher-Seforim), "Hanisrafim"
Feb. 6	H. N. Bialik, <i>Be'ir hahareigah</i> [paper due]
13	Shaul Tchernichovsky, "Ashtorti li" and "Lashemesh" in <i>MHPI</i>
27	M. Y. Berdichevsky, "Parah adumah"
Mar. 6	Devora Baron, "Bayom harish'on" and "Genizah"
13	Sh. Y. Agnon: "Agunot"
20	Agnon: "Pat sheleimah" [paper due]
27	[Colloquium on American Hebrew Literature]
Apr. 3	Poetry of Avraham Shlonsky and U. Z. Greenberg in <i>MHPI</i>
24	S. Yizhar, "Hashavui" [paper due]
May 1	Amos Oz, "Derekh haru'ah"
3	Aharon Appelfeld, "'Al yad hahof"