

Prof. Alan Mintz
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Hours: Thursdays 3-4:15

LIT 5714Y: RESPONSES TO CATASTROPHE
Wednesday 8:20-10:10

One of the central features of Jewish history has been the capacity of the Jewish people to survive and renew itself in the aftermath of massive catastrophes. This course examines the role of the literary-theological imagination in enabling this survival. The focus is not on the problem of evil per se, that is the suffering of the individual righteous person, but rather on the collective experience of the people as a whole. The body of texts we will examine is the known, canonical Jewish literary tradition in Hebrew rather than materials, such as Josephus's account in Greek of the Massada suicides, which would not have been known to later links in the tradition. We will emphasize changing paradigms of explanation that allow for calamities to be explained within a conception of the relationship of God and the Jewish people. When it comes to the Holocaust, we will explore whether responses in Hebrew literature relate to the repertoire of classical responses.

The course will be conducted in English; we shall read from the Hebrew texts as far as possible. Attending all classes prepared to discuss the readings is the key requirement. There will also be several short papers. The end-of-semester assignment will be a take-home final examination.

Course readings will be available on Blackboard. For the first three sessions, you are responsible for using and bringing to class the JPS Tanakh. You are required to purchase three books for the course, which are available at Labyrinth Books: Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Jewish Literature*, Aharon Appelfeld, *Badenheim 1939*, and David Grossman, *See Under: Love*.

From ~~the~~
Prof Mintz -
Please return
(as well as packet
for his other class)

Readings

Jan. 17	Introduction to the problem; the Deuteronomic tradition and classical prophecy
24	Lamentations as resistance to normative theology: Chapters 1-2; Mintz, ch. 1
31	The male theologian of Lamentations 3; Alan Cooper article
Feb. 7	The creditability of redemption and the promise of apocalypse: Isaiah 40, 50-52; Daniel 7-12; Readings: David Kraemer, Christopher Rowland, Paul Hanson
14	Rabbinic responses to the destruction of the Second Temple: selections from Eicha Rabbah, Sefer Ha'aggadah; Mintz, ch. 2.
21	Gezeirot Ashkenaz: First Crusade chronicles and David bar Meshullam of Speyer, "Elohim, al domi ledami"
28	Historiographical issues in understanding of the mass suicides and homicides; Readings: Jeremy Cohen, Mintz, ch. 3
Mar. 7	The pogroms in Russia and the critique of martyrology in Bialik's <i>Be'ir hahareigah</i> ; special PROOFTEXTS issue (Vol. 25, nos. 1-2, 2005) via Project Muse, esp. Mintz, Gluzman and Horowitz chapters.
14	Apocalyptic visions and lyric reclamations: the Holocaust poetry of Uri Zvi Greenberg; Mintz, ch. 5
21	Aharon Appelfeld, <i>Badenheim 1939</i>
28	"In a Sealed Boxcar": The poetry of Dan Pagis
Apr. 18	Imagining the inner world of survivor and the "second generation" in the new Israeli society: David Grossman, "Momik" in <i>See Under: Love</i>
25	Review and synthesis