Israeli Women Writers on War & Peace

This course explores the interrelations between women, nationalism, war, peace, political structures, and political action in Modern Hebrew literature and Israeli society. By reading and discussing a selection of influential literary texts and theoretical research, we will examine how women shape and are shaped by the various national-political environments in which they operate. Drawing on literary theories, poetic norms, postcolonial thought, psychoanalysis, and feminist theories, the course explores the multiple ways in which women define their national identities, challenge hegemony, act to resist violence, and struggle to secure a moral and physical existence for themselves, their families and their communities. Supplementary to the readings, we will try to re-establish the cultural framework of the texts by incorporating into the course and into our discussions excerpts from Israeli music, works of art, and films.

Within a socio-cultural framework, the course examines the complex relationship between Zionism, gender, nationalism, and resistance. By focusing on the perspective of women-writers and discussing women’s relationship to the state, politics, and local and global processes of cultural production, we will draw out major themes in Israeli culture, such as the motif of the Aqedah (the binding of Isaac), bereavement and motherhood, circles of violence, guilt, women-soldiers, peace movements, the contamination of language, and the role of poetics in times “when the cannons roar.”

Course Requirements
Attendance and participation are particularly important and will count as part of the course grade. Students are expected to prepare for each class, participate in class discussion and hand in written assignments in a timely manner.
The final grade will be calculated as follows:
Attendance, participation, and oral presentation – 20%
Midterm paper – 40%
Final paper – 40%
* Monday, October 20, 2014: Midterm Paper due in class.
* Monday, December 8, 2014: Final Paper due in class.

* Each unit is approximately a week and a half.
* The vast majority of readings may be found on LATTE.

“As a Woman, I Have No Country:” Introduction
- Eugene Delacroix: “Liberty Leading the People” (1830)

Between Sex and Gender
Aristophanes: *Assemblywomen* (392/1 B.C)
Selection from Bertha von Suttner, Gertrud Bäumer, and Lida Gustava Heymann
Virginia Woolf: *Three Guineas* (1938)

- Additional reading for graduate students:
  Nira Yuval-Davis: Selection from *Gender and Nation* (1997)

The Myth of the *Aqedah* (The Binding of Isaac)
- Menashe Kadishman: “Mother Caring Her Sacrifice,” “Alter,” “Lament,” “In the Valley of Sadness”
- *Late Summer Blues* (1987), directed by Renen Schorr, written by Doron Nesher and Renen Schorr
Nathan Alterman: “About the Child Abram” (1944)
Haim Gouri: “Heritage” (1960)

- Additional reading for graduate students:
Circles of Violence
- Chava Alberstein: “Chad Gadya”
- To Die in Jerusalem (2007), directed by Hilla Medalia
Raquel Chalfi: “A German Boot” (1969)
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:

Creating Alternatives

Witnessing History in the Making
- To See if I’m Smiling (2007), directed by Tamar Yarom
- Checkpoint (2003), directed by Yoav Shamir
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:
  Yehudit Kirstein Keshet: Selection from Checkpoint Watch: Testimonies from Occupied Palestine (2005)

Guilt
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:
Language and Poetic
Nathan Alterman: “The Third Mother” (1938)
  o Chava Alberstein: Will Days Indeed Come
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:

Bereavement And Motherhood
  o Four Mothers: Leaving Lebanon in Peace
Dalia Ravikovitch: “But She Had a Son” (1992)
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:


Women-Soldiers: Equality Or Discrimination?
  o Adi Nes
  o Nir Hod
Netiva Ben Yehuda: selection from *1948 - Between Calendars* (1981)
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students:

War Widows
Lea Aini: selection from *Sand Tide* (1992)
  ➢ Additional reading for graduate students: