Divided Society, Divided Identity: Exploring the Experience of Minorities in Israel

Instructor: Amber Taylor
Brandeis email: cita@brandeis.edu
Class meets: M/W/Th 10:00-10:50 a.m.
Office: Schusterman Center for Israel Studies
Location: Olin-Sang 112
Hours: Mon 11-12; Thu 12-1 (subject to change)
Email: ambercecile3@gmail.com (preferred)

Course Description and Objectives
The question of identity in the modern world is one that finds representation in a myriad of creative and cultural expressions, including literature and film. Using these two mediums, this course will consider some of the ways that minorities in Israel explore and represent complex questions of identity in a land and society endlessly divided and sub-divided in terms of space, history and language. We will first look at the case of Palestinian Israelis and the work of one of the most prominent Israeli authors, Sayed Kashua. Exploring questions of division and identity in Israeli society, students will learn to closely read a text and create a persuasive argument about that text. Next we will turn to film and literature of Jews from Arab countries, examining questions of societal and cultural oppression, as well as Jewish identity, as they have been raised by scholars such as Ella Shohat and Aziza Khazzoom. Students will learn how to utilize a theoretical text as a lens in order to formulate a richer, more complex argument in their analysis of primary source texts. In the final weeks of the course, students will research and write a larger, more fully developed essay that focuses on the experience of a particular minority group in Israel, such as the Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews), Holocaust survivors, women or the LGBTQ community. Throughout the course, students will learn to think analytically, formulate stimulating research questions and arguments, and write coherently and persuasively at the college level.

Required Texts
Brandeis Latte
Write Now!, a collection of Brandeis Student essays.
Writer’s Help online guide

Evaluation
Attendance, Conferences, Participation 10%
Assignments 75%
Essay 1
Essay 2 20%

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Assignment

Essay 1: Close Reading
Based on our class discussions and employing close reading skills, you will write a 5-7 page essay that makes an interpretive argument about at least three articles from Sayed Kashua’s *Native OR at least three episodes of Kashua’s Arab Labor*.

Essay 2: Lens Analysis
Using either Ella Shohat’s or Homi Bhabha’s article, as a critical lens through which to examine Almog Behar’s “Ana min al-Yahoud,” or Dor Guez’s *Samira*, you will write a 7-9 page essay that explores the ways in which the piece deals with the experience of Mizrachi Jewish immigrants in Israel. What connections do you see between the Mizrachi Jewish experience as described by the theoretical texts (lens) and the primary source (focus) text? What tensions exist between the two? Does the focus text relate with some aspects of the lens text, and question others? Most importantly, how does the lens text affect the way you perceive the focus text? Based on these reflections, you are to create an arguable thesis and write an essay that puts forward original ideas regarding the focus text.

Essay 3: Research Project
Employing the critical reading and thinking skills developed in the course, you will conduct an independent research project on one of the following topics: a) explore the context, meaning and implications of a primary source document (book, short story, series of poems, movie, etc.) as it relates to a social group of your choice in Israeli society; b) explore the intersectionality of minority experience in Israel: what shared experiences do you see across social boundaries? what differences are there? how do you explain those similarities and differences? c) revise and expand on your close read or lens essay. Your research will employ a combination of primary and secondary source documents and will be 10-12 pages in length.

Communication
I will communicate almost exclusively through email. You are expected to check your email regularly, and at least once between class periods. Though electronic missives give the impression of informality, I view all of our communications to be part of our professional relationship. As such, I expect your emails and letters to begin with a salutation (“Dear…”” and end with a valediction (e.g. “Sincerely”). I also expect you to be mindful of your tone: remember that though you may have grown up using electronic communication, many of your professors
Taylor did not. They expect you to communicate respectfully—including proper grammar and an appropriate level of formality—we will practice this mode of communication in class.

**Attendance**

Coming to class regularly is a basic expectation for this course. Your success as a writer at Brandeis will improve if you are present every day, on time, and prepared to participate in discussions and activities. Our limited schedule necessitates that we move swiftly through the course material; we will not have much time to spend revisiting old material. If you must miss class, please let me know before class begins. Your grade will be deducted 1/3 of a letter grade for every absence after your **third** absence. You should plan ahead in the semester if you need to miss for religious reasons or for holidays, as any (excused) absences will count as part of your three allotted absences. More than **six** absences will result in a failing grade.

Likewise, we will begin and end class on time each day. If you can make it to class, you can make it to class **on time**. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, it will count as an absence, and 1/3 of a letter grade will be deducted for each tardy after the third tardy. Be on time and prepared to each class.

**Participation**

Your writing will improve as you engage with the other students in your class to discuss the texts and ideas, as well your own writing. Thus participation is mandatory for success in the course. This may take the form of discussion in class and/or responses to readings posted weekly on Latte.

**Conferences**

Three times during the semester, we will meet in my office for 20-minute conferences, one during each of the three major assignments. These will be one-on-one discussions of your course work, and it will give you a chance to get detailed and personalized feedback from me on your writing and the directions your projects are taking. Any missed conference will count as an absence. You should bring all relevant materials to your conference, including drafts, comments, revisions, outlines and key sources. Also be prepared to discuss any questions, concerns or ideas you have regarding the course, texts or assignments.

**Peer Review Workshops**

Each paper you write will undergo at least one round of peer review. The day your rough drafts are due, you will bring **3 hard copies** to class—one for the instructor, and two for peer reviewers. You will then read and mark up the drafts and write a **1-2 page response** to the essays
of two of your peers for the following class, when you will share your feedback in small groups. You are expected to participate respectfully and intelligently during these workshops, not just providing constructive comments but receiving and acting on them as well. I will be looking at your final drafts for significant revisions that address the points raised in both my comments and those of your peers.

Consider the following while reading and re-reading:

1. Label the topic sentence of each paragraph. If you cannot identify it, make a note of this in the margins.
2. Underline ambiguous, awkward, and confusing wording.

Consider the following while recording feedback:

1. Restate the thesis, without recycling the words that the author uses. If a thesis is not clear, say so.
2. Locate any topic sentence that does not capture the main idea(s) of its paragraph.
3. Assess the clarity and the effectiveness of the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.
4. Weigh the originality and the persuasiveness of the piece, and distinguish its motive.
5. Identify strength(s) and weakness(es) of the draft, taking into account such factors as argument and evidence, flow and logic, phrasing and style. In suggesting at least two (2) elements in need of revision, point to specifics (paragraphs, sentences, and words) whenever possible.

**Essays**

Each of your three essays will require several pre-drafts and one revision. All assignments should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1 inch margins, and printed. Your last name and a page number should occupy the header or footer of each page. All citations must be in Chicago style. Each draft must be accompanied by a cover letter in which you will explain the goals of your paper and reflect on your writing and revision process. Papers that fail to meet these criteria will not be accepted. Please write complete rough drafts; the more work you do for this draft, the better your revision will be. All drafts of the essays will be handed in as physical copies at the beginning of class.

**Portfolio Review**

At the end of the semester, you will be asked to collect the work that you produced in the course
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of this seminar. In assembling this material (every piece of writing – every draft, every exercise, every note, every revision – and every piece of feedback), you will be required to reflect back on the development that you made as a writer. In a review of at least three pages, you will evaluate your work this term and ultimately produce a class writing manual.

Late Work
Extensions will not be granted unless there are extreme, extenuating circumstances. Papers will lose 1/3 of a grade for every day they are late (e.g., a B paper will receive a B-). If you take advantage of the Writing Center, you may hand in a completed reward sheet (obtainable from the Writing Center at the time of your appointment) in place of your final draft (and only the final draft) for a 24-hour extension. All other assignments, including pre-drafts and rough drafts, should be completed on the scheduled due date. Failure to complete the pre-draft, rough draft, and peer review assignments will affect your grade.

Writing Center
Brandeis has an excellent writing resource for students. The Writing Center offers one-on-one tutorials with trained and experienced consultants. Visit <http://www.brandeis.edu/writingprogram/center/> to get a better idea of what the writing center has to offer or to sign up (online!) for an appointment. When you visit the writing center, you may have your consultant fill out a Writing Center Reward Form, which will earn you a 24-hour extension on the final draft of any paper (only one extension per paper).

Academic Integrity
In the academic setting it is critical that the work you present is original and that when you use outside sources you cite them appropriately. You are expected to know and respect University policies regarding academic integrity. (See either section five of the Rights and Responsibilities handbook or the following website: www.brandeis.edu/-studentlife/sdc/ai.) Instances of suspected dishonesty will be referred to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to failure in the course, failure of the assignment in question, and/or suspension from the University and/or educational programs. If you have questions about plagiarism or academic standards of originality, please discuss these with me.

Disabilities
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.
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Class Schedule

Unit 1: Close Reading

Week 1
January 18

Introductions; explanation of course expectations.

Note: You must enter Latte and write a response to the question posted for the first week of class. Due Friday, January 20 by 11:55 p.m.

January 19

Quiz on course syllabus (on Latte - due January 22, 11:55 p.m.)

Read: Parfitt, Writing in Response, Introduction

Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: HISTORY: The State of Israel (link on Latte)

Jewish Virtual Library:

- Israel: Demographics: Population in Israel/Palestine; Minority Communities
- Minority Communities in Israel: History and Overview; The Status of Israeli Arabs; Land Day; Statistics regarding Israeli Arabs
- Explore at least one other section of your choice (you will be asked to report)

Shlaim, Iron Wall, “Prologue”

Write: Response on Latte (due 9:00 a.m.)

Discuss: History of Israel and its Arab citizens, generally

Week 2
January 23

Read: Parfitt, Part 1, section 1, “Reading with a Purpose,” pp. 21-45

Khalidi, All That Remains, selections

Review of Khalidi by Benny Morris

Waxman, “A Dangerous Divide”

Moragh, “New Images of Arabs in Israeli Fiction” (optional)

Write: Response on Latte

Discuss: Development of Palestinian nationalism and challenges for Palestinian Israelis

Close reading and first essay assignment

January 25

Read: Parfitt, Part 1, section 2, “Active Reading,” pp. 47-68

Sayed Kashua, Dancing Arabs, selected passages

Wattad, “I Believe: Israeli Arabs, Lost in a Sea of Identities”

Write: Pre-draft 1.1 (Latte, 9:00 a.m.)
Discuss: Close Reading of a primary source document

January 26
Read: Sayed Kashua, *Native*, selected passages
Parfitt 109-125
Harvey, “Elements of the Academic Essay”
Talmon, “Arabic As a Minority Language in Israel” (optional)
Write: Pre-draft 1.2 (9:00 a.m.)
Discuss: Sayed Kashua
Elements of the academic essay
Thesis activity
Introduction

**Week 3**

January 30
Read: (Watch) *Arab Labor* (episodes 1, 4, 9, 10 minimum)
Parfitt 129-139, 147-164
Write: Pre-Draft 1.3 (Latte, 9:00 a.m.)
Discuss: Topic Sentence and outlining essay for strong flow of ideas
Revision
(Note: in groups, revision of theses and introduction)

February 1
Read: Parfitt 183-208
Write: Pre-Draft 1.4
Discuss: Principles of organization
Strong argumentation and analysis
(Note: in groups, revision of topic sentence outline)

February 2
Read: Parfitt 127-145 (Yes, review the section on organization); AND 324-331
Cohen, “Good Arabs”
Write: Revision: thesis, introduction, topic sentence outline (based on revision activity; upload to Latte by February 2, 8:00 a.m.)
Discuss: Academic title
Paraphrasing
Quotations
(Note: paraphrasing and quoting activity)

**Week 4**

February 6
Read: Parfitt 245-256
Write: First (rough) Draft and Cover Letter (Note: bring three printed copies to class)
Discuss: Style
Grammar and sentence structure
Editing student papers activity

February 8
Read: Parfitt 260-264
Drafts for Peer Review
Write: Peer Review Letters (bring printed copies to class, upload in one document to Latte)
Discuss: Conferences: etiquette and expectations
(Note: In class - Peer Review)

February 9 CONFERENCES

Unit 2: Texts as Lenses
Week 5
February 13
Read: (Watch) “Ingathering of the Exiles,” Episode from Tkuma Rosenthal, selected passages
(Suggested: Jewish Virtual Library: Immigration to Israel, Overview)
Anita Shapira, selected passages (optional)
Write: Response on Latte
Discuss: Review of Israeli society and Jewish immigration
Lens Essay
Key terms for stitching
Transitional language

February 15
Read: Parfitt 294-300; 319-322
Shohat, “The Invention of the Mizrahim”
Dahan-Kalev, “You’re So Pretty, You Don’t Look Moroccan” (optional)
Write: Final Draft of Close Read (upload to Latte, and hard copy to class)
Discuss: Pairing a lens and focal text
Mini lens activity (with Shohat and Sallah Shabati)

February 16 NO CLASS—enjoy the break!
February 20-24  BREAK

Week 6
February 27
Read:    Behar, “Ana min al-Yahud”
Write:   Response on Latte
Discuss: “Ana min al-Yahud”
Symbolism and semiotics
Balancing evidence and analysis

March 1
Read:    Sugbaker, “Memories of an Indian Upbringing”
Write:   Pre-Draft 2.1 (Reflection on Focus Text)
Discuss: Sugbaker
Quoting, paraphrasing and interpretive analysis

March 2
Read:    Bourdieu, “Structures, Habitus, Practices”
Write:   Pre-draft 2.2 (Outline of lens text)
Discuss: Bourdieu and Habitus
Strategically reading a complicated argumentative text
Matching lens and focal text
Openers

Week 7
March 6
Read:    Nothing due
Write:   Pre-Draft 2.3 (Matching lens and focal text)
Discuss: Thesis and motive with a lens

March 8
Read:    Nothing due
Write:   Pre-Draft 2.4 (2 hard copies to class, upload on Latte by 8:00 a.m.)
Discuss: Balancing evidence and analysis
Non-linguistic evidence
Thesis and Motive in lens essay
Brief introduction to Research Essay
(Note: In class - peer review of thesis, intro and outline)

March 9
Read:    Parfitt 296-322
Write:   Respond on Latte (initial thoughts on topic for research assignment)
Discuss: Strong paragraphs
Conclusions
(In class—loser sentence activity)

Week 8
March 13
Read: Nothing due
Write: Rough Draft of Lens Essay (be sure to bring 3 hard copies to class)
Discuss: Library visit (meet in library - subject to change)

March 15
Read: Peer Review rough drafts
Write: Peer Review Letters (printed copies to class, upload as one document to Latte)
Discuss: Peer Review Activity

March 16
CONFERENCES

Week 9
Unit 3: Research Essay
March 20
Read: Herzog, “Homefront and Battlefront: The Status of Jewish and Palestinian Women in Israel”
Write: Response on Latte
Discuss: Introduce Research Essay Assignment
Gender in Israeli society: Jewish, Arab and beyond
Primary vs. Secondary Sources
Research for argument

March 22
Read: Bernstein, Benjamin and Motzafi-Haller, “Diversity in an Israeli Intersectional Analysis”
One essay from “optional” list, on Latte
Write: Response on Latte
Discuss: Social divisions and intersectionality
Research Questions
Scholarly and non-scholarly sources

March 23
Read: bell hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators”
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Write: Final Draft of Lens Essay (due at beginning of class)
Discuss: Feminist and Gender Theory
Social divisions across ethnic/national/religious lines
Narrowing research topics
Evaluating the reliability of a source

**Week 10**
March 27
Read: Nothing due
Write: Pre-Draft 3.1 (Research Proposal)
Discuss: Second Library visit (meet in library)

March 29
Read: Parfitt 324-338
Write: Pre-Draft 3.2 (Source Analysis)
Discuss: Annotated Bibliography
Style and strong sentences

March 30
Read: Parfitt 406-411
Write: Pre-Draft 3.3 (Annotated Bibliography)
Discuss: Incorporating Secondary Sources
Plagiarism
Citation
(Note: In-class activity - incorporating secondary sources)

**Week 11**
April 3
Read: Nothing due
Write: Pre-Draft 3.4: Research Question(s), Thesis, Introduction and Outline
Discuss: Evolving ethnic identities and social mobility
When to give a source's credentials in-text vs. in the citation
(Note: In-class activity - editing student papers)

April 5
Read: Nothing due
Write: Nothing due
Discuss: Holocaust and Israeli society
Grammar and Style: fine-tuning
Editing student essays
April 6
Read:  (nothing due)
Write:  Rough Draft of Research Essay (3 hard copies to class)
Discuss:  Reviewing minority experiences
Reverse Outline

April 10-18  PASSOVER BREAK

Week 12
April 19  BRANDEIS MONDAY
Read:  Drafts for Peer Review
Write:  Peer Review Letters (printed copies to class, upload as one document to Latte)
Discuss:  Peer Review
Research Presentations

April 20  CONFERENCES

Week 13
April 24
Read:  nothing due
Write:  Reverse Outline of research essay (Upload to Latte, bring 2 hard copies to class)
Discuss:  Reverse Outline—group check for flow and organization
Portfolio
Final editing

April 26  STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

April 27  STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Week 14
May 1  STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

May 3  STUDENT RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS
Final Drafts of Research Essay Due (hard copy due at beginning of class)
Final thoughts

May 5
No class, but portfolios due (upload to Latte by 10:00 a.m.)