The Un-Chosen Body:  
Disability in Israeli Literature, Film, and the Arts

Ilana Szobel  
NEJS 184B, Fall 2017  
Office hours: TBA  
szobel@brandeis.edu  
Tuesday, Thursday 2:00 - 3:20

This course explores representations of disability within Hebrew and Israeli culture. By focusing on literature, film, dance, and visual art, it looks at personal and socio-political conceptualizations of disability. This course pursues various applications of physical, mental, and emotional disability experiences and theories to Zionist, Jewish-Israeli narratives and rhetoric. Thus, while we will examine how the social context of disability in Israel affects representations of disability, we will also consider the ways in which disabled experiences and the notion of disability in general raise questions about Israeli subjectivity.

While in the past the experience of disability has been viewed as a condition of personal deficit and misfortune, our course will explore the work of writers, artists, scholars and activists, who have reinterpreted disability as a fact of life and a form of human variation. By discussing representations of people with disabilities, the course will provide in-depth analysis of: the roles and stereotypes of disabled figures in the Zionist movement, women with disabilities in Israeli Film, people with disabilities as artists and performers, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Israeli disabled dance and performance, disability and the Holocaust, images of madness and emotional distress in Hebrew literature, the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and disability, and Crip and alternative self-representations by artists with disabilities.

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, present a short talk, 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%

Success in this 4 credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.).

Access Accommodations  
I welcome you to discuss all access accommodation issues with me early in the semester. Please do not wear scented products.
Introduction: Disability and the Zionist Body

- *Ishon* (Pupil) *Theater, Inner Colors*, Tal Mazliach, Efrat Dotan, Shaked Zmirali, Gabriel Balachsan


Suggested Reading:
Sagit Mor: “Hierarchies of Disability in Israeli-Zionist Collective Ethos and Public Policy.”

Choreographing a Political Change

- Moran Zuckerman (director): *Men on Wheels (Gvarim Al Galgalim, 2003)* [Documentary]


Suggested Reading:


Jerusalem

- Iddo Gruengard and John Elias Dabis: *Playback Paralysis* (2016) [Interactive video art]

Disability, Ethnicity, and Gender

- Hanna Azoulay Hasfari (writer) and Shmuel Hasfari (director): *Shchur* (1994) [Movie]


Disability Culture


Dror Harari: “Performing the Un-Chosen Israeli Body: Nataly Zukerman’s *Haguf Ha’acher,*” *TDR* 60(1), 2016.


- Simon Baker (curator): "Performing for the Camera," Tate Modern, 2016 [Exhibition]
- Miri Krimolovsky (curator): “Selfie in Limited Edition,” 2016, Tel Aviv University [Exhibition]

Crip Future
- Dani Menkin (director): 39 Pounds of Love (2005) [Animated Documentary]

Excerpts from: Alison Kafer, Feminist, Queer, Crip, 2013.

Suggested Reading:

Disability and Sexuality
- Iddo Gruengard: Disabled & Sexy (2004) [Fashion show]
- Rona Soffer (director): Love Davka (2010) [Documentary]

Suggested Reading:
Margrit Shildrick: “Queering Performativity: Disability After Deleuze,” Scan 1(3), 2004

The Poetics of Pain
- Rachel Bluwstein Sela: “The messenger came in the night...,” “In my great loneliness...,” “In the Hospital,” lay bare the wounds..., “Transformation,” “My Book of Poems” (1927, 1930) [Poetry]
- Yona Wallach: posthumous poems [Poetry]
- Yair Qedar (director): The Seven Tapes - Poet Yona Wallach (2012) [Documentary]

Virginia Woolf: On Being Ill

Suggested Reading:

Blindness and the Arts
- Sophie Calle: The Blind (1986)
- Nalaga’at [please do touch] Theater [Deafblind Theatre]
Roy Nachum [paintings, installations and sculptures]
Larry Abramson: *Tsuba* (1993-4)


**Suggested Reading:**
Georgina Kleege: *Sight Unseen*, 1999

**Sexual Violence against Women with Disabilities**
Nitzan Gilady (director): *Wedding Doll* (2016) [Movie]

**Holocaust**
Avi Nesher (director): *The Matchmaker (Paam Hayiti)* [Movie]
Shahar Rozen (director): “Liebe Perla” (Dear Perla) (1999) [Documentary]


**Suggested Reading:**

**Madness/Distress**
Yosef Hayyim Brenner : “Nerves” (1911) [Story]
Shmuel Yosef Agnon: “A Simple Story” (1935) [novella]  

**Student’s Presentations**