

Tel Aviv University
The Lester & Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities
The Department of English and American Studies
סיפור החניכה הנשי בארה"ב – 0626305201 – Coming of Age in America
סמסטר א' תשע"ט 2018-19 Fall Semester

Few literary conventions teach us as much about the culture that produced them as the coming-of-age plot. In charting the transition from childhood to adulthood, this plot explores the most basic definitions governing normative identity in a given social setting. For many years, however, discussion of this genre focused on male-authored texts, from *Wilhelm Meister* and *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* to *The Catcher on the Rye*. This seminar will center, instead, on female-authored coming-of-age stories, and will address such questions as: what happens to this genre when it is appropriated by women? How is the "adult woman" defined at different historical moments? Are there common threads (mother-daughter relations, conflict between love and labor, paths of socialization and resistance) that connect older and contemporary writing about female maturation?

Requirements:

(1) The student's active **participation** in meetings is absolutely vital for the success of this seminar. All students are required not only to come to every meeting and to come on time, but also (and most importantly) to come prepared and to participate in discussion. Students are also expected to log in to this moodle site on a regular basis to check announcements and updates to the syllabus. A student who has to miss a class because of illness or milu'im is required to notify me via email or in person, when possible in advance. According to department rules, a student who misses more than three meetings in the course of the semester is automatically disqualified from earning a grade. Active participation + preparation of assignment for each class will account for 40% of final grade.

(2) **Preparation Assignments** - For each class, I will post in the syllabus below an assignment to be completed for the following meeting. The assignment will be based on the reading for that meeting, and will take a different form each time: in some cases, I will ask you to hand in a short written response; in other cases I will ask you to post something in the discussion forum, respond to a question, or prepare a small presentation for the class. These assignments will intensify the preparation for class discussion, and will help pave the way for the final paper project. You are expected to complete all of these assignments, and because the point is preparation for discussion in advance, no late assignments will be accepted. The assignments combined with your participation in discussion will account for 40% of the final grade.

(3) A couple of weeks before the end of the semester, students will hand in a **short prospectus** of their seminar paper. This will include one paragraph explaining what topic you chose and why you chose it, a tentative thesis statement, and a preliminary bibliography. During the last two weeks of the semester students will give short (15-minute) **presentations** of their seminar paper project, explaining why they chose the topic, what the main argument will be, what methodology will be deployed, and what sources will be used. The goal will be to get good feedback from

your peers, which would then allow you to refine your work in progress and ultimately submit a better seminar paper. This presentation will account for 10% of your final grade.

(4) The **seminar paper** will be about eighteen to twenty pages long (no fewer than 4,500 words). It will present an original argument about a primary text (or more than one), present this argument coherently and logically, and use both close reading of the text(s) and secondary sources to support it. Every paper should include a "works cited" list of at least six secondary sources. The paper should use the MLA (parenthetical) style of citation, not the footnote style. It should look like an article in a scholarly journal, i.e., not be broken down into chapters or begin with a table of contents. The seminar paper will account for 50% of final grade. The seminar paper needs to be submitted by the date set by the university; no extensions will be approved.

Academic Dishonesty:

As you know, the English Department takes academic dishonesty very seriously. A student caught plagiarizing or cheating on an assignment, quiz, or exam will receive **a failing grade on the assignment with no possibility of amending the grade**. An official letter describing the offense will be placed on his/her permanent record. In some cases, the department will file a complaint with the university disciplinary committee. This can lead to the student being expelled or having to take a leave of a semester or an entire year.

Contact details:

Prof. Milette Shamir | Office Hours: Sundays 14:00-15:00 Webb 519 | mshamir@post.tau.ac.il

SCHEDULE:

OCTOBER 14: Preliminaries

- Listen to the radio diary of Majd (2016) (scroll to the middle of the page to find the podcast).

For additional reading:

- "Bildungsroman" in *The Literary Encyclopedia*.
- Elline Lipkin. *Girl's' Studies*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2009. pp. 1-39.
- For your viewing pleasure, you may want to look at Melissa Ann Pinney's photographic project. Pinney has been exploring girls' identity for three decades. She is known for presenting women and girls as subjects in their own right, not as accessories in the lives of men.

OCTOBER 17: The Bildungsroman - Origins and Form

Required Reading:

- Franco Moretti. "The Bildungsroman as Symbolic Form." *From The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. London: Verso, 1987. pp. 3-13.
- David H. Miles. "The Picaro's Journey to the Confessional: The Changing Image of the Hero in the German bildungsroman." *PMLA* 89.5 (1974): 980-992.

For additional reading:

- Jerome Hamilton Buckley. *Season of Youth: The Bildungsroman from Dickens to Golding*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974.
- Marianne Hirsch. "The Novel of Formation as Genre: Between *Great Expectations* and *Lost Illusions*." *Genre* 12.3 (1979): 97-108.

OCTOBER 21: The Female Bildungsroman

Required reading:

- Susan Fraiman. "Is there a Female Bildungsroman?" *Unbecoming Women: Women Writers and the Novel of Development*. New York: Columbia UP, 1993.
- Lorna Ellis. "Gender, Development, and the Bildungsroman." *Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman, 1750-1850*. London: Associated University Press, 1999. pp. 15-25.

For additional reading:

- Patricia Meyer Spacks. "The Adolescent as Heroine." In *The Female Imagination*. New York: Knopf, 1975.
- Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland. eds. *The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1983.

- Gilbert and Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

OCTOBER 24: Psychological Perspectives

Required reading:

- Nancy Chodorow. "Family Structure and Feminine Personality." *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989. pp. 45-65.

For additional reading:

- Adrienne Rich. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Norton, 1986.
- Jessica Benjamin. "Father and Daughter: Identification with Difference." *Like Subjects, Love Objects*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1995.

OCTOBER 28: Ideology and Resistance

Required reading:

- Tiqqun, from *Preliminary Materials for a Theory of the Young-Girl* (trans. 2012).
- Read Jamaica Kincaid's one-page story "Girl" (1978).
- Watch Bikini Kill's "Rebel Girl" (1993).

For additional reading:

- Rita Felski. *Beyond Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

OCTOBER 31

Required reading:

- Louisa May Alcott. *Little Women*. Chapters 1-12.
- Jane Hunter. *How Young Ladies became Girls*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2002. pp. 11-22, 38-56.

NOVEMBER 4

Required reading:

- *Little Women*, Chapter 12 to the end of Part One.
- Leslie Jameson, "On Female Rage." *New York Times*, January 17, 2018.

NOVEMBER 7

Required reading:

- *Little Women*. First half of Part Two.
- Carroll Smith-Rosenberg. "The Female World of Love and Ritual." In *The Girls' History and Cultural Reader*, ed. by Miriam Forman-Brunell and Leslie Paris. Urbana: Illinois UP, 2011.

NOVEMBER 11

Required reading:

- Little Women, finish reading the novel.

For additional reading on Alcott:

- Richard Broadhead. "Sparing the Rod." In *Cultures of Letters*. Chicago: Chicago UP, 1995.
- Greta Gaard. "'Self Denial was all the fashion': Repressing Anger in Little Women." *Papers on Language and Literature* 27.1 (1991): 3-19.
- Angela M. Estes and Kathleen Margaret Lant. "Dismembering the Text: The Horror of Louisa May Alcott's Little Women." *Children's Literature* 17 (1989): 98-123.
- Barbara Sicherman. "Reading Little Women: The Many Lives of a Text." In *The Girls' History and Cultural Reader*, ed. by Miriam Forman-Brunell and Leslie Paris. Urbana: Illinois UP, 2011.
- Roberta Seelinger Trites. *Twain, Alcott, and the Birth of the Adolescent Reform Novel*. Iowa City: Iowa UP, 2007.

NOVEMBER 14

Required Reading:

- Katherine Anne Porter. "The Virgin Violetta" (1935).
- Joan Jacobs Brumberg. "The Disappearance of Virginity," from *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls* (1997).

NOVEMBER 18

Required reading:

- Carson McCullers. *Member of the Wedding*, Part One.

NOVEMBER 21

Required reading:

- *Member of the Wedding*, Part Two.
- Michelle Ann Abate. "The Tomboy Turns Freakishly Queer and Queerly Freakish." In *Tomboys: A Literary and Cultural History*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008.

NOVEMBER 25

Required reading:

- *Member of the Wedding*, Part Three.

For additional reading on McCullers:

- Rachel, Adam. "'A Mixture of Delicious and Freak': The Queer Fiction of Carson McCullers." *American Literature* 71.3 (1999): 551-8.
- Laura Fine. "Gender Conflicts and Their 'Dark' Projections in Coming of Age White Female Southern Novels." *Southern Quarterly* 36.4 (1998):121-29.
- Judith Halberstam. *Female Masculinity*. Durham: Duke UP, 1998.

NOVEMBER 28

Required reading:

- Sylvia Plath. *The Bell Jar*, chaps 1-7.
- Kelly Schrum. "'Oh the Bliss': Fashion and Teenage Girls." In *The Girls' History and Cultural Reader*, ed. by Miriam Forman-Brunell and Leslie Paris. Urbana: Illinois UP, 2011.

DECEMBER 2

Required reading:

- *The Bell Jar*, chaps 8-13.

DECEMBER 5

Required reading:

- *The Bell Jar*, chaps 14-end.

For additional reading on Plath:

- Marilyn Boyer. "The Disabled Female Body as a Metaphor for Language in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 33.2 (2004): 199-223.
- Diane S. Bonds. "The Separative Self in Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 18.1 (1990): 49-64.
- Linda W. Wagner. "Plath's *The Bell Jar* as Female Bildungsroman." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 12.1 (1986): 55-68.
- Joan Jacobs Brumberg. *The Body Project: An Intimate History of American Girls*. New York: Vintage, 1998. pp. 141-160.
- Susan Bordo. "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity." In *Unbearable Weight*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Catherine Driscoll. *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory*. New York: Columbia UP, 2002. _

DECEMBER 9: Holiday, no class.

DECEMBER 12

Required reading:

- Sapphire. *Push* (a.k.a Precious), chaps 1-2.

DECEMBER 16

Required reading:

- *Push*, chaps 3-4.

DECEMBER 19

Required reading:

- *Push*, Appendix Section (Class Notebook).

For additional reading on Sapphire:

- Janice Doane and Devon Hodges. "On the Border of the Real." In *Telling Incest*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001.
- Barbara Romaine. "On Writing in Tongues: An Experiment in Simulated Literary Translation." *Translation Review* 65 (2003): 16-22.
- Wendy A. Rountree. "Overcoming Violence: Blues Expression in Sapphire's *Push*." *Atenea* 24.1 (2004): 133-143.
- Elizabeth McNeil et al., eds. *Sapphire's Literary Breakthrough*. New York: Palgrave, 2012.

WEEK OF DECEMBER 23: PERSONAL CONFERENCES ABOUT TOPIC

DECEMBER 30: ALL PROSPECTI DUE IN CLASS. PRESENTATIONS BEGIN.

JANUARY 2 - 9 – PRESENTATIONS CONTINUE.

JANUARY 13: SPECIAL CLASS TOGETHER WITH SEMINAR ON MASCULINITY.

Required Reading:

- Kristen Roupenian, "Cat Person" (2017).