

Tel Aviv University  
The Lester & Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities  
The Department of English and American Studies  
0626313901 שינוי ואימוץ, התנגדות, Resisting and Conforming to Forms in Poetry  
BA Seminar  
סמסטר ב' תשע"ז 2016-17 Spring Semester

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Office hour: W 13-14  
Class meets S/W 14-16, Webb 501

The field of contemporary poetry is often, if somewhat artificially, divided into camps, like traditional/formal poetry and avant-garde poetry. But, as David Caplan and others have shown, these categorizations are limited for many reasons, not the least of which is the fact that many experimental and innovative poets employ traditional forms in interesting ways. In that sense, part of what makes poetry innovative is precisely its negotiation with markers of traditional poetry (e.g. the sonnet and rhyme). In this seminar we will look at new (and old) manifestations of old (and new) forms, and read texts by poets and critics who explicitly address the question of form. The seminar will be particularly beneficial for students with background and interest in poetry.

Readings: The poems and theoretical readings are available on the course website. Students are required to have all the material with them for all classes, and to come prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

Class Requirements and Grade Breakdown: Attendance is mandatory and taken regularly. Absence of more than 4 classes will jeopardize the status of a student in the class. In this context attendance also means punctual arrival prepared with the appropriate readings. The seminar paper is worth 100% of your final grade for the class provided that all other requirements are satisfied, specifically the responses, class presentation and annotated bibliography.

Responses: There are 8 class meetings in which we deal with theoretical material. You will need to submit a one-page response paper to 6 of those 8, and also to 2 poems of your choice from our readings (for a total of 8 responses). The response papers are due in class, on the day the reading appears on the schedule.

Presentations: In the second half of the seminar, each participant will lead a class discussion on a poet or topic that you are working on. Towards your presentation you will be asked to prepare and submit a 10-item annotated bibliography, which will then serve as the basis for your seminar paper. The annotated bibliography is due on June 11, 2017.

Seminar Paper: The due date for the seminar paper is October 1, 2017.

Schedule:

1. W 15.3 Introduction
2. S 19.3 Poems
3. W 22.3 Theoretical Reading: Jakobson
4. S 26.3 Poems
5. W 29.3 Theoretical Reading: Herrnstein Smith
6. S 2.4 Poems
7. W 19.4 Theoretical Reading: Brooks, Williams
8. S 23.4 Poems
9. W 26.4 Theoretical Reading: Caplan, Cummins
10. S 30.4 Poems
11. W 3.5 Theoretical Reading: Coleridge, Levertov, Eliot
12. S 7.5 Poems
13. W 10.5 Theoretical Reading: Andrews, Lux, Mackowski, Rios
14. S 14.5 Poems
15. W 17.5 Theoretical Reading: Bernstein
16. S 21.5 Poems
17. W 24.5 Theoretical Reading: Rich, Varnes
18. S 28.5 Poems
19. S 4.6 Poems
20. W 7.6 Charles Bernstein (?)
21. S 11.6 Poems; Annotated bibliography due
22. W 14.6 Presentations
23. S 18.6 Presentations
24. W 21.6 Presentations
25. S 25.6 Presentations
26. W 28.6 Recap

Bibliographical Information (in order of schedule):

Jakobson, Roman. "Linguistics and Poetics." *Language in Literature*. Harvard UP. 62-94.

Herrnstein Smith, Barbara. "Introduction." *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End*.

Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1968. 1-37.

Brooks, Cleanth. "What Does Poetry Communicate?" *The Well Wrought Urn*. London: Dobson, 1968. 54-64.

Williams, William Carlos. "Author's Introduction [to The Wedge]." *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams*. Vol 2. New Directions, 1988. 53-55.

Caplan, David. "When a Form Comes out of the Closet." *Questions of Possibility: Contemporary Poetry and Poetic Form*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. 61-85.

Cummins, James. "Calliope Music: Notes on the Sestina." *After New Formalism*. Ed. Annie Finch. Story Line, 1999. 133-43.

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "[Mechanic vs. Organic Form]" (excerpts). *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*. 408-09.

Levertov, Denise. "Some Notes on Organic Form." *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*. 1082-1086.

Eliot, T. S. "Reflections on Vers Libre." *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*. Ed. Frank Kermode. Faber, 1975. 31-36.

Andrews, Bruce. "Reading Lines Linear How to Mean." *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line*. Ed. Emily Rosko and Anton Vander Zee. U of Iowa P, 2011. 40-43.

Lux, Thomas. "The Line." *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line*. Ed. Emily Rosko and Anton Vander Zee. U of Iowa P, 2011. 155-56.

Mackowski, Joanie. "'And then a Plank in Reason, Broke.'" *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line*. Ed. Emily Rosko and Anton Vander Zee. U of Iowa P, 2011. 157-60.

Rios, Alberto. "Some Thoughts on the Integrity of the Single Line in Poetry." *A Broken Thing: Poets on the Line*. Ed. Emily Rosko and Anton Vander Zee. U of Iowa P, 2011. 207-10.

Bernstein, Charles. "Comedy and the Poetics of Political Form." *The Politics of Poetic Form*. Ed. Charles Bernstein. Roof, 1998. 235-44.

Rich, Adrienne. "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision." *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*. 1086-96.

Varnes, Kathrine. "Feminist Formalist: A Critical Oxymoron?" *After New Formalism*. Ed. Annie Finch. Story Line, 1999. 158-65.