

Post World War II Jewish American Literature

Syllabus

Dr. Noam Gil

E-mail: gilgunoam@gmail.com

Location: Webb, Room 103

Time – Tue, 10:00-12:00

Course Description

The 1950s and 1960s are perceived as the golden years of Jewish fiction in America, when for the first time Jewish authors broke into the cultural mainstream. And yet, many texts by notable authors such as Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud and Grace Paley challenged their Jewish tradition and expressed a desire to transcend their own "marginal" identity into a broader universal sensibility. In this course we will discuss the way these authors engaged in establishing a new sense of self in America. It is a literary exploration that challenges not only issues of Jewish identity but prevalent perspectives concerning collective identity and their implication in Post Holocaust America.

Course Requirements

- Students are expected to be prepared for every class, to read the required texts and to be ready to listen to and challenge the ideas of others.
- Reading material: the theoretical texts and the short stories we'll discuss will be uploaded to Moodle.
- The exact schedule of reading may change based on class discussions.
- Final Paper: You will be required to write 6-8 pp final paper. Further information regarding the assignment will be specified later on in the semester.

Grade:

Attendance and Participation in class	20%
Final Paper	80%

Class Schedule:

1. Introduction – Drawing the basic perimeters

October 24th + 31st –

24th - *Reading materials for this introductory session will be handed out in class.*

31st – "Radio Days", Dir. Woody Allen (1986).

2. Childhood

November 7th –

Grace Paley, *The Loudest Voice* (Short story). 1959.

November 14th –

Philip Roth, *The Conversion of the Jews* (short story). 1959.

Soren kirkegaard, *The Crowd is Untruth* (essay). 1847.

Jose Ortega y' Gasset, *Man Has No Nature* (essay). (1941).

3. Adolescence

November 21st –

Bernard Malamud, *The Magic Barrel* (short story). 1958.

Isaac Rosenfeld, *The Situation of the Jewish Writer* (essay). 1948.

November 28th + December 4th –

Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* (novel). 1969.

Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (excerpts from book). 1927.

4. Adulthood

December 11th –

Saul Bellow, *Looking for Mr. Green* (Short Story). 1952.

Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (excerpts from book). 1937.

December 18th –

*Philip Roth, **Defender of the Faith** (short story). 1959.*

*Jean Paul Sartre, **Anti Semite and Jew** (excerpts from book). 1945.*

5. **Parenthood**

December 25th –

*Bernard Malamud, **Jewbird** (short story). 1963.*

*Sandar Gilman, **Jewish Self-Hatred** (excerpts from book). 1985.*

January 1st –

*Grace Paley, **A Conversation with My Father** (short story). 1974.*

*Roland Barthes, **The Death of the Author** (essay). 1967.*

*Friedrich Nietzsche, **On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense** (essay). 1873.*

6. **The Autumn Years**

January 8th –

*Saul Bellow, **Seize the Day** (novella). 1957.*

*Lionel Trilling, **The Meaning of Literary Idea** (essay). 1948.*