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*.
- 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:

For additional reading:

OCTOBER 21: The Female Bildungsroman

Required reading:

For additional reading:

**OCTOBER 24: Psychological Perspectives**

Required reading:

For additional reading:

**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:

**OCTOBER 31**

Required reading:
• Louisa May Alcott. *Little Women*. Chapters 1-12.

**NOVEMBER 4**

Required reading:
• *Little Women*, Chapter 12 to the end of Part One.

**NOVEMBER 7**

Required reading:
• *Little Women*. First half of Part Two.
**NOVEMBER 11**

Required reading:
- *Little Women*, finish reading the novel.

For additional reading on Alcott:

**NOVEMBER 14**

Required Reading:
- Katherine Anne Porter. "The Virgin Violetta" (1935).

**NOVEMBER 18**

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

**NOVEMBER 21**

Required reading:
- *Member of the Wedding*, Part Two.

**NOVEMBER 25**

Required reading:
- *Member of the Wedding*, Part Three.

For additional reading on McCullers:

NOVEMBER 28

Required reading:
• Sylvia Plath. The Bell Jar, chaps 1-7.

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:

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:

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).