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**JSTU L390 / NELC N695**  
**Biblical Themes in Modern Hebrew Literature**

(Fall 2012; class #29930 / #25891)

Time: MW 4:00-5:15p.m.

Place: BH209

**S y l l a b u s**

Goals: To appreciate the complexity of biblical texts, the diverse motivations behind the interpretations for a host of motives and recognize the value in these readings of scriptures that are deemed sacred, literary, historical and open to re-readings.

Note: Reading sources are often abbreviated by the last name of the author/editor. The [eR] means the item is on Electronic Reserve for which the following url and password are provided. Assignments listed are due on the date of the assignment.

**E-Reserves** for L390 -- password is: longing

The direct url is: <http://ereserves.indiana.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=3039>

(M) Aug. 20: Introduction: Topics, background.

Reading of sample poetry for illustration

Read: Abraham Mapu's *The Love of Zion* [also translated as *The Shepherd Prince*] to prepare a written assignment--specifications enclosed below.

(W) Aug. 22: In the Beginning...: Genesis--an exercise in analysis and criticism

Read: Genesis 1-6:8; Isaiah 11:1-9

Topics: concept of humanity; Eden and sin;  
God, Adam, Eve, Serpent, Cain, Abel, etc.

(M) Aug. 27: Midrash views of "In the Beginning..."

Read: midrash and legend texts: "Legends/Man" and "Legends/Eve" [eR]

(W) Aug. 29: Representations of Eve

Read: Poems about Eve, handouts and "Poems of Eve" [eR]

(M) Sept. 3: LABOR DAY—no class

- (W) Sept. 5: Eden from the Twentieth Century  
Read: Aharon Megged, *The First Sin*, act 1 in Reader or [eR]  
Compare with the biblical account  
Characters, tone, implied ideology
- (M) Sept. 10: Contemporary Views of Genesis  
Read: Aharon Megged, *The First Sin*, acts 2, 3 Reader or [eR]; "Legends/Can & Abel" [eR]; Idea of free will, sin, the world
- (W) Sept. 12: The *Akedah*--The Binding of Isaac--Bible and Midrash  
Read: Genesis 22; Ginzberg, in Reader under: "Ginzberg, L. 'Abraham.'"
- (M) Sept. 17: ROSH HASHANAH—no class
- (W) Sept. 19: The *Akedah* and Modern Hebrew Literature  
Sample poetry on the *Akedah* [eR]  
Suggested: "Odysseus' Scar," in Auerbach, *Mimesis*, in Reader
- (M) Sept. 24: The *Akedah* in Israel  
Read: Poetry on the subject of the *Akedah* from Reader; Gros Louis, in Reader (36-43); Amichai, Kartun-Blum and Wiesel, in Reader (8, 147-156, 110-125); Lamdan's "In the Khamsin," Reader (51-53)
- (W) Sept. 26: YOM KIPPUR—no classes
- (M) Oct. 1: Re-imagining the *Akedah* in times gone by and for today  
Read: Shulamit Hareven, *Thirst/After Childhood*.
- (W) Oct. 3: Conclusion of Hareven, *Thirst/ After Childhood*.  
The contemporary issues
- (M) Oct. 8: The *Akedah* in Israeli prose: Amos Oz  
Read: Amos Oz, "The Way of the Wind," [eR] or his ...*Jackals...*, or *Until Daybreak* [R].
- (W) Oct. 10: MIDTERM EXAM
- (M) Oct. 15: Another *Akedah*: Jephthah and his daughter  
Read: *Tanakh*—Judges, chapters 11-12:9.  
Also, Midrash: "Legends/Jephthah and His Daughter" etc. [eR]  
Read: "Upon this Evil Earth" by Amos Oz [eR]
- (W) Oct. 17: Conclusion of Oz's novella:  
Read: "Upon this Evil Earth" by Amos Oz [eR] (conclusion)
- (M) Oct. 22: Moses and the Exodus  
Read: Exodus 1-20

- (W) Oct. 24: Moses and Zippora: The Inner Life  
Read: Ex. 4:18-26; midrash: "Ginzberg/Legends-Moses" [eR]; H. Hazaz, "The Bridegroom of Blood," Reader,  
or in Leftwich, *Yisroel*, 708-21.
- (M) Oct. 29: Moses and the Exodus: A Contemporary View  
Read: Hareven, *Thirst/ The Miracle Hater*, chs. 1-5
- (W) Oct. 31: Moses and the Exodus: S. Hareven  
Read: Hareven, *The Miracle Hater*, chs. 6-end
- (M) Nov. 5: Moses and the Exodus: The Intellectuals' View  
Read: Ahad Ha-`Am, "Moses," [eR], or in Simon, *Selected Essays...*, or in Kohn, *Nationalism...*, 206-27.
- (W) Nov. 7: Freud on Moses  
Read: excerpt from "Freud/ Moses and Monotheism" [eR]
- (M) Nov. 12: The Exodus in *Haskalah* fiction  
Read: Mendele Mocher Sforim, "Shem & Japheth on the Train," Reader (54-66).
- (W) Nov. 14: In the Wilderness: Post-*Haskalah* Fiction  
Read: D. Frischmann, "The Dance," in Reader (20-23); "Sinai," in Reader (24-26), or in Leftwich, *Yisroel* [R], 668-74; "The Rebellious Son," [eR].
- (M-W) Nov. 19-21: THANKSGIVING BREAK—no class
- (M) Nov. 26: American Hebrew Writings: The Bible and Black Culture  
Read: E. E. Lisitzky's "So Miriam Spoke of Moses"--electronic copy  
Bible/*Tanakh*: Numbers, chapter 12; Genesis, chapter 21
- (W) Nov. 28: Entering the Promised Land: Joshua  
Read: Joshua 1-10, esp. ch. 9
- (M) Dec. 3: The Realistic Mode: Joshua and the Canaanites  
Read: Hareven, *Prophet*
- (W) Dec. 5: The Desert and Contemporary Israel: A.B. Yehoshua  
Read: A.B. Yehoshua's "The Last Commander" Reader or in Yehoshua, *Early...*, 134-65; or in *Present Tense* (a journal), 3:2 (Winter 1976); or in Abramson, *The Oxford...*, 220-36.
- (F) Dec 14: FINAL EXAM--5:00-7:00p.m. (In our classroom; all papers due)

Final grade based on:

Midterm exam:	30%
Final Exam:	30%
Quizzes/attendance:	20%
Final paper:	20%

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Required Texts (most are no longer held by Reserve dept. and are in stacks):

1. Hareven, Shulamith. *Thirst: The Desert Trilogy* (Mercury House, 1996). ISBN: 1-56279-088-9 [or *The Miracle Hater* PJ5054.H292S613 1988; *Prophet* PJ5054.H292N3813 1990] PJ5054.H292A25 1996.
2. Mapu, Abraham. *The Love of Zion and other writings*. (Toby Press c. 2006) [aka *The Shepherd Prince*]. ISBN: 1-59264-129-6
4. *Reader* (photocopied) for L390/N695—available at Bookstore
5. *The English Bible: The Old Testament*. A Norton Critical Edition. Edited by Herbert Marks. New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 2012. ISBN: 978-0-393-92745-0; or *Tanakh: the Holy Scriptures* (JPS, 1988); or any edition of the Hebrew Bible)

II. Reference: (note: most [R] are no longer on Reserve but in stacks)

1. Alter, Robert. *After the Tradition*. (Dutton)
- [R]2. Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis*. (Princeton) PN56 .R3 1982
3. Band, Arnold J. *Nostalgia and Nightmare*. (Calif.)
4. *Encyclopedia Judaica* (= EJ, located in both reference rooms).
5. Halkin, Simon. *Modern Hebrew Literature* (Schocken)
- [R]6. Hirsch, David and N. Aschkenasy. *Biblical Patterns in Modern Literature*. (Scholars Press, 1984). PN56 .B5 B54 1984
- [R]7. Jacobson, David. *Modern Midrash*. (SUNY) PJ5029 .J3 1987
- [R]8. Jacobson, David. *Does David Still Play Before You?--Israeli Poetry and the Bible* (Wayne State) PJ5024 .J33 1997
- [R]9. Joseph, Herbert S. *Modern Israeli Drama*. (Fairleigh D.) PJ5043 .M6 1983
- [R]10. Patterson, David. *Abraham Mapu: The Creator of the Modern Hebrew Novel* (East and West Library, 1964). PJ5052 .M3 Z76
- [R]11. Patterson, David. *The Hebrew Novel in Czarist Russia*. (Edinburgh Univ. Press, 1964). PJ5049 .R8 P317
12. Rabinovich, Isaiah. *Major Trends in Modern Heb. Fiction*. (Chicago)
13. Ribalow, M. *The Flowering of Modern Heb. Literature*. (Twayne)
14. Waxman, Meyer. *A History of Jewish Literature* (Bloch or Yoseloff)
15. Yudkin, Leon. *Escape into Siege: A Survey of Israeli Lit. Today*.
16. Goell, Yohai. *Bibliography of Modern Heb. Lit. in Eng. Trans.* (Ktav)
17. Saramago, Jose. *Cain*.
18. Rothstein, Gidon. "Cassandra Misreads the Book of Samuel: (and other untold tales of the prophets)" --Gidon Rothstein:  
<http://www.amazon.com/Cassandra-Misreads-Book-Samuel-phrophets/dp/1439208255/>
19. Spitz, Ben-Zion. *Destiny's Call: Book One – Genesis*.  
<http://www.amazon.com/Destiny's-Call-Book-One-Genesis/dp/1937623513/>  
Examples of Spitz' work appears at <http://ben-tzion.com/>
20. The 1949 *Samson & Delilah* film based on Jabotinsky's book and there's an interesting treatment here:  
<http://dgmyers.blogspot.co.il/2011/03/jabotinskys-samson.html>
21. Yerushalmi, Rina. Plays: "vayomer vayeilekh" and "vayishtahu vayiru."
22. Sandmel, Samuel. *Alone Atop the Mountain* (Doubleday, 1973), (re Moses).

24. Hazony, Yoram. *The Philosophy of Hebrew Scripture*. Cambridge UP, 2012.

[http://www.jewish-theatre.com/visitor/article\\_list.aspx?articleGroupID=95](http://www.jewish-theatre.com/visitor/article_list.aspx?articleGroupID=95)

More than several operas are based on biblical stories, "Samson and Delilah," "Nebucco," "The Vow of Jephtah," "Jephtah," "Saul and David," "David and Jonathan," "The Great Flood," "The Cave," "Esther," "Joseph," "Moses in Egypt," "Moses and Aaron," "Saul and David," "The Death of Adam," "The Tower of Babel."

### III. Anthologies:

- [R]1. Abramson, G. *The Oxford Book of Hebrew Short Stories*. PJ5059.E8 O96 1996
- [R]2. Alter, Robert (ed.) *Modern Heb. Literature* (Behrman) PJ5059/.E8 M69
  - 3. Agnon, S.Y. *Days of Awe*. (Schocken)
  - 4. Anderson, E. (ed.) *Contemporary Israeli Literature*. (Triquarterly #39; also JPS)
- [R]5. Blocker, Joel (ed.) *Israeli Stories*. (Schocken) PJ5059/.E8 B6
  - 6. Burnshaw, S. et al. (eds.) *The Modern Heb. Poem Itself*. (Schocken)
  - 7. Carmi, T. *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*. (Penguin)
- [R]8. Kahn, S.J. *A Whole Loaf*. (Vanguard) PN6069/.K13 1963
- [R]9. Kohn, Hans. *Nationalism and the Jewish Ethic: Basic Writings of Ahad Ha'am* (Schocken, 1962) DS149 .G484
- [R]10. Leftwich, Joseph. *Yisroel*. (Beechhurst, 1952) PN6099 .Z2 L48
  - 11. Leviant, Curt (ed.) *Masterpieces of Hebrew Literature*. (Ktav)
- [R]12. Michener, James (ed.) *Firstfruits*. (Fawcett) PJ5059/.E8 M62
- [R]13. Mintz, Ruth F. *Modern Hebrew Poetry*. (Calif.) PJ5059/.E3 M67
  - 14. Ovadyahu, M. *Bialik Speaks*. (Herzl)
- [R]15. Oz, Amos (ed.). *Until Daybreak: Stories*. PJ5059 .E8 U5 1984
- [R]16. ----- . *Where the Jackals Howl* (Harcourt) PJ5054/.O9 A8713 1981
  - 17. Penueli, S.Y. (ed.) *Anthology of Modern Heb. Poetry* (Is. Univ. Pr.)
- [R]18. Penueli, S.Y. and A. Ukhmani (eds.) *Hebrew Short Stories*. 2 vols. (Megiddo) PJ5059/.E8 P42
  - 19. Rabikovitz, Daliah (ed.) *The New Israeli Writers* (Sabra)
- [R]20. Shenhar, Y. (ed.) *Tehillah and other Stories*.
- [R]21. Simon, Leon. *Selected Essays by Ahad Ha-'Am* (JPS) DS113 .G38/.G4)
- [R]22. Spicehandler, E. (ed.) *Mod. Hebrew Short Stories* (Bantam) PJ5059/.E8 S75
  - 23. -----, and C. Arnson (eds.) *New Writing in Israel*. (Schocken)
  - 24. Tammuz, B. (ed.) *Meetings with the Angel*. (Andre Deutsch)
- [R]25. Taub, Michael. *Israeli Holocaust Drama*. (Syracuse) PJ5043 .I87 1996
- [R]26. ----- . *Modern Israeli Drama in Translation*. PJ5059 .E8 O96 1996
- [R]27. Yehoshua, A.B. *Early in the Summer of 1970*. (Doubleday) PJ5054/.Y42 E2

A pun:

How does Moses make his tea? Hebrews it.

### N390/N695: WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

Read Abraham Mapu's novel, *The Love of Zion* (also translated as *The Shepherd Prince*). Write your evaluation/analysis in a paper of AT LEAST 1000 words along the following lines:

1. State what (you believe) is one of the chief issues/themes of the novel.
2. Explain, in brief, why you believe that is so.
3. State what you will do to demonstrate that this, indeed, is the main point the author wanted his reader to come away with.
4. Use clear and correct English; style and clarity will count.
5. What are your views about the novel? Explain.
6. Submit the work, typed and double spaced (hard copy or email; retain a copy or file) by **(F) Dec 14** (Late papers will lose half a grade per day).

Dan Pagis—Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car

here in this carload  
i am eve  
with abel my son  
if you see my other son  
cain son of man  
tell him that I am

כתוב בעפרון בקרון הקתום דן פגיס

כאן במשלוח הזה  
אני תוה  
עם הכל בני  
אם תראו את בני הגדול  
קרו בן אדם  
תגידו לו שאני