Syllabus

CULTURES OF WITNESS: TESTIMONY IN SOUTH AFRICA - 54300

Last update 23-09-2013

HU Credits:  2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: The Program in Cultural Studies

Academic year: 1

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Louise Bethlehem

Coordinator Email: louise.bethlehem@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday 13:00-14:00

Teaching Staff:
Dr. Louise Bethlehem
Course/Module description:
A semester-long seminar which investigates the literary texts, cultural production, visual culture and social institutions associated with the Truth and Reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa.

Course/Module aims:
Testimony has emerged as an important genre in the wake of the historical catastrophes of the twentieth century, notably the Great War and the Holocaust. Whereas it is widely recognized that poststructuralist thought was constituted in response to the Holocaust, less attention has been paid to the manner in which the so-called ethical turn in Cultural Studies and in Postcolonial Theory is indebted to the category of witness. This course positions South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as a paradigmatic instance of postcolonial witness, and seeks to investigate the ethical priorities of Postcolonialism and Cultural Studies in what Mark Sanders has termed “The Time of a Truth Commission”.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
1. Identify major topoi of perpetrator and confessional literature in selected South African texts.
2. Define characteristics of literary fiction as testimony.
3. Evaluate and interpret the role of gender in the TRC and the cultural artifacts its generated.
4. To distinguish literary from visual cultural response to the TRC.
5. To comment on the role of testimony in establishing the ethical agendas of Cultural Studies.

Attendance requirements(%): 100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Frontal lecture and seminar

Course/Module Content:
Schedule of Readings

1. Introduction: In the Name of Witness
19/02 Chris van Wyk [In Detention, Mandla Langa [They No Longer Speak to Us in Song,]

Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi

Mamdani, Mahmood

2. Perpetrator Narratives: Mark Behr, The Smell of Apples
26/02
van der Vlies, Andrew

Barnard, Rita
DOI: 10.1353/mfs.2000.0001

Heyns, Michiel
DOI: 10.1353/mfs.2000.0005

Hand-out
05/03
Bystrom, Kerry
DOI 10.1080/00020184.2012.668290

Mbembe, Achille

Stobie, Cheryl
DOI: 10.1353/ral.2008.0001

Assignment: viewing of Frances Reid and Deborah Hoffman 2000 Long Night’s Journey into Day.
3. The Poetics of Testimony: Antjie Krog, Country of My Skull, selected poems & Ingrid de Kok, poems

12/03
Krog, Antjie

Krog, Antjie


DOI: 10.1353/mfs.2000.0011

Optional

19/03
Selections from the poetry of Anjie Krog and Ingrid de Kok
Kelly, Erica
2003 “Strangely Tender: An Interview with Ingrid de Kok,” Scrutiny2 8(1): DOI:10.1080/18125440308565994

4. Joyce Mthimkulu and Her Sisters: Black Women Testify

26/03
Blommaert, Jan, Mary Bock and Kay McCormick

Goldblatt, Beth and Sheila Meintjes

Ross, Fiona C.

02/04
Krog, Antjie and Nosisi Mpolweni

Oboe, Ana Lisa

Screening: Mark Kaplan Between Joyce and Remembrance
30/04 Venue to be announced

Associated Reading:
Sanders, Mark

5. Experiments with the Truth: Njabulo Ndebele, The Cry of Winnie Mandela
07/05

Bethlehem, Louise
2001 "A Primary Need as Strong as Hunger": The Rhetoric of Urgency in South African Literary Culture under Apartheid,

Medalie, David
DOI: 10.1080/00138390608691354

14/05
Samuelson, Meg
2007 Remembering the Nation, Dismembering Women (Pietermaritzberg: UKZN Press). [extracts]

21/05

Duncan, David

Kentridge, William
28/05 Student Day
4/05 Shavuot

11/05
Rothberg, Michael
DOI: 10.1353/nar.2012.0005

7. Aftermaths: Breaking Silence
18/05 Interim synthesis: Witness in the Here and Now
Student Panel

Required Reading:
Primary Texts
Behr, Mark
de Kok, Ingrid
[Extracts on Moodle]
Krog, Antjie
Ndebele, Njabulo

Optional Reading
Magona, Sindiwe
1998 Mother to Mother (Boston: Beacon Books).

Recommended Secondary Texts
Ross, Fiona C.
Sanders, Mark
Taylor, Jane

Film Screenings
Reid, Frances and Deborah Hoffman 2000 Long Night’s Journey into Day.
Mark Kaplan 2003 Between Joyce and Remembrance.

Additional Reading Material:
Select Theoretical Bibliography
Alexander, Jeffrey C.

Arendt, Hannah

Caruth, Cathy.
1996 Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP).

Eaglestone, Robert

Feldman, Shoshana and Dori Laub.

Humphrey, Michael
2000 "From Terror to Trauma: Commissioning Truth for the National Reconciliation." Social Identities, 2000, 6, 1, Mar, 7-27.

Sanders, Mark

Winter, Jay
2006 The Setting: The Great War in the Memory Boom of the Twentieth Century, and Shell Shock, Memory and Identity, in Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century, 17 - 76 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press).
**Course/Module evaluation:**
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 10 %
Project work 80 %
Assignments 10 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

**Additional information:**
Two film screenings will accompany the course at scheduled times NOT in class hours.