



## *Syllabus*

### *Insects and Literature - 17079*

*Last update 15-07-2019*

*HU Credits:* 2

*Responsible Department:* Hebrew Literature

*Academic year:* 0

*Semester:* 2nd Semester

*Teaching Languages:* Hebrew

*Campus:* Mt. Scopus

*Course/Module Coordinator:* Prof. Dror Burstein

*Coordinator Email:* [dror.burstein@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:dror.burstein@mail.huji.ac.il)

*Coordinator Office Hours:* Weds.

*Teaching Staff:*  
Prof Dror Burstein

*Course/Module description:*

*The insects are a test case of literary sensitivity to reality. They are very ancient*

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(about 400 million years old) and are ubiquitous, but they are invisible in terms of what most people perceive as "inventiveness," and when they appear they often seem unimportant, nuisance, or alien. Science knows about a million species of insects but there are estimates that this is only the tip of the iceberg and that the number of species is up to ten times higher. For example, ants have more on the planet than any other animal, but their position in the literature is marginal; We will find it hard to find beetles in literature, although 400,000 beetles are already known.

Course/Module aims:

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Sharpening our ecopoetic view of creatures standing on the verge of being invisible. Reading literature that deals with what most people perceive as trivial and worthless. Reading literature and poetry with attention to the world and to scientific-entomological information.

Attendance requirements(%):  
100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:

Course/Module Content:

Life of Others: Introduction to the World of Insects  
Roach  
cicada  
Fly  
wasp  
ant  
Bumblebee  
moth  
butterfly  
Beetle  
The entomologist

Required Reading:

18. Arthur Conan-Doyle, "The Beetle Hunter" (1898).  
19. E. A. Poe, "The Sphinx" (1846).

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20. E. O. Wilson, "Trailhead", *The New Yorker*, 25.1.2010.
  21. H. G. Wells, "Empire of the Ants" (1898)
  22. Stephen Addiss, *A Haiku Menagerie*, Weatherhill 1992.
  23. Victor Pelevin, *The Life of Insects*, A. Bromfield (trans.), Harbord Publishing 1997.
  24. Virginia Woolf, "Miss Ormerod", "Reading", "The Death of the Moth".
  25. Vladimir Nabokov, *Nabokov's Butterflies*, Beacon Press 2000.
  26. ---, *The Gift*, translated by Michael Scammell & the author, Vintage 1991 [1938].

Additional Reading Material:

1. Adam Dodd, *Beetle*, Reaktion 2016.
2. Arran Stibbe, "Haiku and Beyond", *Anthrozoöls* 20 (2), pp. 101-112.\*
3. Claire Preston, *Bee*, Reaktion 2013.
4. Charlotte Sleigh, *Ant*, Reaktion 2012.
5. D. T. Suzuki, "Love of Nature", in: *Zen & Japanese Culture*, Princeton U.P., 1959, pp. 329-395.
6. Eric C. Brown, *Insect Poetics*, U. of Minnesota Press 2006.
7. Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
8. Harold J. Isaacson, *Insect Haiku from the Shiki School*, Till-Moyland 2009 [1959].
9. L. Talairach-Vielmas & M. Bouchet (eds.), *Insects in Literature and the Arts*, Peter Lang 2014.\*
10. Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Life of the Ant*, tans. B. Miall, Cassel & Co., 1930.
11. R. H. Blyth, *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*, Dutton, 1960, pp. 396-411.
12. ---, *Haiku*, vol. 3, pp. 788-839; vol. 4, pp. 1060-1078, Hokuseido Press, 1949-1952.
13. Y. Betchaku & J. B. Mirviss, *Utamaro: Songs of the Garden*, The Metropolitan Museum & Viking Press 1984.

Grading Scheme:

Additional information: