



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Poetree - 17350

Last update 01-09-2022

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Hebrew Literature

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dror Burstein

Coordinator Email: dror.burstein@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: By Appointment

Teaching Staff:

Prof Dror Burstein

Course/Module description:

The subject of the course is trees and literature. The title of the course is taken from the Book of Job and its subject is the ability to return to life. The trees breathe us and shade us; We are fed with fruits and protected against strong winds; We build houses, ships and musical instruments from them and we make paper for notebooks and books from them. In the past there were people who saw trees as dear friends with a distinct character. Henry David Thoreau (Massachusetts, mid-19th century) used to walk for miles, in snow and sun, to visit certain trees. He delivered a eulogy for a tree he loved; Painters in China and Japan painted trees as living creatures that are part plant and part dragon.

Course/Module aims:

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

Following painters, botanists, foresters and poets, who knew how to see trees, we will try to learn to look anew at trees and their mysterious lives, in nature and in literature, and try to "touch their hearts", as Alterman put it.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:

Course/Module Content:

The life of the trees, nature writing about trees, trees in the Bible, in the apocryphal literature, in the literature of the Jewish Sages, and in the poetry of Bialik, Tschernihovsky, Vogel, Steinberg, Yona Wallach, U.Z. Greenberg and Zelda.

Required Reading:

See Syllabus.

Additional Reading Material:

• Colin Tudge, *The Tree: A Natural History of What Trees Are, How They Live, and Why They Matter*, Crown 2007.

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- *David Beerling, The Emerald Planet: How Plants Changed Earth's History, Oxford UP 2007.*
 - *David George Haskell, The Songs of Trees: Stories from Nature's Great Connectors, Viking 2017 [+ a conversation with the author]*
 - *---, The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature, Viking 2012.*
 - *Hope Jahren, Lab Girl, Little, Brown 2017.*
 - *James Canton, The Oak Papers, Canongate 2020.*
 - *John Muir, My First Summer in the Sierra, Canongate 2014 [1911].*
 - *Oliver Rackham, Woodlands, Collins 2006.*
 - *Richard Higgins, Thoreau & the Language of Trees, U. of California Press 2017.*
 - *Richard Mabey, The Cabaret of Plants: Botany & the Imagination, Profile 2015.*
 - *Robert Macfarlane, Landmarks, Penguin 2015. Esp. chapters 1 & 10.*
 - *---, The Wild Places, Granta 2007, pp. 2007. Chapter 1.*
 - *Roger Deakin, Wildwood: A Journey through Trees, Penguin 2008.*
 - *Suzanne Simard, Finding the Mother Tree, Penguin 2021.*
 - *Thomas Pakenham, Meetings with Remarkable Trees, Cassel 1996*

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 10 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 90 %
Home Exam

Additional information:

"Mystery in my eyes is not unusual; In my opinion - the leaf that is just a leaf is no less mysterious than if it suddenly opened its mouth and started speaking in human language". (Zelda)