Syllabus

SONG OF SONGS AS CULTURAL TEXT - 19893

Last update 30-01-2014

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Comparative Literature

Academic year: 1

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof Ilana Pardes

Coordinator Email: mspardes@mssc.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Wed 2-3pm

Teaching Staff:
  Prof Ilana Pardes
Course/Module description:
The Song of Songs as Cultural Text: Love, Religion, Secularism

What makes the Song of Songs such a prominent text for reflections about love in different cultural contexts? Why does it serve as a touchstone for the definition of both literal and allegorical loves? To what extent does the Song revolve around the question of the language of love and poetic epitome? The first part will be devoted to a consideration of major interpretive trends (allegorical exegesis, the literary approach, feminist criticism) and to close readings of the Song. Part II and Part III will revolve around two exemplary modern scenes of reception: American literature and culture (from Whitman's "Song of Myself" to Toni Morrison's Song of Solomon and Beloved) and Israeli literature and culture (from S. Y. Agnon to Daliah Ravikovitch). The discussion will also entail an exploration of adaptations of the Song in music, dance, and art.

Course/Module aims:
The objective of the seminar is to follow the intricacies of the exegetical history of the biblical text while developing the students’ capacity to compare between diverse modes of reception.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
To examine the exegetical history of the Song of Songs
To compare diverse interpretive contexts
To define interpretive strategies
To explain reading processes
To assess the interrelations between literature and religion

Attendance requirements(%):
80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Seminar

Course/Module Content:
The Reception of the Song of Songs - Introduction
The Garden of Metaphors and the Prophetic Marital Metaphor
The Question of Gender and Sexuality: Feminist Readings of the Song
Allegorical Readings: From Rabbi Akiva to the Zohar
Allegorical Readings: From Origen to Santa Teresa
The Literal-Aesthetic Turn: Herder
The Song in America: Whitman
The Song in African-American Culture – Morrison's Song of Solomon
Morrison's Beloved: Mother-Daughter Love
The Song in Israeli Culture: The Song and the Orient
Agnon's Song of Song; From “Betrothed” to “Edo and Enam”
Conclusion
Students' Presentations

Required Reading:

Gershom Cohen, The Song of Songs and the Jewish Religious Mentality
Julia Kristeva, on the Song of Songs, in Tales of Love
Ilana Pardes, Am a Wall and My Breasts like Towers, Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach
Daniel Boyarin, Intertextuality and the Midrash
Melila Hellner-Eshed, on the Song of Songs in the Zohar
--Marvin Pope, Song of Songs. The Anchor Bible. 153-179.
Selected passages from Origines and Santa Teresa
--Marvin Pope, Song of Songs. The Anchor Bible. 112-132.
-- Herder, selected passages from his commentary on the Song
--John D. Baildam, Paradisal Love: Johann Gottfried Herder and the Song of Songs (Sheffield, 1999), 127-139; 180-185.
--George R. Noyes, Selected passages from his commentary on the Song (1846) "Song of Myself" -- Whitman "Song of Myself" and "Preface 1855 from Leaves of Grass, First Edition.
Song of Solomon, Toni Morrison


Toni Morrison, Beloved

Anita Shapira, The Bible and Israeli Identity
S.Y. Agnon, Betrothed, Edo and Enam
Walter Benjamin, on Allegory
Ariel Hirschfeld, selected passages from reshimot al makom

Additional Reading Material:
Yair Zakovitch, The Song of Songs, Mikra le-Yisrael (Hebrew)

Marvin Pope, The Song of Songs, The Anchor Bible

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 80 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 10 %
Project work 0 %
Assignments 10 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:
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