



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

JEWISH AMERICAN THEATRE AND CINEMA - 20592

Last update 08-09-2015

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: theatre studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Jeanette Malkin

Coordinator Email: jmalkin@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Wed. 14:15-15:00 or by appointment

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Jeanette Malkin

Course/Module description:

What is "Jewish" American Theatre? How does Jewish identity or ethnicity shape theatre, if at all? Who are the audiences of this theatre? This course will study the various forms of this rich vein of American theatre and cinema from the 1920s until today. We'll study works in their dramatic, theatrical, cinematic and filmed versions (where relevant) and we'll read critical studies which discuss these questions.

Course/Module aims:

- To discuss ethnicity in theatre and cinema
- To understand the place of plays with Jewish content in the general American theatre
- To know the central plays/ performances

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

An understanding of American plays and performances written by Jews which evoke, in various ways, questions about identity, ethnicity, and belonging to the American nation.

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Frontal lectures and joint discussions based on plays, films, and critical articles which must be read before each class

Course/Module Content:

רשימת נושאים / תכנית הלימודים בקורס:
- מבוא והגדרות

The Jazz Singer. 1927. Directed by Alan Crosland with Al Jolson.
Written by Alfred A. Cohen from the play by Samson Raphaelson. Warner Brothers. 86 min

- Sholem Asch. *God of Vengeance*
- Donald Margulies. *God of Vengeance*, adapted from the play by Sholom Asch.

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- Clifford Odets. *Awake and Sing* (וסרט מחזה)
 - Arthur Miller. *Death of a Salesman* (וסרט מחזה)
 - Leeny Sack. *The Survivor and the Translator*
 - Tony Kushner. *Angels in America*
 - A Serious Man. 2009. Directors and writers: Joel and Ethan Coen

Required Reading:

The above are required reading and viewing.

Henry Bial. "Performance Studies, Mass Culture, and the Jewish Problem," the Introduction to his *Acting Jewish: Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage and Screen*. 2005: 1-29.

Harley Erdman. "Introduction" to his *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity, 1860-1920*. 1997: 1-13.

"I Love to Singa" cartoon. A Merrie Melodies animated cartoon directed by Tex Avery, produced by Leon Schlesinger and released to theaters on July 18, 1936, by Warner Bros. and Vitaphone. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v&eq;ytR7-wT0Qqw>

Harley Erdman, "Jewish Anxiety in 'Days of Judgment': Community Conflict, Antisemitism, and the God of Vengeance Obscenity Case," *Theater Survey* 30/2 (May 1999): 52 -74.

Alisa Solomon. "Queering the Canon: Azoi Toot a Yid," in *Re-Dressing the Canon: Essays on Theater and Gender*. 1997: 95-129.

Jonathan Krasner. "The Interwar Family and American Jewish Identity in Clifford Odets's *Awake and Sing!*" *Jewish Social Studies* 13/1 (Autumn, 2006): pp. 2-30.

Julius Novick. "Death of a Salesman: Deracination and Its Discontents." *American Jewish History* 91/1 (2003): 97-107.

Deborah R. Geis. "'And this strength is in me still': Embodying Memory in Works by Jewish Women Performance Artists," in *The Yearbook of English Studies* 24 (1994): 172-179.

James Fisher. "Tony Kushner's Metaphorical Jew," in *You Should See Yourself: Jewish Identity in Postmodern American Culture*, Vincent Brook (ed.). 2006: 76-94.

Yair Lipshitz. "The Jacob Cycle in *Angels in America*: Re-Performing Scripture Queerly." *Prooftexts* 32/2 (Spring 2012): 203-238.

Additional Reading Material:

- Alexander, Michael. *Jazz Age Jews*. Princeton U. Press, 2001.
- Antler, Joyce. "Introduction" to the "Performance and Jewish Cultural History" issue of *American Jewish History* 87/4 (1999): 247-251.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_jewish_history/v087/87.4antler.html
- Ben-Zvi, Linda. "Generational Shifts in American Jewish Theatre," in *Jewish Theatre: A Global View*, Edna Nahshon (ed). Leiden: Brill, 2009: 215-238.
- Bial, Henry. *Acting Jewish: Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage and Screen*. Ann Arbor: U. Michigan Press, 2005.
- Bigsby, C.W.E. *Modern American Drama: 1945-1990*. Cambridge U. Press, 1992.
- Berkowitz, Gerald M. *New Broadways: Theatre Across America 1950-1980*. NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 1982.
- Brook, Vincent (ed.). *You Should See Yourself: Jewish Identity in Postmodern American Culture*. New Jersey: Rutgers U. Press, 2006.
- Buhle, Paul (ed. and introd.); Pekar, Harvey (introd.) *Jews and American Popular Culture: Volume 2. Music, Theater, Popular Art, and Literature*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007.
- Chaudhuri, Una. *Staging Place: The Geography of Modern Drama*. Ann Arbor: U. Michigan Press, 1995.
- Cohen, Rabbi Norman M. "A Serious Man". *Journal of Religion and Film* 15/2 (October 2011): online.
<http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/Vol15no2/CohenSeriousMan.html>
- Cohen, Sarah Blacher (ed.). *From Hester Street to Hollywood: The Jewish-American Stage and Screen*. Indiana U. Press, 1983.
- Epstein, Lawrence J. *The Haunted Smile: The Story of Jewish Comedians in America*. NY: Public Affairs, 2001.
- Erdman, Harley. *Staging the Jew: The Performance of an American Ethnicity, 1860-1920*. New Brunswick: Rutgers U. Press, 1997.
- Erdman, Harley. "Jewish Anxiety in 'Days of Judgment': Community Conflict, Antisemitism, and the God of Vengeance Obscenity," *Theater Survey* 30/2 (May 1999): 52 -74.
- Fisher, James. *The Theater of Tony Kushner: Living Past Hope*. Routledge, 2001.
- Fisher, James. "Tony Kushner's Metaphorical Jew," in *You Should See Yourself: Jewish Identity in Postmodern American Culture*, Vincent Brook (ed.). New Jersey: Rutgers U. Press, 2006: 76-94.

Freedman, Jonathan. "Angels, Monsters, and Jews: Intersections of Queer and Jewish Identity in Kushner's *Angels in America*," in *PMLA: Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 113/1 (Jan 1998): 90-102.

Furnish, Ben. *Nostalgia in Jewish-American Theatre and Film, 1979-2004*. Peter Lang, 2005.

Gabler, Neal. *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*. New York: Crown Pub., 1988.

Garrett, Shawn-Marie. "Return of the Repressed" [on Blackface], in *Theater* 32/2 (2002):

26-43. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theater/v032/32.2garrett.html>

Geis, Deborah, and Steven Kruger (eds.). *Approaching the Millennium: Essays on Angels*

in America. Ann Arbor: U. Michigan Press, 1999.

Geis, Deborah R. "'And this strength is in me still': Embodying Memory in Works by Jewish Women Performance Artists," in *The Yearbook of English Studies* 24 (1994): 172-179. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3507889?origin=&JSTOR-pdf>

Grunberger, Michael W. (ed.). *From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America*. Library of Congress, 2004.

Harap, Louis. *Dramatic Encounters: The Jewish Presence in Twentieth-Century American*

Drama, Poetry, and Humor and the Black-Jewish Literary Relationship. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.

Hoberman, J. and Jeffrey Shandler. *Entertaining America: Jews, Movies, and Broadcasting*. NY: The Jewish Museum, and Princeton U. Press, 2003.

Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*. 1976.

Jerving, Ryan. "Jazz Language and Ethnic Novelty," in *Modernism/modernity* 10/2 (2003):

239-268. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/modernism-modernity/v010/10.2jerving.html>

Kane, Leslie. (ed.). *David Mamet in Conversation*. Ann Arbor: U. Michigan Press, 2001.

King, Emily. "The Overlooked Jewish Identity of Roy Cohn in Kushner's *Angels in America*: American Schmucko," in *Studies in American Jewish Literature* 27 (2008): 87-100.

Krasner, Jonathan. "The Interwar Family and American Jewish Identity in Clifford Odets's *Awake and Sing!*" *Jewish Social Studies* 13/1 (Autumn, 2006): pp. 2-30. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4467755>

Kugelmass, Jack (ed.) *Key Texts in American Jewish Culture*. New Jersey: Rutgers U. Press, 2003.

Kushner, Tony, and Joachim Neugroschel (adapted and trans. From S. Ansky). *A Dybbuk*

and Other Tales of the Supernatural. NY: Theatre Communications Group, 1998.

Kramer, Michael P. and Hana Wirth-Nesher (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Jewish American Literature*. Cambridge U. Press, 2003.

Landis, Joseph C. (ed. and trans.). *The Great Jewish Plays*. New York: Avon, 1966.

Lipshitz, Yair. "The Jacob Cycle in *Angels in America*: Re-Performing Scripture Queerly." *Prooftexts* 32/2 (Spring 2012): 203-238.

Merwin, Ted. *In Their Own Image: New York Jews in Jazz Age Popular Culture*. New Jersey: Rutgers U. Press, 2006.

Most, Andrea. *Making Americans: Jews and the Broadway Musical*. Harvard U. Press, 2004.

Murphy, Brenda. *American Realism and American Drama: 1880-1940*. Cambridge U. Press, 1987.

Nahshon, Edna. "The Pulpit and the Stage: Rabbi Joseph Silverman and the Actors' Church Alliance," in *American Jewish History* 91/1 (2003): 5-27.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_jewish_history/v091/91.1nahshon02.html

Novick, Julius. "Death of a Salesman: Deracination and Its Discontents," in *American Jewish History* 91/1 (2003): 97-107.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_jewish_history/v091/91.1novick.html

Novick, Julius. *Beyond the Golden Door: Jewish American Drama and Jewish American Experience*. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Omer-Sherman, Ranen. "Jewish/Queer: Thresholds of Vulnerable Identities in Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*," in *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 25/4 (Summer 2007): 78-98.
<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/shofar/v025/25.4omer-sherman.html>

Pederson, Joshua. "'More Life' and More: Harold Bloom, the J Writer, and the Archaic Judaism of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*," in *Contemporary Literature* 50/3 (Fall 2009): 576-598.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/contemporary_literature/v050/50.3.pederson.html

Prell, Riv-Ellen. "A Serious Man in Situ: 'Fear and Loathing in St. Louis Park.'" *AJS Review* 35/2 (November 2011): 365-376.

Robinson, Marc. *The Other American Drama*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. Press, 1994.

Rogin, Michael. *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. Berkeley, Calif.: U. of California Press, 1996.

Rosenberg, Joel. "What You Ain't Heard Yet: The Languages of The Jazz Singer," in *Prooftexts* 22/1+2 (Winter/Spring 2002): 11-54.
http://muse.jhu.edu/search/results?search_id&eq;0704580758&action&eq;reload

Sack, Leeny. *The Survivor and the Translator*, in *Out from Under: Texts by Women Performance Artists*, Lenora Champagne (ed). NY: Theatre Com. Group, 1990: 119-151.

Sarna, Jonathan D. *American Judaism: A History*. Yale U. Press, 2004.

Savran, David. "Ambivalence, Utopia, and a Queer Sort of Materialism: How Angels in America Reconstructs the Nation," in *Approaching the Millennium: Essays on Angels in America*, Deborah Geis and Steven Kruger (eds.). Ann Arbor: U. of Michigan Press, 1999: 13-39.

Shuman, R. Baird. "Clifford Odets and the Jewish Context," in *From Hester Street to Hollywood*, Sarah Blacher Cohen (ed.). Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1983: 85-105.

Shuman, Robert Baird. *Clifford Odets*. NY : Twayne Publishers, 1962.

Schiff, Ellen (ed.). *Awake & Singing: Six Great American Jewish Plays*. NY: Applause, 2004.

Schiff, Ellen (ed.). "Introduction," in *her Fruitful & Multiplying: 9 Contemporary Plays from the American Jewish Repertoire*. NY: Mentor Book, 1996.

Smith, Susan Harris. *American Drama: The Bastard Art*. Cambridge U. Press, 1997.

Solomon, Alisa. "Wrestling with Angels: A Jewish Fantasia," in *Approaching the Millennium: Essays on Angels in America*, Deborah Geis and Steven Kruger (eds.). Ann Arbor: U. Michigan Press, 1999: 118-33.

Solomon, Alisa. "Queering the Canon: Azoi Toot a Yid," in *her Re-Dressing the Canon: Essays on Theater and Gender*. Routledge, 1997: 95-129.

Stahl, Nanette (ed.). *Sholem Asch Reconsidered*. New Haven: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript, 2004.

Vorlicky, Robert (ed.). *Tony Kushner in Conversation*. Ann Arbor: U. Michigan Press, 1998.

Zangwill, Israel. *The Melting Pot: A Drama in Four Acts*. London: Heinemann, 1914.

Zinman-Silverman, Toby. "Jewish Aporia: The Rhythm of Talking in Mamet," in *Theatre Journal* 44/2 (1992): 207-15.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 20 %
Project work 80 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information: