

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Bertolt Brecht as Lyrical Poet of The Dark Times 1927-1953 - 32123

Last update 04-08-2021

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: German Language & Literature

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Christian Alexander Wollin

Coordinator Email: christian.wollin@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: t.b.a. before the course starts

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Christian Wollin

Course/Module description:

The course consists of the weekly 2-hour discussion of Bertolt Brecht's lyrical poetry.

Supplemented by the German originals, we will read English translations of selections from Brecht's major poetry collections as published/written between 1927-1953 as well as uncollected poems.

We will engage in depth with Brecht's use of poetical forms, lyrical strategies, and poetological concerns.

Course/Module aims:

To introduce students to Brecht's lyrical poetry and its relevant literary, cultural, and historical contexts.

To provide students with suitable tools of textual analysis and interpretation for this end.

To familiarize students with Brecht's uses of lyrical forms, his poetical strategies, and his poetics.

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

The ability to critically analyse Brecht's poetry, to identify his poetical strategies (forms/contents), and to recognize and distinguish his fundamental poetological concepts.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Seminar

Course/Module Content:

(Note: Exact order and number of content elements may be subject to change.)

"Old forms, new contents/contexts": Brecht's protean adaptation of canonical lyrical

genres and forms

"My brother Shelley": Brecht's engagement with the European lyrical tradition

"I, Bertolt Brecht": Brecht's (dis-)continuous crafting of literary personae and poetical instances across social orders and political regimes

Avant-garde modernist and/or socialist classic? Brecht's poetry at the limits of autonomy aesthetics and the partisan politics of littérature engagée

Brecht's lyrical ethopoieia of the "Dark Times": Between "Verhaltenslehren der Kaelte" and socialist humanism

"Questions of a worker who reads": Brecht's poetry as discursive medium of counter-history and social critique

The politico-didactic uses of the lyric: Brecht as poetical strategist and propagandist

"Don't knock a nail in the wall": Brecht as poet of exile, 1933-1945

Writing the Second World War: the "War Primer" (1940-45) between verse and image

"Violence is the midwife of history": Brecht's poetical spaces of violence/power

Brecht's lyrical intimism of the quotidian

"Every creature can do it": Gendering Brecht's erotic poems

The critical reception of Brecht as poet (Benjamin, Lukács, Arendt)

Brecht's lyrical legacies in the two Germanys after 1945

Required Reading:

All primary texts will be made available on moodle before the seminar starts.

Selections from:

- Bertolt Brechts Hauspostille / Bertolt Brecht's Domestic Breviary (1916-25/1927)

- Die Songs der Dreigroschenoper / The Songs of The Threepenny Opera (1924-1927/1928)

- Aus dem Lesebuch für Städtebewohner / From the Reader for City Dwellers

(1926-27/1930)

- *Svendborger Gedichte / Svendborg Poems (1934-38/1939)*
- *Steffinische Sammlung / Steffinian Collection (1939-40)*
- *Kriegsfibel / War Primer (1940-45/1955)*
- *Hollywoodelegien / Hollywood Elegies (1942)*
- *Buckower Elegien / Buckow Elegies (1953)*
- *uncollected poems, 1927-1956*
- *Brecht's essays on poetry and poets*

Additional Reading Material:

- essays (excerpted/complete) by
Hannah Arendt, Walter Benjamin, and Georg Lukács

Course/Module evaluation:

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

Additional information: