



## *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

### *Syllabus*

## *Hanna Arendt on Language Literature and Art - 32814*

*Last update 22-08-2016*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)*

*Responsible Department: german, russian & east european studies*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 2nd Semester*

*Teaching Languages: English*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Prof Birgit Erdle, DAAD Walter Benjamin Chair*

*Coordinator Email: [birgiterdle@aol.com](mailto:birgiterdle@aol.com)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Sunday, 14-16  
and by appointment*

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Teaching Staff:  
Prof Birgit Erdle

Course/Module description:

*What role do literature and language play in the thinking of one of the most important intellectuals of the 20th century, Hannah Arendt? Hannah Arendt maintains that poets are archivists of facts: „The men who stand guard over facts are not the officers of interest groups – no matter how legitimate their claims – but the reporters, the historians, and finally the poets.“ (1966). In this course, using exemplary texts, we shall explore Hannah Arendt’s understanding of art, literature, language, the distinctness of different languages, and the consequences for her philosophical and political theory. We investigate the way in which Arendt refers to German literature in her writing – for example to works by Goethe, Heine, Rilke, Brecht, Kafka and Hebbel.*

*This course is also an introduction to the nature of the relationship between literature and philosophy and questions arising from this relationship.*

Course/Module aims:

*make students familiar with certain aspects of the interrelation between literature and philosophy;  
introduce students to Hannah Arendt’s thought through a close reading of texts;  
critically reflect on Hannah Arendt’s understanding of art, literature, language, multilingualism, and the consequences for her philosophical and political thought*

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

*Interpret primary texts and critically evaluate arguments in secondary texts;  
critically analyze some key texts written by Hannah Arendt;  
analyze how Arendt does make use of and refer to literary texts;  
discuss the relationship between experience and poetic language;  
reflect on debates on literature, representation, and relation to reality after 1945 in their cultural and political context*

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

*Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: seminar discussion  
reading reports*

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student presentations

Course/Module Content:

close reading of exemplary texts (in english) by Arendt focusing on her understanding of poetic language, metaphor, multilingualism, and 'world', and the consequences this has for her philosophical and political thought.

We shall explore how Arendt does refer in her writings to German literature - for example to works by Goethe, Heine, Brecht, Kafka and Hebbel. The course is also an introduction to questions and problems about the relationship between literature and philosophy.

Required Reading:

All primary texts and secondary literature will be provided

Additional Reading Material:

Sigrid Weigel, "Poetics as a Presupposition of Philosophy: Hannah Arendt's Denktagebuch," *Telos*, 2009, 146: 97-110

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %  
Presentation 35 %  
Participation in Tutorials 0 %  
Project work 30 %  
Assignments 0 %  
Reports 0 %  
Research project 0 %  
Quizzes 0 %  
Other 35 %  
written paper (12 pp)

Additional information: