



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Female Writing in Italy: Natalia Ginzburg and Elsa Morante - 45138

Last update 03-10-2022

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Romance Studies

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Chiara Caradonna

Coordinator Email: chiara.caradonna@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours:

Teaching Staff:

Dr. chiara Caradonna

Course/Module description:

Elsa Morante (1912-1985) and Natalia Ginzburg (1916-1991) are towering figures in Italian 20th century literature, and unique voices in Italy's literary landscape. They have profoundly shaped Italy's way of narrating itself after WWII. They were friends and shared both a reflection on what it meant to be women and writers, and forms of political activism on burning issues of their time – from women rights to the atomic threat. At the same time, as writers they could not be more different: as imaginative, rich and dense Morante's writing is, as laconic, terse and seemingly straightforward is that of Ginzburg. In this course, we will explore both bodies of work in dialogue with each other. We will compare different stages of Morante's and Ginzburg's literary development and look closely at their choices of style and topic, in order to gain a deeper understanding of their aesthetics and concerns. We will also consider their literary output in the context of their time and its political and ideological struggles. How did Morante and Ginzburg respectively place themselves in the literary and political arena of their time? What role did their Jewish identity play in shaping their literary voice? How did they understand their position as women writers in a deeply patriarchal society? How did they represent women, what language did they develop? What kind of possibilities of narration and activism, or narration as activism, open up from their work and life? These and many other questions will occupy us in the course of the semester, as we take on a journey into Morante's and Ginzburg's fascinating literary worlds.

Course/Module aims:

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

By the end of the semester, students will have gained a thorough knowledge of the work of Elsa Morante and Natalia Ginzburg. They will be familiar with the context in which these writers operated and with the topics they engaged with. Moreover, students will acquire tools of textual analysis informed by feminist literary criticism and will be able to apply them to texts beyond those discussed in class.

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: The course consists in close reading and discussion of the texts at hand. Students are required to read the texts closely beforehand and participate actively in the classes by preparing specific questions to be handed in before the class and then raised during the class.

Course/Module Content:

(Subject to change)

1.14/3

Introduction: Women Writers in Italy

2.21/3

Historical Context: Italy between Fascism and First Republic

3.28/3

Finding a Voice: Ginzburg, La strada che va in città (1942)

4.11/4

Finding a Voice: Morante, Menzogna e Sortilegio (1948)

5.18/4

Writing Short Stories: Ginzburg

6.2/5

Writing Short Stories: Morante

7.9/5

Writing Italian History: Ginzburg, Lessico Familiare (1963)

8.16/5

Writing Italian History: Ginzburg, Lessico Familiare (1963)

9.23/5

Writing Italian History: Morante, La Storia (1974)

10.30/5

Writing Italian History: Morante, La Storia (1974)

11.6/6

Writing Theatre: Ginzburg, Ti ho sposato per allegria (1966)

12.13/6

Writing Poetry: Morante, Il mondo salvato dai ragazzini (1968)

13.20/6

Political Engagement: Ginzburg, Morante and the burning issues of their/our time

14.27/6

Conclusions and outlook

Required Reading:

(Subject to change – Choice from:)

אלזה מורנטה, אלה תולדות, תל-אביב: הקיבוץ מאוחד, תשנ"ה, 1995

—כזב וכישוף, בני ברק: הקיבוץ המאוחד, תש"ס 2000.

—הרדיד האנדלוסי : נובלה וסיפורים, תל-אביב: הקיבוץ המאוחד, תשס"ה, 2004.

Elsa Morante, *The World Saved by Kids and Other Epics*, trans. by Cristina Viti, Kalkota: Seagull Books, 2016

—, *Pro e contro la bomba atomica e altri scritti*, Milano: Adelphi 1987

—, *History. A Novel*, trans. by William Weaver, London: Penguin Books, 2000

נטליה גינצבורג, אל תשאלי אותי לעולם, ירושלים: הוצאת ספרים ע"ש י"ל מאגנס - האוניברסיטה העברית; תשפ"א 2021

—, קולות הערב: שלושה רומאנים קצרים, תל-אביב: הקיבוץ המאוחד; תשנ"ה, 1994

—, איפה הכובע שלי? כל המחזות: א, בני ברק: הוצאת הקיבוץ המאוחד; תשפ"ב 2021

—, אמרות משפחה, תל-אביב: הקיבוץ המאוחד; תשע"ג 2012

—, חמישה רומאנים קצרים וסיפורים אחרים, בני ברק: הוצאת הקיבוץ המאוחד, תשפ"ב 2021

—, קשה לאדם לדבר על עצמו: שיחות עם נטליה גינצבורג, ירושלים: כרמל, תשס"ה, 2005

—, המידות הקטנות, ירושלים: תשע נשמות, 2019

Natalia Ginzburg, *Never must you ask me*, London: Joseph, 1973

—, *A place to live and other selected essays*, New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002

—, *The wrong door: the complete plays*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008

—, *Family lexicon*, New York: New York Review Books, 2017

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 80 %

Assignments 20 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information:

Final Assignment

Students will be asked to write a paper of 10 pp. based on a topic that was discussed during the semester. Deadline to hand in the paper is 30 September 2023.