



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Apartheid South Africa: A History through Four Works of Expressive Culture - 54233

Last update 30-10-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Cultural Studies-Individual Graduate Prog.

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Louise Bethlehem

Coordinator Email: louise.bethlehem@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday 14:30-15:30

Teaching Staff:

Prof. Louise Bethlehem

Course/Module description:

This course investigates the history of the apartheid regime in South Africa from 1948-1994 from the perspective of four iconic works of expressive culture, each with the power to illuminate the decade to which it refers. We will begin with a discussion of mining and urbanization as integral to the establishment of the apartheid state through the lens of William Kentridge's short animation, *Mine* (1991) echoing earlier footage from Lionel Rogosin's documentary drama *Come Back, Africa* (1959). Although produced in 1991, the movie provides a retrospective on the forces that brought the apartheid state into being. The 1950s in South Africa saw the non-violent resistance of the Defiance Campaign and the drafting of the Freedom Charter through the alliances of South Africans of all races. The musical production *King Kong: A Jazz Opera* speaks to this moment, and positions jazz a channel of political consciousness, further reflected in scenes from *Come Back, Africa*. South Africa's transformation into a police state from the 1960s was reflected in the severe plight of political prisoners and detainees. Chris van Wyk's poem "In Detention" (1971) offers a window into the death in custody of political activists Ahmed Timol, Steven Bantu Biko and others as a defining feature of South Africa's prison regime. During the 1980s, photography occupied a prominent place in internal political struggles in South Africa. The funeral photography of Gille de Vlieg, one of the few female members of the Afrapix collective, opens up questions about the boundaries between the public and the private, and between Black and white South Africans in the context of extreme violence. Her work will be used to stage a dialogue with the work of other photographers during the various states of emergency of the era. Our discussions will be enriched by independent reading of one of two novels, Alan Paton's *Cry, The Beloved Country* (1948) or J.M. Coetzee's *Age of Iron* (1990).

Course/Module aims:

To familiarize students with major events in the history of apartheid in South Africa and their cultural representations.

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

Identify major events in the history of apartheid South Africa.
Use methodologies based on the analysis of literary, material and visual culture.
To produce a book review, wikipedia entry, or podcast dealing with a work of expressive culture from apartheid South Africa

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: In person seminar with some online meetings.

The course takes place in English.

Course/Module Content:

A full syllabus of weekly readings will be provided.

Topics to be discussed include:

- 1.What was apartheid?*
- 2. Mining the Past: Apartheid as Racial Capitalism*
- 3.The Johannesburg Gothic*
- 4. Extraction and Laying Waste*
- 5.King Kong: and the Right to the City*
- 6. Defiant Lives: The Sophiatown Renaissance*
- 7. Miriam Makeba and Transnational Solidarity*
- 8. Arresting Thought: On the Poem "In Detention"*
- 10. Incarcerating Consciousness: Steve Biko and Black Consciousness*
- 11. Documentary Photography under Apartheid: Afrapix*
- 12. Gille De Vlieg's Activist Photography*

Required Reading:

TBA

Additional Reading Material:

TBA

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 50 %

Active Participation / Team Assignment 10 %

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 20 %

Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture 20 %

Additional information:

Two tracks exist for the submission of interim assignments--preparing a research matrix or preparing a book review of a novel associated with the course.

