

Comparative Literature 46.01/ Jewish Studies 27.01

The Jewish Family

Professor Kritzman

2A Tuesday and Thursday

Fall 2023

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the various narrative forms - novel, short story, essay, self-portraiture, drama, film, television (situation comedy) - in which the Jewish family is represented. In an attempt to transcend cultural stereotypes, we will examine how the rhetorical configurations of texts describe the varieties of Jewishness and the significance of Jewish cultural identity as embodied in the family. Special attention will be paid to the rewriting of biblical texts in twentieth century literature and the ethical issues they dramatize (particularly the keeping of the covenant). Examples will be drawn from a variety of literary traditions: American, Brazilian, French, German, Hebrew, South African, and Yiddish.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- The Book of Genesis, translation Robert Alter (Norton)
- Saul Bellow, "The Old System" in Mosby's Memoirs (Penguin)
- .-Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl 11 (photocopy)
- Sholem Jacob Abramovitsh, "The Calf" (photocopy)
- Sholem Rleichem, Teuyre the Dairyman (Schocken, 1987)
- Issac Basheuis Singer, Gimpel the Fool (Noonday Press, 1996)
- Franz Kafka, The Basic Kafka (Washington Square Press)
- Nadine Gordimer, 11 Letter From His Fat h er 11 (photocopy)
- Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl 11 (photocopy)
- Clarice Lispector, "Family Ties" (photocopy)
- Alain Finkelkraut, The Imaginary Jew (Nebraska Paperback)

- Wendy Wasserstein, *The Sisters Rosenzweig* (Harcourt Brace)
- The Schocken Book of Contemporary Jewish Fiction, edited by Ted Solotaroff and Nessa Rapoport (Schocken, 1992) (Texts by E.L. Doctorow, Grace Paley, IB Singer) (CJF)
- Woody Allen, "Oedipus Wrecks"
- Allegra Goodman, *The Family Markowitz*
- William Finn and James Lapine, *Falsettos* (Plume Drama) Recommended:

- The Oxford Book of Jewish Stories, edited by Ilan Stavans, 1998 (Oxford)

REQUIRED WORK:

- midterm exam, October 28 (25%)
- one 10-12 page paper due either November 23 or November 30 at the latest. (40%)
- each student will do a twenty minute oral presentation. You will choose a passage in one of the texts we shall study,, paying particular attention to the rhetorical techniques deployed in the representation of the Jewish family. The approach should be interactive (20%)
- classwork (15%)

SCHEDULE:

September 23-Introduction: Jewish Writing: Hebrew and Yiddish Traditions. Biblical Interests. The Family and Judaism.

September 28- What is Jewish writing?: E.L. Doctorow, "The Writer in the Family," in CJF; CREATION AND CONFLICT: THE FAMILY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Adam and Eve; Cain and Abel) Book of Genesis (§i. chapters 1-21)

September 29-x Hour (4:00-6:00)- Motherhood and Conflict: Sarah and Hagar/Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl"; Fatherhood and Conflict: Genesis 22: "The Hkedah or The Sacrifice of Isaac"; Kafka, "Abraham," in *The Basic Kafka*, pp. 172-174.

October 5-Visit of Rabbi Emily Lipof, Temple Ohabei Shalom, Brookline, Mass.
SISIERS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: Rachel and Leah (G, chapters 28-35)

October 7-BROTHERS IN CONFLICT: "Jacob and Essau 11 /Saul Bellow,
11 Th e Old System" Complete Genesis.

October 12-YIDDISH NRRRATIUE TRADITIONS: Sholem Jacob
Rbram out sh1 "The Calf" (photocopy); Sholem Aleichem, Teuye the Dairyman

October 14-Sholem Aleichem, Teuye (continued); Issac Basheuis
Singer, Gimpel the Fool: 11 6i mp el 11"The Little Shoemaker

October 19-Issac Basheuis Singer, 11Th e Gentleman from Cr acow 11
"R Party in Miami Beach• in CJF; Kafka, '1Th e Judgment 11

October 21-FRTHERS RND SONS: Kafka, "The Letter to My Fat her 11
Gordimer, 11 Letter to His Father"; Roth, 11 11 Always Wanted You to
Admire My Fasting' 11 or, Looking at Kafka'• in CL.

October 26-Finkielkraut, The Imaginary Jew October 28-Midterm

Examination

November 2- TIKKUN OLRM: JEWISH WRITIN6 RND
REPRESENTATIONS OF THE NON-TRRDITIONRL FAMILY (Interracial
Marriages; 6ay Jewish Families): Grace Paley, 11 Zagr ow sk y Tells" in CJF:
William Finn, Falsettos. TIKKUN OLRM AND MORAL DILEMMAS: Saul
Bellow, "Something to Remember Me By" in CL.

November 3-H hour. REPRESENTATIONS OF THE JEW I SH MOTHER IN
POPULAR CULTURE: "The Molly Goldberg Show"

November 4-THE FIGURE OF MOSES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT; FREUD 1 S
MOSES AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE. Freud, Moses and Monotheism

November 10 H-Hour-Freud, Moses and Monotheism: Perec, W November 11-FRMILY
MEMORIES RND THE HOLOCAUST: Perec, .Yli

November 16-ZRKHOR OR THE LIVING WILL: Roth, Patrimony

Class Policies

Honor Principle:** You are expected to adhere to the Dartmouth College Community Standard of Academic Integrity. **Students should not seek help** from another student, a friend, a tutor or a member of their family without first seeking permission from their professor, unless the assignment is clearly described as teamwork. In particular, each student is responsible for completing their own written assignments. Having anyone else write on your behalf or offer significant edits gives me an inaccurate idea of your skills, and as such violates the honor code principle. **Any suspicion of use of online translation programs will be pursued. *Do not use Google Translate or any similar translation website. For your oral presentations, you may not copy / paste text from websites, nor use translation programs. **This will be considered plagiarism.** For detailed information, please review Dartmouth's [Academic Honor Principle](#). For your information, please consult [this resource on proper citation of sources](#)

***Student Accessibility and Accommodations:**

Students requesting disability-related accommodations and services for this course are required to register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS; [Getting Started with SAS webpage](#); student.accessibility.services@dartmouth.edu; 1-603-646-9900) and to request that an accommodation email be sent to me in advance of the need for an accommodation. Then, students should schedule a follow-up meeting with me to determine relevant details such as what role SAS or its [Testing Center](#) may play in accommodation implementation. This process works best for everyone when completed as early in the quarter as possible. If students have questions about whether they are eligible for accommodations or have concerns about the implementation of their accommodations, they should contact the SAS office. All inquiries and discussions will remain confidential.

***Religious Observances:** Some students may wish to take part in religious observances that occur during this academic term. If you have a religious observance that conflicts with your participation in the course, please meet with me as soon as possible, or before the end of the second week of the term—at the latest, to discuss appropriate adjustments. Dartmouth has a deep commitment to support students' religious observances and diverse faith practices

Social Media and Other Devices: Unless you have a documented accommodation, cell phone use, text messaging, and social media in general are prohibited in this class.