WOMEN IN ISRAEL: AN INTRODUCTION

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Spring 2013
Barnard Hall 228
Office Hours: 11:15-1:00 PM
or by appointment

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

“Women in Israel: An Introduction” covers some of the significant issues addressed by feminist and gender scholars in relation to the status and experiences of Jewish and non-Jewish women living in Israel.

The state’s self-definition, its religious laws, its traditional views relating to family and the military’s centrality in Israeli life pose specific challenges for women in Israel. The course identifies and addresses some of these challenges as experienced by contemporary women. Sessions include: women, religion and the law; Jewish and non-Jewish minorities; women and the military; women’s health and violence against women. Since contemporary women’s issues are inevitably rooted in historic and present political debates and contexts, sessions are also devoted to women in pre-State Israel and women and the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Required readings include first-person narratives, memoirs, historical, sociological and feminist sources and fiction. Required films supplement the reading materials.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Boianjiu, Shani. _The People of Forever Are Not Afraid_ (2012)
Fuchs, Esther, ed. _Israeli Women’s Studies: A Reader_. (Rutgers UP, 2005). (_IWS_ in syllabus)
Misra, Kalpana and Melanie S. Rich, eds. _Jewish Feminism in Israel_ (Brandeis UP, 2003). (_JWI_ in syllabus)
Swirski, Barbara and Marilyn P. Safir, eds. _Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel_ (Teachers College Press, 1993). (_CEB_ in syllabus) (_oop_)

**Required Texts** can be found at Book Culture, 536 West 112th St., (212) 865-1588. Texts marked “_oop_” are out of print and can be found through the internet (Strand Bookstore, alibris.com, amazon.com, etc.). Readings marked (C) in the syllabus are available through Courseworks.
REQUIRED FILMS
Films are available at Media Center, Barnard Library (3rd floor)
Anou Banou: Daughters of Utopia (Edna Politi, 1982)
Desert Brides (Ida Upshiz, 2008)
Pickles, Inc. (Dalit Kimor, 2005)
Keep not Silent: Ortho-Dykes (Ilil Alexander, 2004)
To Be a Woman Soldier (Shuli Eshel, 1987)
To See If I'm Smiling (Tamar Yarom, 2007)
Black Bus (Anat Zuria, 2009)
City of Borders (Yun Suh, 2009)

SEMINAR REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and class participation: The seminar relies on the active participation of all students. Students are expected to come to class with texts and hard copies of materials available through Courseworks. Class discussions will involve close examination of assigned readings.

2. Current issues presentation: One 5-minute class presentation on a relevant and recent article (limited to 3 pages) that relates specifically to women and gender in Israel from a local, national, Israeli, Jewish, Palestinian, Arab and general, newspaper or journal.
   This is an opportunity for students to open a discussion on a topic of interest to them. This presentation does not exempt the student from submitting one of the required papers that day.
   Article should be posted by Monday 10 AM in “Weekly Articles” and identified by date, abbreviated title, and student’s last name.

3. Required reading(s) presentation: Each student is to give one 15-minute class presentation on all assigned readings and films for a particular session. The student should provide the class with an outline of the presentation that identifies significant issues and poses questions to be explored. Do not read the presentation. Do not summarize each reading. Assume that everyone has read and viewed the materials. Plan the presentation carefully to last only 15 minutes. Students may not submit a primary paper (see 4 below) related to their presentation topic.

4. Three Research Papers: Three 1250-1500 words developing a subject not included in the syllabus. Papers should be analytical and not summaries of materials. One paper should focus on women of an ethnic or racial Jewish minority and one on women of ethnic or racial non-Jewish minority. The third paper may be on any topic relating to women and gender in Israel. The paper may not be on the same topic as the oral presentation. All topics must be approved by instructor.
Papers will be evaluated on originality of research, writing, organization and will be given a letter grade. **Revision** of **1st paper** is optional and to be submitted the following week.

**Last days for submitting papers:**
Paper 1--Feb. 12, Paper 2--March 12, Paper 3--April 30

5. **Two weekly response papers:**
   
   (a) First paper (500+ words) covers your reactions to the readings and films required for each Tuesday class. It should be followed by at least 2 questions that you consider important for class discussion. To be submitted at the end of each class. This response paper is intended, in part, also to demonstrate that you have read and seen the required texts and films for that day.

   (b) Second paper (250+ words), mailed to <iklepfis@barnard.edu> as an attachment no later than Thursday 6 PM that records your responses to the class discussion of the materials required for that week’s class.

   In other words, you will be writing before (class discussion) and after (class discussion) responses to each Tuesday’s required readings and films.

   Both response papers will receive a grade of 1-10 based on thoughtfulness and originality of ideas (writing--grammar, organization--will not be evaluated) and both will be returned the following week.

6. **One conference:** with instructor by February 12. T 11:15-1 PM or by appointment. Phone conferences are also an option.

**Syllabus**

**Jan. 22—Introduction**

Course requirements
10 Facts about women in Israel (C)
Seismic Shift (C)

**Jan 29—Women in Pre-State Israel**


Druyan, Nitze. “Yemenite Jewish Women—Between Tradition and Change” in *Pioneers and Homemakers: Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel*, ed. Deborah Bernstein (SUNY, 1992), 75-87. (C)

------. “Second Aliyah: Women’s Experience and their Role in the Yishuv.” In Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia. (2005), 14 pp. (C)


Tamar Mayer. “From Zero to Hero: Masculinity in Jewish Nationalism.” In IWS, 97-117.

Tues. Feb. 5—Women in Pre-State Israel (cont’d)


Fleischmann, Ellen L. "The Emergence of the Palestinian Women's Movement, 1929-39." Journal of Palestine Studies, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Spring, 2000), 16-32. (C)

----"Nation, Tradition, and Rights: The Indigenous Feminism of the Palestinian Women's Movement (1929-1948)." In Women's Suffrage in the British Empire: Citizenship, Nation, and Race, eds. Ian Fletcher, Philippa Levine and Laura Mayhall (Routledge, 2000), 138-56. (C)

Brand, Hanita. "Loyalty, Belonging, and Their Discontents: Women in the Public Sphere in Jewish and Palestinian Cultural Discourse." Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues (Fall 2003), 6, 84-103. (C)

Feb. 12 —Gender and Memory

Paper I—Last day to submit Paper 1


**Film:** *Anou Banou: Daughters of Utopia* (Edna Politi, 1982)

**Feb. 19—Women and Religion**


Raday, Frances. "The Concept of Gender Equality in a Jewish State," 18-28 in *CEB.*

Freeman, Marcia. "Women, Law, Religion and Politics in Israel: A Human Rights Perspective" 57-75 in *JFI.*


Reports on the status of women in Israel—1997-2009 (C)

Ben Shimon, Kamon. “Freedom Riders.” *Jerusalem Report.* (June 8, 2009), 16-21. (C)

Swirski, Barbara and Marilyn P. Safir. "Living in a Jewish State: National, Ethnic and Religious Implications," 7-17 in *CEB.*

**Film:** *Sentenced to Marriage* (Anat Zuria, 2004)
**Film:** *Black Bus* (Anat Zuria, 2009)

**Feb. 26—Minorities**


Shohat, Ella. "The Invention of the Mizrahim." *Journal of Palestine Studies,* XXIX, no. 1 (Autumn 1999), 5-20. (C)

Dahan-Kalev, Henriette. "Mizrahi Feminism: The Unheard Voice" 96-112 in JFI.

Motzafi-Holler, Pnina. “Scholarship, Identity and Power: Mizrahi Women in Israel.” Signs, Vol. 26, No. 3 (Spring, 2001), 697-734. (C)


Ben-Zvi, Yael. “Zionist Lesbianism and Transsexual Transgression: Two Representatives of Queer Israel.” Middle East Report, No. 206 (Spring 1998), 26-28+37. (C)

Edayat, Fadi. “First Israeli Arab conference of Lesbians convened in Haifa.” Haaretz, March 29, 2007. (C)

Film: Keep not Silent: Ortho-Dykes (Ilil Alexander, 2004)
Film: City of Borders (Yn Suh, 2009)

March 5--Minoirities (cont'd)


----"Retelling Herstory: To Be a Female Bedouin Teacher Differently." Comparative Education, Vol 41, No. 3 (Aug., 2005), 247-266. (C)

Hajjar, Lisa. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Arab Women, Liberal Feminism and the Israeli State." Middle East Report, No. 27 (Summer, 1998), 27. (C)
Sa'ar, Amalia. "Contradictory Location: Assessing the Position of Palestinian Women Citizens of Israel." *Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, Iss. 3 (Fall 2007), pg. 45, 30 pgs. (C)

Kanaaneh, Rhoda Ann. *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*. (UC P, 2002). Introduction and Ch. 1 "Babies and Boundaries" and Ch. 2 "Luxurious Necessities," (1-103)

**Film:** *Desert Brides* (Ida Ushpiz, 2008)

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March 12 --Minorities (cont'd)

**Paper 2**

Last day to submit paper 2

Kanaaneh, Rhoda Ann. *Birthing the Nation: Strategies of Palestinian Women in Israel*. (UCP, 2002). Ch. 3 "Fertile Differences," Ch. 4 "Modemizing the Body" Ch. 5 "Son Preference" and "Conclusion" (104-256).

Birenbaum-Carmeli, D. and M. Dirnfeld. "In Vitro Fertilisation Policy in Israel and Women’s Perspectives: the more the better?" *Reproductive Health Matters*, 16 (31) (May 2008), 182-191. (C)


**Film:** *Pickles, Inc.* (Dalit Kimor, 2005)

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March 19—Spring Break—no classes

March 26—1st day of Passover—no class

April 2--Gender and the Military


**Films:** *To Be a Woman Soldier* (Shuli Eshel, 1987)  
*To See if I'm Smiling* (Tamar Yaro, 2007)

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**April 9--Violence Against Women**


Eilam, Esther. "Rape and Rape Survivors in Israel," 312-319 in *CEB*.

Umanit, Irit. “Violence against Women,” in *JFI* 132-140


Abdalla, Jihan. “A Room of Their Own” [Palestinian Women’s Shelter]. *Jerusalem Report*. June 22, 2009. 16-18. (C)

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**April 16--Violence Against Women (cont’d)**


Stone, Anya and Martina Vandenberg. "How the Sex Trade Becomes a Slave Trade: Trafficking of Women to Israel." *Middle East Report*, No. 211 (Summer, 1999), 36-38. (C)

Amnesty International. "Human Rights Abuses Affecting Trafficked Women in Israel's Sex Industry" (May 18, 2000). (C)

April 23--Women and War


---- "Homefront as Battlefield: Gender, Military Occupation, and Violence Against Women," 231-246 in IWS.

Espanioly, Nabila. "Palestinian Women in Israel Respond to the Intifada," 147-151 in CEB.

Svirsky, Gila. "The Women's Peace Movement in Israel" 113-131 in JFI.

Sasson-Levy, Orna and Tamar Rapoport. "Body, Gender, Knowledge in Protest Movements: The Israeli Case." Gender and Society, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jun., 2003), 379-403. (C)


April 30—Women & War (cont'd)

Paper 3
Last day to submit Paper 3


Mazali, Rela. "And What About the Girls?" What a Culture of War Genders Out of View." Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues, Number 6, Fall 5764/2003, 39-50 (C)

Boianjiu, Shani. The People of Forever Are Not Afraid (2012)