

Rachel Feldhay Brenner

**YORK UNIVERSITY
HUMANITIES 4000A.06
CANADIAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE THROUGH
LITERATURE 1990-91**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores the shaping of Canadian Jewish literature as a response to contemporary Jewish experience. We shall focus on literary representations of the immigrant experience in Canada, the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the establishment of the Jewish State. The emphasis on literary-historical inter-relationships aims at clarification of issues which currently pre-occupy Jews and non-Jews alike.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

First Term: 2 essays (15%, 20%), 1 presentation (15%).

Second Term: 1 essay (30%), 1 presentation (15%).

Short Essays: 1,500 - 2,000 words (6-8 typed pages, double spaced).

Major Essay: 4,000 - 5,000 words (15-20 typed pages, double spaced).

REQUIRED BOOKS

Kattan, Naïm. *The Neighbour and Other Stories*. McClelland and Stewart.

Klein, A.M. *The Second Scroll*. McClelland and Stewart.

Kreisel, Henry. *The Rich Man*. McClelland and Stewart ; *The Betrayal*. McClelland and Stewart.

- Maynard, Fredelle Bruser. *Raisins and Almonds*. Penguin.
Richler, Mordecai. *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*. Bantam;
The Street. Penguin; *St. Urbain's Horseman*. McClelland and
Stewart; *Joshua Then and Now*. Bantam.
Waddington, Miriam. *Apartment Seven*. Oxford UP.
Weinzweig, Helen. *Basic Black with Pearls*. Anansi.
Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Bantam.
Wiseman, Adele. *Memoirs of A Book Molesting Childhood*.
Oxford UP; *The Sacrifice*. McMillan; *Crackpot*. McClelland and
Stewart.

COURSE OUTLINE

FIRST TERM:

- Week 1 Introduction
Week 2 ROSH HASHANA
Week 3 Immigrant Experience (General)
Week 4 Immigrant Experience (Women Writers)
Week 5 Canada and the Old World - Poetry (General)
Week 6 Canada and the Old World - Fiction (Adele
Wiseman)
Week 7 Canada and the Old World - Fiction (Adele
Wiseman)
Week 8 Canadian Response to Jewish Persecution in
Europe (Irving Abella & Harold Tropper)
Week 9 Anti-Semitism in Quebec (Lita-Rose Betcherman,
A.M. Klein, Mordecai Richler, Leonard Cohen)
Week 10 Holocaust refugees in Canada (Abraham Boyarski,
Mordecai Richler, Henry Kreisel)
Week 11 Survivors' literary responses to the Holocaust (Elie
Wiesel, Henry Kreisel)
Week 12 Survivors' literary responses to the Holocaust
(Henry Kreisel)
Week 13 Survivors' literary responses to the Holocaust
(Henry Kreisel)

SECOND TERM:

- Week 14 Canadian literary responses to the Holocaust
(A.M. Klein)

Week 15	Canadian literary responses to the Holocaust (Eli Mandel)
Week 16	Canadian literary responses to the Holocaust (Irving Layton)
Week 17	Canadian literary responses to the Holocaust (Guest Speaker)
Week 18	Canadian literary responses to the Holocaust (Michael Greestein and others)
Week 19	The Post-Holocaust World and the State of Israel (A.M. Klein)
Week 20	READING WEEK
Week 21	The Post-Holocaust World and the State of Israel (Irving Layton, Mordecai Richler)
Week 22	The Post-Holocaust World and the State of Israel (Mordecai Richler)
Week 23	The Canadian response to the Jewish State (A.M. Klein, Irving Layton and others)
Week 24	The Canadian response to the Jewish State (Irving Layton, Miriam Waddington and others)
Week 25	“Making it” in Canada (Mordecai Richler)
Week 26	“Making it” in Canada (Helen Weinzweig)
Week 27	“Making it” in Canada (Naïm Kattan)

FIRST TERM

Week 1: Introduction

William Shaffir & Morton Weinfield, “Canada and the Jews: An Introduction,” *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic*, 7-20.

Michael Greenstein, “Introduction,” *Third Solitudes*, 3-18.

Week 2: ROSH HASHANA

Week 3: Immigrant Experience

A.M. Klein, *Collected Poems*: “Autobiographical,” 271-273;
“Sonnet Semitic,” 152; “Soiree of Velvel Kleinburger,” 89-92.

Irving Layton, *Waiting for the Messiah*.

Mordecai Richler, “The Street,” 7-32.

Week 4: Immigrant Experience (Women Writers)

Fredelle Maynard, *Raisins and Almonds*.

Adele Wiseman, "Old Markets, New World," *Memoirs of a Book Molesting Childhood*.

Miriam Waddington, "Outsider: Growing Up in Canada," *Apartment Seven*.

Week 5: Canada and the Old World - Poetry

Tom Wayman, "Jews," *The Spice Box*, 296.

J.I. Segal, "Teaching Yiddish," *The Spice Box*, 7.

Leonard Cohen, "Out of the Land of Heaven," *Essential Words*, 26-27.

A.M. Klein, *Collected Poems*: "A Psalm Touching Genealogy," 234; "Heirloom," 157-158.

Eli Mandel, "Psalm 24," "Charles Isaac Mandel," *Essential Words*, 86.

Miriam Waddington, "When We Met," "The Transplanted: Second Generation," *Essential Words*, 160-163.

Shulamis Yelin, "Widowhood," *Essential Words*, 173.

Week 6: Canada and the Old World - Fiction

Adele Wiseman, *The Sacrifice*.

Week 7: Canada and the Old World - Fiction

Adele Wiseman, *Crackpot*.

[Canada in the 1930's and the 1940's]

Week 8: Canadian Response to Jewish Persecution in Europe

Irving Abella & Harold Troper, "The Line Must Be Drawn Somewhere," *The Canadian Jewish Mosaic*, 49-75.

A.M. Klein, "The Mystery of the Mislaid Conscience," *Beyond Sambation*, 153-156; "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage," *Collected Poems*, 113-118.

Mordecai Richler, *The Street*, 62-70.

Leonard Cohen, "The Dance Hall," *The Spice Box*, 177-182.

Week 10: Holocaust Refugees in Canada

Abraham Boyarski, "A Birthday Party," *The Spice Box*, 64-71.

Mordecai Richler, *The Street*, 71-77.

Henry Kreisel, "Diary," *Another Country*, 13-42.

Week 11: Survivors' Literary Responses to the Holocaust

Elie Wiesel, *Night*; "Why I Write?" *Confronting the Holocaust*, 200-207.

Henry Kreisel, "Language and Identity," *Another Country*, 119-134.

Week 12: Survivors' Literary Responses to the Holocaust

Henry Kreisel, *The Rich Man*.

Week 13: Survivors' Literary Responses to the Holocaust

Henry Kreisel, *The Betrayal*.

SECOND TERM

Week 14: Canadian Literary Responses to the Holocaust

A.M. Klein, "The Jews of Europe," *The Post-War Period Begins*,
Beyond Smbation, 243-247; "Meditation Upon Survival,"
"Elegy," *Collected Poems*, 288-290.

Week 15: Canadian Literary Responses to the Holocaust

Eli Mandel, "On the 25th Anniversary of the Liberation of
Auschwitz," *The Spice Box*, 117-120.

"Auschwitz: Poetry of Alienation," *Canadian Literature*.

Week 16: Canadian Literary Responses to the Holocaust

Irving Layton, "Forward," *For My Brother Jesus*, xv-xviii;
Fortunate Exiles: "Jeshua," 52; "Reingemacht," 77; "Entry," 82;
"At the Belsen Memorial," 84; "Eternal Recurrence," 93; "The
Final Solution," 97-98; "The Victims of the Holocaust," 108.

Week 17: Canadian Literary Responses to the Holocaust
Guest Speaker

Week 18: Canadian Literary Responses to the Holocaust

Michael Greenstein, "Canadian Poetry after Auschwitz: Layton, Cohen, Mandel," *Third Solitudes*, 35-54.

Kenneth Sherman, "Alien," *Mirror*, 174; "Ghosts," *Essential Words*, 143.

Phyllis Gotlieb, "Commentary," *Essential Words*, 52-53.

Miriam Waddington, "Why Should I Care About the World," *Essential Words*, 153-155.

Rochl Korn, "My Mother Often Wept," *Mirror*, 152-153.

J.I. Segal, "Scenario," *Mirror*, 156-157.

Seymour Mayne, "Zalman," *Mirror*, 155.

Week 19: The Post-Holocaust World and the State of Israel

A.M. Klein, *The Second Scroll*.

Week 20: READING WEEK

Week 21: The Post-Holocaust World and the State of Israel

Mordecai Richler, "The Holocaust and After," *Shovelling Trouble*, 81-95.

Irving Layton, *Taking Sides*: "Advises Dealing with Germany With Compassion, Intelligence," 96-99; "A View of Germany," 116-123.

Mordecai Richler, *St. Urbain's Horseman*.

Week 22: The Post-Holocaust World and the State of Israel

Mordecai Richler, *Joshua Then and Now*.

Week 23: The Canadian Response to the Jewish State

A.M. Klein, "In Praise of the Diaspora," *Beyond Sambation*, 463-479.

Irving Layton, *Taking Sides*: "A High Price to Pay for Survival," 142-144; "Israel," 156-157; "Arabs and Jews," 157-158.

Mordecai Richler, "This Year in Jerusalem," *Hunting Tigers Under Glass*, 130-160.

Leonard Cohen, "Lines from My Grandfather's Journal," *Selected Poems*, 78-87.

Week 24: The Canadian Response to the Jewish State

Irving Layton, *Fortunate Exiles*: "O Jerusalem," 13; "On Seeing," 58-59; *Poems*, 134-146.

Miriam Waddington, "This Year in Jerusalem," *Essential Words*, 158-159.

Seymour Mayne, *Name*: *Poems*, 44-48; *The Impossible Promised Land*: *Poems*, 105-106.

Stanley Cooperman, "Masada," *Essential Words*, 32-42.

Week 25: "Making it" in Canada

Mordecai Richler, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*.

Week 26: "Making it" in Canada

Helen Weinzwieg, *Basic Black With Pearls*.

Week 27: "Making it" in Canada

Naim Kattan, *The Neighbour and Other Stories*.

Conclusion