

Mr. Mani: History Overheard



Tal Shochat. "Father (is mine)," 2022

IDH 2930 | Thursday 12:50 – 1:40 PM | Classroom: [LIT 0117](#) |
Professor Roy Holler | Email: royholler@ufl.edu
Office: 1120 Turlington Hall | Office Hours: Tue 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

There is no book quite like A. B. Yehoshua's "Mr. Mani" (1989). First of all, it is told backwards. The novel which spans five generations of one family begins in the relatively recent present and proceeds back through the centuries, "ending" in 1799. If that's not experimental enough, the novel is also written in the form of one-sided conversations, meaning, the reader gets to read only one voice (imagine listening to someone talking on the phone...) and must complete the dialogue in their head.

In this course we will unpack Yehoshua's innovative, yet challenging novel. We will open the semester by thinking about post-modern art and how the process of writing and reading had changed in the 20th century. We will then delve into the book's "conversations" and hear about the trials and tribulations of the Mani family through the ages. In our discussions, we will learn about the history and fate of the Jewish people in exile, about Jewish identity, the state of Israel, and the conflict in the Middle East. We will also raise more personal questions about the structure of one's identity: how do we define and present ourselves in relation to religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, and mainstream culture? How do external forces such as community, family, and prescribed notions of destiny, affect our lives and free will?

This (Un)Common Reads course will mark a one year anniversary of Yehoshua's passing. The celebrated novelist, essayist and playwright was described by the New York Times as the "Israeli Faulkner." Students will get to familiarize themselves with Yehoshua's literary inspiration, and his own philosophical reflections about identity and the state through supplemental readings and discussions.

Course Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with the history of the Jewish people, in Israel and the diaspora.
- Students will explore notions of immigration, diasporas, exile, displacement, and the meaning of homelands or motherlands
- Students will write and present their own findings in writing and through an experiential project that apply their family history to express their own backgrounds and realities,.

Required Readings and Works

A.B. Yehoshua. *Mr. Mani*. ISBN: 9780547542454 | 0547542453. Publisher: Harcourt (1992).

All other readings, works and required viewing will be available in Canvas.

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

| | | | | |
|----|-----------|--|----|----------|
| A | 94 – 100% | | C | 74 – 76% |
| A- | 90 – 93% | | C- | 70 – 73% |
| B+ | 87 – 89% | | D+ | 67 – 69% |
| B | 84 – 86% | | D | 64 – 66% |
| B- | 80 – 83% | | D- | 60 – 63% |
| C+ | 77 – 79% | | E | <60 |

Description of Graded Work:

| Assignment | Description | Requirements | Points |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|-----------|
| Course Journal | Each week students will submit a brief blogpost summary and analysis of the assigned content for the week. Students will read and comment on their classmates posts as well. | 400 words weekly | 200 – 40% |
| Attendance and in-class participation | Being a small seminar, this class is dependent on your attendance, discussion, and participation! In addition, students will prepare three discussion questions for each session. | Active participation | 100 – 20% |
| Final Project | Creative project. Students will submit a written, one-sided conversation about one’s family in the spirit of the novel. We will share and discuss these conversations during the last class. | Submit a conversation in the novel’s format | 40% |

Tentative Course Schedule.

Introduction

Week One, Jan. 12: **Welcome + Who's Afraid of Modern Art?**

Week Two, Jan. 19: **Breaking down literary conventions.**
Read: *The Sound and the Fury*. Faulkner (Pg. 3-75)

Week Three, Jan. 26: **Intro to Israeli Society**
"Early in the Summer of 1970," Yehoshua

The Conversations

Week Four, Feb. 2: **The First Conversation. (pg. 3 - 75)**

Week Five, Feb. 9: "Who is an Israeli," Yehoshua.

Week Six, Feb. 16: **The Second Conversation. (pg. 75 - 145)**

Week Seven, Feb. 23: Read: "Holocaust as a Junction," Yehoshua. (pg. 1-10)

Week Eight, Mar. 2: **The Third Conversation. (pg. 145-203)**

Week Nine, Mar. 9: Read: "Who is an Israeli"

Week Ten, Mar. 23: **The Fourth Conversation. (203-291)**

Week Eleven, Mar. 30: Read: "Who is a Zionist," Yehoshua

Week Twelve, Apr. 6: **The Fifth Conversation. (291-363)**

Students Presentations

Week Thirteen, Apr. 13: Wrapping up.

Week Fourteen, Apr. 20: Student Presentations

University Policies and Statements:

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to come to every class. For absence due to participation in an official university activity, observance of a religious holiday, performance of a military duty, or any other reason as per the University policy, the student is required to notify the instructor before the day of the absence, and if possible at the start of the semester, in order to arrange make up time and procedures. No makeups allowed for unexcused absences.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.