



4th Year – Special Topics in Fiction

Autobiographical Fiction

Dr. Hala Kamal – Fall 2017

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course includes 3 components: 1) theoretical definitions and characteristics of autobiographical fiction in the light of autobiography and narrative theory; 2) reading two autobiographical novels and one autobiographical novella; 3) reading critical material on the texts. First: the students will be introduced to concepts related to autobiographical fiction, and will be trained to identify the characteristics of autobiographical fiction, in relation to other fictional and non-fictional genres. Second: the students will be required to read a variety of cross-cultural autobiographical fictional texts, and reflect on them in relation to the theoretical framework. Third: the students will be required to reflect on critical work on the texts, while at the same encouraged to critically analyse the texts and express themselves in oral presentations and written essays.

COURSE OUTLINE

Weeks 1-2: Introduction to Autobiographical Fiction

- Porter Abbott, "Narrative and Truth," *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 145-159.
- Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, University of Minnesota Press, 2010:
 - "Life Writing and the Novel," pp. 9-15; and "Autofiction," pp. 259-260.

Week 3-4: Hisham Matar, *In the Country of Men* (2006)

- Hisham Matar, *In the Country of Men*, London: Viking, 2006.



Week 5: Critical Reflections on Hisham Matar's *In the Country of Men* and Memory

- John Kearney, "Traumatized Narrators in Hisham Matar's Novels," *Journal of Literary Studies*, vol. 30, issue 3 (2014), pp. 124-148.
- Debbie Elliott, "Novelist's Own Exile Echoes in 'Country of Men'", (Interview), *NPR*, 11 Feb 2007 (<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7357412>)

Assignment 1 due at the end of week 5 (Context 1)

Week 6: 'Autobiografiction'

- Max Saunders, "Autobiografiction: Experimental Life-Writing from the Turn of the Century to Modernism," *Literature Compass*, vol. 6, issue 5, (2009), pp. 1041-1059.
- Çiğdem Pala Mull, "'Transforming Ordinary Experience To An Ecstasy': Virginia Woolf's Autobiographical Novel *To the Lighthouse*," *Idil*, vol. 3, issue 11 (2014), pp. 147-156.

Week 7-9: Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, Beirut: York Classics, 2003; c. 1927 (<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91t/>).

Midterm at the end of week 9 (Context 2).

Week 10: Reflections on Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*

- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, Beirut: York Classics, 2003:
 - "Introduction", pp. vii-xi.
 - "Commentary", (Point of View) pp. 217-221; (Symbolism) pp. 228-234.

Assignment 3 due at the end of week 9 (Essay).

Week 11-12: Yahia Hakki, *The Lamp of Umm Hashim* (1944)

- Yahia Hakki, *The Lamp of Umm Hashim and Other Stories*, trans. Denys Johnson-Davies, Cairo: AUC Press, 2006.

Week 13: Concluding Remarks and General Discussion
