

Tel Aviv University International  
**Writing the Experience of Tel Aviv**  
Syllabus  
Fall 2018-19

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## Course Description

The experience of living in Israel in general and Tel Aviv in particular will inform this course. The main project for the semester is creating your own blog based on creative writing exercises done throughout the semester. Writing exercises will be assigned in class and as homework (see instructions for the blog on page six).

Prior experience with creative writing is not necessary; however, to benefit from the course in a meaningful way, students must possess 1) willingness to explore written expression in various forms and 2) the desire to study writing as a craft, which includes close attention to one's own experiences, and the experiences of others.

There is also a "workshop" component of this course, in which students will have the opportunity to meet in small groups and share their writing. While workshops are being held, other students have "general" writing exercises to complete and post on blogs.

Finally, we will be reading and responding to poetry and prose by writers from the region, often focusing on themes of place, identity, and language. Such writers may include: Shirley Kaufman, Karen Alkalay-Gut, Mahmoud Darwish, Rachel Tzvia Back, Tuvia Ruebner, Sarah Wetzler, Sayed Kashua, and Etgar Keret.

## Course Policies

### Attendance

*Attendance for this course is mandatory.* There are no "excused" absences (except in rare cases determined by the Overseas office). Three two-hour absences (1.5 weeks of class) are permitted without impact to the grade. After six hours of absence, the participation grade will be brought down ten points for each subsequent absence. It is necessary to be present in class to receive credit for that week. Assignments, including the blog, will be accepted only if a student has been attending on a regular basis. Arriving late can count as half an absence for that week. *See the last page of the syllabus for blog requirements following an absence.*

There is no need to inform me by email of the reason for an absence. Students who miss class are expected to follow the syllabus, stay informed about updates, and come prepared for the next lesson. Your source for information, announcements, and "catching up" is the Moodle site, where course announcements are posted.

## Correspondence

I am available to respond to emails Sunday-Thursday. Please plan your correspondence accordingly.

## Classroom Etiquette

Please respect your classmates and conduct yourself in the classroom as you would in a professional setting. It is acceptable to bring a laptop to class; however, you may be asked to put away laptops, and there should be **no emailing, texting, Facebooking, Tweeting, Instagramming, Snapchatting, etc.** during class (unless required by that day's assignment). Any of these activities will be considered disrespectful to the class. If they are pursued, the student will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for the day. In addition, the student's participation grade will be negatively affected.

## Grading

The course grade will be comprised of the following assignments:

1. Mid-semester blog evaluation (instructions TBD) 30%
2. Final blog evaluation (instructions TBD) 40%
3. Workshop attendance 15%
4. Attendance, preparedness, in-class participation 15%

*\* Instructions for all assignments will be discussed in class, as well as posted on Moodle.*

## Course Schedule – October 15th-December 20th, 2018 (Readings and assignments are subject to be amended)

### Week 1 October 15th

Introduction to *Writing the Experience of Tel Aviv*

- Review syllabus, course requirements, and blog instructions
- Reading: "A Postcard from Tel Aviv," Tuvia Ruebner
- Writing exercises

Assignments: **Open blog** (link should be submitted to Moodle under "assignments" no later than week three)

### Week 2 October 22nd

- Blog requirements review
- Reading: "Shit Happens," Etgar Keret
- Writing exercises

**\* Workshop groups assigned/posted on Moodle \***

**\* Workshop instructions posted on Moodle \***

Assignments: **Open blog** (link should be submitted to Moodle under “assignments” no later than week three); Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

### **Week 3 October 29th**

- Reading: “This Place, For Now,” Sarah Wetzel

- Writing exercises

**\* WORKSHOP GROUP 1**

Assignments: **Open blog** (link should be submitted to Moodle under “assignments” no later than this week); Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

### **Week 4 November 5th**

- Reading: “Just Another Sinner,” Etgar Keret

- Writing exercise

**\* WORKSHOP GROUP 2**

Assignments: Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

### **Week 5 November 12th**

- Writing Exercises

**\* WORKSHOP GROUP 3**

Assignments: **Mid-semester blog evaluation** (instructions discussed in class and posted on Moodle); Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

### **Week 6 November 19th**

- Reading, “Just Another Sinner,” Etgar Keret

- Writing exercise

**\* WORKSHOP GROUP 4**

Assignments: Writing exercise (posted on Moodle); Independent study

**Week 7 November 26th**

*Independent study (instructions discussed in class and posted on Moodle)*

\* WORKSHOP GROUP 5

\* WORKSHOP GROUP 6

**Week 8 December 3rd**

- Reading: Poems by Mahmoud Darwish

- Writing exercises

\* WORKSHOP GROUP 7

Assignments: Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

**Week 9 December 10th**

- Writing exercises

- Blog exchange

\* WORKSHOP GROUP 8

Assignments: Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

**Week 10 December 17th**

- Course reflection

- Writing exercises

Assignments: **End of semester blog evaluation** – due one week after the last day of class – (instructions discussed in class and posted on Moodle)

## Blog Requirements

1. Open a blog on a *free* platform of your choice (I like wordpress.com, but you can work with squarespace, blogger, tumblr, or another site). If you already have a blog, great, no need to abandon it, but you must open a new one specifically for this course.
2. Please be sure that I have access to the blog. You are welcome to share this blog beyond myself and your peers with family, friends, and acquaintances, or not. It is up to you whether to make it public.
3. Give the blog any title you wish, but there must be a subtitle: “OSP Writing Tel Aviv Fall 2019.” This can also be the main title of the blog.
5. Writing exercises will be given in class and assigned as homework. Writing exercises for the week will be posted on Moodle. If you are absent, in-class exercises must be completed no later than three days after the class. Exercises for homework must be completed no more than one week after being posted (unless instructions state otherwise). In other words, you cannot wait until the end of the semester to write all the entries; they must be completed in a timely fashion.
4. The first entries (writing exercises) must appear no later than week three, and writing exercises from weeks one and two of the semester will be post-dated.
6. The titles for individual blog entries can be creative, but should contain the week and title of the exercise. Titles will usually be provided (e.g. “Week Four Poetry Exercise” or “Passover Break Exercise”).
7. Yes, you can go back and revise your entries throughout the semester, but again, they must be completed on time.
8. Most importantly, stay on top of the exercises as we go. A well-done blog will demonstrate effort and attention to each exercise. I will be looking for detail, description, reflection, and thoughtfulness in the responses.

Enjoy!