

Writing the Experience of Tel Aviv

Dr. Dara Barnat

Fall 2021-22

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Office: Webb Building, Room 502
Office Hours: Sunday 2:00-3:00/by appointment
Course Credits: 3 TAU Semester Credits

For course times/days and location, please visit the TAU International web site (Study Abroad Course Offerings and Schedules). Please note that all information below is subject to change and/or adjustment as necessary.

Course Description

The experience of living in Israel in general, and Tel Aviv in particular, informs this course. Students will be doing weekly creative writing exercises, which are posted on a blog site designated for the class. The blog serves as an archive for the writing produced during the semester (see instructions for the blog on Moodle). These exercises are also a complement to the goal of writing a non-fiction essay inspired by the period of studying abroad.

In addition, we will be reading and responding to poetry and prose by writers from the region, with a focus on questions of identity, place, and language. Such writers may include Etgar Keret, Mahmoud Darwish, Tuvia Ruebner, Amos Oz, Yehuda Amichai, and Sayed Kashua.

Course Requirements and Expectations

Prior experience with creative writing is not necessary; however, to benefit from the course in a meaningful way, students must be willing to explore written expression in different forms, as well as to study writing as a craft. Such endeavors can involve reflecting on one's experiences, and those of others.

There is a "writing workshop" component of this course, whereby students have the opportunity to meet in small groups to exchange constructive criticism. While workshops are being held, other students have writing exercises to complete and post on blogs.

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Learning Outcomes

- * Becoming familiar with conventions of various genres of creative writing
- * Understanding conventions of creative non-fiction
- * Gaining awareness of writing as a process and craft
- * Writing and revising a non-fiction essay
- * Collaborating in writing workshops
- * Reading and responding to poetry and prose by authors from the region and beyond

Evaluation Criteria

1. Mid-Semester Writing Portfolio (with essay draft) 25%
2. Final Writing Portfolio (revised essay, five-seven pages) 30%
3. Blog Site 10%
4. Read and Respond Assignments 15%
5. Workshop Attendance and Participation 10%
6. Attendance and Participation 10%

- * *Instructions for all assignments will be discussed in class, as well as posted on Moodle.*
- * *Please be sure to have access to your TAU email account, whether directly or by forwarding TAU emails to the account you check regularly.*
- * *“Read and Respond” assignments are always due by class the following week.*

Absence Policy

Attendance for this course is mandatory. There are no “excused” absences (except in rare cases determined by the International 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 Moodle site 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.



* Regarding late assignments, in general, unless an extension is agreed upon in advance, such assignments will not be accepted, nor are extensions granted, after a deadline has passed. If a student does not contact me requesting an extension due to extenuating circumstances, the grade for that assignment will be marked down. Please note that extensions are given on an individual basis only, unless otherwise indicated to the class as a whole.

* 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.

Course Schedule

October 16th-December 16th
(Readings, assignments, and workshop dates are subject to be amended)

Week One

Topic: The Conventions of Creative Non-Fiction

- Review syllabus, course requirements, blog instructions
- Introducing the conventions of "creative non-fiction"
- Reading: "Shit Happens," Etgar Keret
- Writing exercise

Assignments:

- * Open blog (link should be submitted to Moodle under "assignments" no later than week three)
- * Read and Respond (Moodle)

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Week Two

Topic: Story

- Creative non-fiction continued
- Non-fiction essay and mid-semester portfolio guidelines assigned
- Blog requirements - review
- Reading: TBA
- Writing exercise

*** Workshop instructions posted on Moodle ***

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

Assignments:

- * Open blog (link should be submitted to Moodle under “assignments” no later than week three)
- * Read and Respond (Moodle)
- * Mid-semester essay/portfolio

Week Three

Topic: Point of View/Character

- Reading: TBA
- Writing exercise
- * WORKSHOP GROUP 1 (6:00-7:30pm)

Assignments:

- * Open blog (link should be submitted to Moodle under “assignments” no later than this week)
- * Read and Respond (Moodle)
- * Mid-semester essay/portfolio



Week Four

Topic: Structure

- Reading: TBA

- Writing exercise

* WORKSHOP GROUP 2 (6:00-7:30pm)

Assignments:

* Read and Respond (Moodle)

* Mid-semester essay/portfolio (submitted to Moodle)

Week Five

Topic: Tone

- Reading: TBA

- Writing exercise

* WORKSHOP GROUP 1 (6:00-7:30pm)

Assignments:

* Final essay/portfolio

* Read and Respond (Moodle)

Week Six

Topic: Imagery

- Reading: TBA

- Non-fiction essay and final portfolio guidelines assigned



* WORKSHOP GROUP 2 (6:00-7:30pm)

Assignments:

- * Final essay/portfolio
- * Read and Respond (Moodle)

Week Seven

Topic: In Medias Res

- Reading: TBA
- Writing exercise

Assignments:

- * Final essay/portfolio
- * Read and Respond (Moodle)

Week Eight

Topic: Revising

- Reading: TBA
- Writing exercise

Assignments:

- * Final essay/portfolio
- * Read and Respond (Moodle)

Week Nine

Topic: Revising (again!)

Individual conferences



Assignments:

* Final essay/portfolio

Week 10 (final week)

Course reflection/review

Assignments:

Final portfolio, including link to blog site (instructions discussed in class and posted on Moodle)

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Course Readings and/or Required Materials

Readings will be posted on the course Moodle site throughout the semester. Announcements, instructions, and due dates will be posted regularly on Moodle, so please refer to the site for questions about these matters.

Instructor Biography

Dara Barnat is a poet and researcher of poetry. She holds a PhD from Tel Aviv University, where she teaches poetry, creative writing, and academic writing. Her research explores Walt Whitman's influence on Jewish American poetry from the mid-19th-century to date. Articles appear in *The Walt Whitman Quarterly Review*, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, and elsewhere. *In the Absence*, Dara's first full-length collection of poetry, was published in 2016. *The City I Run From: Poems of Tel Aviv* is her most recent collection of poems. Other poems, translations from Hebrew, and essays, appear in *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and elsewhere.

TAU International Academic Guidelines

Students may only attend classes which they are officially registered for. No auditing of courses is permitted. Students are responsible for reading and adhering to all policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#) at all times. Below is a summary of some of these relevant policies and procedures.

Learning Accommodations

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In accordance to University guidelines, TAU International may be able to accommodate students with learning disabilities or accommodation requests if these requests are also honored at the student's home university or home school. To be considered, students must submit official documentation from their home school or university (if not in English, a notarized official copy translated into English is required) to TAU International in advance of arrival describing in detail any specific needs and how these are accommodated at the home school or university. Students must also bring a copy of this documentation with them on-site and give it to their faculty on the first day of class while introducing themselves so that the faculty know who they are and what sorts of needs or accommodations they may have. **Without official documentation from the home school submitted on or before the first day of courses, TAU will not be able to honor accommodation support.**

With supporting documentation and by following the correct procedure as outlined above, TAU International and its faculty will do the best it can to make any suitable accommodations possible. However, we cannot guarantee that all accommodations received at the home school can be similarly met at TAU. For example, TAU is usually not able to offer note-taking services in English, private testing rooms, or advance viewing of classroom presentations, exams, or assignments.

It may be an option to provide a student with additional tutoring or support outside the classroom as needed. Students should be aware that this additional support cannot be guaranteed and is based on teacher availability in the subject as well as the specific student level. If available, the cost of additional tutoring or support will be the sole responsibility of the student.

In-Class Exams

TAU does not permit, under any circumstances, taking any in-class (including mid or final) exams early or later than the scheduled exam day. When selecting courses, it is thus very important to note if there is an in-class midterm or final exam as this date/exam cannot be changed. It is also the student's responsibility to clarify exam dates with the professors at the beginning of a course, with the understanding that not all exam dates can be decided up front as it can sometimes depend on the pace of the course and class learning. It is the student responsibility to plan to be present for all courses including the final day of class for this reason. Early departures from the program are not approved, nor are early or exception in-class exams.

TAU International Absence Policy

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Attendance is mandatory in all of the courses including Hebrew Ulpan. Faculty can and will take attendance regularly. Missing classes will be reflected in the final grade of the course. Up to three justified and properly documented absences from classes may be accepted (for example: emergency matter or illness, both of which will require a doctor's note). Such cases of absence should be reported to the faculty immediately and again, a doctor's note is required. Teachers are entitled to treat any lateness or absence without documentation as unexcused. Some of our courses such as Service Learning or the Internship Seminar require more practical in-class work; thus, attendance policies may be stricter in some courses and students then must adhere to the stricter attendance policy as outlined by the faculty/syllabus.

Students are required to arrive on time for classes. Teachers are entitled to treat any single case of lateness and/or repeated lateness as an unjustified absence.

Please note that according to official TAU Academic Policy, if a student's behavior or attendance during is disagreeable his/her course participation may be cancelled at the discretion of TAU with no due refund.

Grade Appeals

Students are responsible for checking grades once posted or distributed by faculty. The limited grade appeals window and the detailed procedure for appealing a grade – whether a graded assignment, exam or final grade – is outlined clearly in the policies and procedures in the TAU International Academic Handbook [posted here](#).

