

Tel Aviv University International  
**Writing the Experience of Tel Aviv**  
**Syllabus**  
Fall 2019-20

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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 the last page of the syllabus).

Prior experience with creative writing is not necessary; however, to benefit from the course in a meaningful way, students must possess 1) the 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 Wetzel, 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.

**Note: Announcements, instructions, and due dates will be posted regularly on Moodle. Always refer to the Moodle site with questions about these matters, since emails requesting such information cannot be guaranteed a timely response.**

## Late Assignments

In general, unless an extension is agreed upon in advance, late 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.

## 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 35%
2. Final blog evaluation 45%
3. Workshop attendance 10%
4. Attendance, preparedness, in-class participation 10%

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

**Course Schedule – October 23rd-December 19th, 2019**  
**(Readings, assignments, and workshop dates are subject to be amended)**

**Week 1**

*Introduction to Writing the Experience of Tel Aviv*

- Review syllabus, course requirements, blog instructions
- Reading: "Shit Happens," Etgar Keret
- Writing exercises

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

**Week 2**

- Writing principle #1
- Blog requirements review
- Reading: TBA
- 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**

- Writing principle #2
- Reading: TBA
- 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**

- Writing principle #3

- Reading: TBA

- Writing exercise

\* WORKSHOP GROUP 2

Assignments: Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

**Week 5**

- Writing principle #4

- Reading: TBA

- Writing Exercises

\* WORKSHOP GROUP 1

Assignments: **Mid-semester blog evaluation due** (instructions discussed in class and posted on Moodle); Independent study (instructions discussed in class and posted on Moodle)

**Week 6**

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

**Week 7**

- Writing principle #5

- Reading: TBA

- Writing exercise

\* WORKSHOP GROUP 2

Assignments: Writing exercise (posted on Moodle)

**Week 8 (final week)**

- Blog exchange
- 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**

### **- Due by week three of the semester -**

1. Open a blog on a *free* platform of your choice. (I use 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: “Writing the Experience of Tel Aviv, semester/year.” This can also be the main title of the blog.
4. 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.
5. 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”).
7. You can add any photos or other images to the blog that you wish.
8. You can go back and revise your entries throughout the semester, but again, they must be completed on time. A well-done blog will demonstrate detail, description, reflection, and thoughtfulness. Later in the semester, we will be discussing how to present these posts most effectively to a reader.

**Submission: The link for your blog should be uploaded in a Word file to the appropriate submission folder on Moodle by week three of the semester.**

Enjoy!