Jewish Studies 31104: Introduction to Modern Jewish Writers: The Works of Philip Roth and Cynthia Ozick
The City College, CUNY, Fall 2011

Dr. Amy W. Kratka
Mondays and Wednesdays 9:30a-10:45a, NAC 6/111
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Required Texts:

1. Ozick, Cynthia: *Levitation: Five Fictions* (Syracuse)
2. Ozick, Cynthia: *The Messiah of Stockholm* (Vintage)
3. Ozick, Cynthia: *The Pagan Rabbi* (Syracuse)
4. Ozick, Cynthia: *The Shawl* (Vintage)
5. Roth, Philip: *American Pastoral* (Vintage)
6. Roth, Philip: *Goodbye, Columbus and Five Short Stories* (Vintage)
7. Roth, Philip: *Indignation* (Vintage)

Supplemental Readings will be provided by instructor.

Course Objective: In this course we will get to know two of this country's bravest writers, Cynthia Ozick and Philip Roth, and find out why the term “brave” fits each one of them, albeit in different ways. We will be reading four full-length fictional pieces by each of them, and we will also study their essays, along with essays about their work written by other literary critics. Students will have an opportunity to participate firsthand in research on Ozick and Roth by putting together a biographical essay on each of them early on in the semester.

By the term's end, you will feel confident in your ability to identify each writer by his or her turn-of-phrase, cadence, favorite word, or surprising plot twist! Guaranteed!

You will also discover that each of these authors reflects on the emotional, physical, sociological, and religious climate in America.

Methodology: We will be completely text-based in this course! Do your readings and bring your books to class!

Projected Course Learning Outcomes: Students will

1. be able to critically and independently evaluate and reflect on primary fictional sources that speak to the Jewish religious and cultural experience.
2. demonstrate a basic knowledge of the various stages in the evolution of contemporary Jewish communities and how historical factors have impacted these changes.
3. formulate new and creative approaches to Jewish literary traditions based on their own research.
Requirements:

* Every student must give one oral presentation, 5-6 minutes long. You should base your remarks on a piece of text that is baffling or interesting and requires further thought or explanation that you intend to provide. This should not be a summary.

* There will be a midterm exam and a final exam. Dates are below.

* Everyone will write a two-page biography of each author, having used the CCNY library's resources to get biographical information. Each of these biographies will contain a 1-paragraph analysis of a Roth/Ozick work of the student's choice. See below for due-date.

* I will not accept e-mailed papers or late papers.

* Plagiarism will result in an automatic class failure – please be careful in your attribution of sources.

* It is key that you come to class early enough to be ready to begin on time. We will follow the standard practice at City College: four or more absences will result in a drop from the class. Two latenesses will count as one absence.

Percentage Breakdown:

Midterm: 30%
Final: 35%
Oral Presentation: 10%
Author Biographies: 5% and 5%
Attendance and Participation: 15%

(Schedule: This may change according to the needs of the class.)

M 8/29: Introduction
W 8/31: Roth's Goodbye, Columbus
M 9/5: Labor Day: No Class
W 9/7: Goodbye, Columbus
M 9/12: Ozick's "The Pagan Rabbi" (in Pagan Rabbi Collection)
W 9/14: Roth's "The Conversion of the Jews" (in Goodbye, Columbus collection)
M 9/19: Ozick's "Envy" (in Pagan Rabbi Collection)
W 9/21: Roth's "Eli, The Fanatic," and "Epstein" (in Goodbye, Columbus collection)
M 9/26: Ozick's "Levitation" and Library Lecture
W 9/28: Eve of Rosh Hashana: No Class
M 10/3: Excerpt from Roth’s *Portnoy’s Complaint*

W 10/5: **Roth Biography Due.** Roth’s *Patrimony: A True Story*

M 10/10: Columbus Day: No Class

W 10/12: *Patrimony*

M 10/17: **Midterm Exam.**

W 10/19: *Patrimony*

M 10/24: Ozick’s *The Messiah of Stockholm*

W 10/26: *Messiah of Stockholm*

M 10/31: Ozick’s “The Shawl”

W 11/2: **Ozick Biography Due;** Ozick’s “Rosa” (in *The Shawl*)

M 11/7: Roth’s *American Pastoral*

W 11/9: *American Pastoral*

M 11/14: *American Pastoral*

W 11/16: Presentation of selected Youtube interviews with our two authors

M 11/21: Ozick’s Puttermesser (in *Levitation* collection)

W 11/23: Ozick’s Puttermesser (in *Levitation* collection)

M 11/28: Roth’s *Indignation*

W 11/30: *Indignation*

M 12/5: **Film: Goodbye, Columbus**

W 12/7: *Goodbye, Columbus*

M 12/12: **Final Exam**

**Extra Credit:** Read the excerpt from *The Street of Crocodiles* (handout) and write a 2 page exploration of ways in which Ozick’s *Messiah of Stockholm* pays homage to Bruno Schulz. Due Date: **TBA**