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Office: 400 Hall of Languages, Tuesday 1-2 p.m.

JSP/LIT/REL 333; ETS 315
MWF, 11:40-12:35

Yiddish Literature in Translation

A survey of great works in modern Yiddish fiction and drama. Our readings focus on:

- 1) *the three classic Yiddish authors*—S. Y. Abramovitsh, Sholem Aleichem, and I. L. Peretz;
- 2) *Yiddish drama* by J. Gordin, S. Ansky and P. Hirshbein;
- 3) *modernist trends in Yiddish*— Lamed Shapiro and David Bergelson, and
- 4) *Yiddish women writers*—Y. Serdatsky, C. Dropkin, and others.

While placing each author's work in historical and biographical context, we will pay special attention to the role of satire, parody, and narrative techniques. We will also watch clips from Yiddish films of the 1930s and listen to some Jewish music. This is a writing intensive class, fulfilling that requirement with four short papers and three revisions.

I. Classic Yiddish Fiction

25 August

Introduction. Read I. L. Peretz, "If Not Higher!" (1900), in **CYS**

27 August

Discuss I. L. Peretz, "If Not Higher!" (1900), in **CYS**
Read "A Celebration of Yiddish Literature," in **CYS**, pp. 181-206

S. Y. Abramovitsh

29 August

Begin discussion of *The Little Man* (1864), in **CYS**

[1 September—Labor Day; No classes

Start Reading *Benjamin the Third* for 5 September]

3 September

Finish discussion of *The Little Man* (1864), in **CYS**

5 September

Discuss *Benjamin the Third* (1878), in **TMBP**, chapters 1-8

8 September

Discuss *Benjamin the Third* (1878), in **TMBP**, chapters 9-14 & Epilogue

10 September

Begin discussion of *Fishke the Lame* (1869), in **CYS**

With clips from the film *Fishke der krumer* (1939)

12 September

Conclude discussion of 1869 *Fishke the Lame*, in **CYS**

15 September

Begin discussion of 1888 *Fishke the Lame*, in **TMBP**

17 September

Continue discussion of 1888 *Fishke the Lame*, in **TMBP**

Paper #1 (3 pages, ~1000 words) due on the two versions of *Fishke*

19 September

Conclude discussion of 1888 *Fishke the Lame*, in **TMBP**

Sholem Aleichem**22 September**

Tevye Stories: “Hodel” (1904), in **CYS**

With clips from the Yiddish film *Tevye* (1939)

24 September

Tevye Stories: “Chava” (1906), in **CYS**

With clips from other film versions of the Tevye stories:

Fiddler on the Roof (1971) and *Get Thee Out* (1991). Read Ken Frieden’s essay,

A Century in the Life of Sholem Aleichem’s Tevye (distributed)

[26 September—No Class: Rosh ha-shana

Start reading the monologues; read “Memories of Sholem Aleichem,” pp. 207-240.]

29 September

Monologues, in **CYS:**

“Holiday Dainties” (1904) and “Advice” (1904)

1 October

Monologues, in **CYS**:

“Joseph” (1905) and “A Business with a Greenhorn” (1916)

I. L. Peretz**3 October**

“The Shtrayml” (1894), in **CYS**

Read “Around Peretz,” pp. 241-271.

6 October

Introduction to Hasidism.

Hasidic Stories in **CYS**: “Kabbalists” (1891/1894) and “The Rebbe’s Pipe” (1895)

8 October

“Teachings of the Hasidim” (1894/1902)

With Nathan Sternharz photocopied pages on R. Nahman

Paper #2 (3 pages) due on Peretz and Sternharz

10 October

“Between Two Mountains” (1900), in **CYS**

II. Yiddish Drama**13 October**

Jacob Gordin, *God, Man, and Devil* (1900), in **GMD**

With clips from the film *God, Man, and Devil* (1950)

15 October

Jacob Gordin, *God, Man, and Devil* (1900), in **GMD**

With clips from the film *God, Man, and Devil* (1950)

17 October

*S. Ansky, *The Dybbuk* (1914/1920)(photocopy/digitized file)

With clips from the film *The Dybbuk* (1937)

20 October

*S. Ansky, *The Dybbuk* (1914/1920)(photocopy/digitized file)

With clips from the film *The Dybbuk* (1937)

22 October

Peretz Hirshbein, *Green Fields* (1916), in GMD

24 October

Peretz Hirshbein, *Green Fields* (1916), in GMD

With clips from the film *Green Fields* (1937)

III. Modernism in Yiddish, and Yiddish Women Writers**27 October**

*Lamed Shapiro, "Eating Days," in TYS (photocopy/digitized file)

29 October

Fradel Shtok, "The Veil," and Dora Schulner, "Reyzele's Wedding," in FT

31 October

Blume Lempel, "Correspondents"; Yente Serdatsky, "Unchanged," in FT

3 November

Celia Dropkin, "A Dancer"; Miriam Raskin, "Zlatke" and "At a Picnic," in FT

5 November

*Bryna Bercovitch, "Becoming Revolutionary," and

*Frume Halpern, "Goodbye, Honey" (photocopy/digitized file)

Paper #3 (3 pages, ~1000 words) due on one of these stories

7 November

Dora Schulner, "Esther"; Ida Maze, "Dina," in FT

10 November

Rikudah Potash, "Jazal the Purim Player," in FT

12 November

Rikudah Potash, "Prikhah's Complaint to God" and "G'ula and Shulamit," in FT

14 November

Rikudah Potash, "Pirkhah Ozeri" and "Schraby's Daughter Comes Home," in FT

17 November

Kadia Molodowsky, "A House with Seven Windows," and

Esther Kreitman's "The New World," in FT

19 November

Chava Slucka-Kestin, "Her Story," in FT

21 November

*David Bergelson, "In a Backwoods Town," in TYS (photocopy/digitized file)

Thanksgiving Vacation: Read David Bergelson's *Departing*

1 December

David Bergelson, *Departing*, in *The Stories of David Bergelson*, chapters 1-11

Paper #4 (3 pages, ~1000 words) due (if writing about first part of Bergelson's novel)

3 December

David Bergelson, *Departing*, in *The Stories of David Bergelson*, chapters 12-20

Paper #4 (3 pages, ~1000 words) due on Bergelson's novel (if writing about second part of Bergelson's novel)

5 December

Review Session

8 December, 3-5 p.m. Final Examination

(Please do not ask to reschedule.)

Required Texts:

Abramovitsh, S. Y. *Tales of Mendele the Book Peddler: Fishke the Lame and Benjamin the Third*. Ed. Dan Miron and Ken Frieden. Trans. Ted Gorelick and Hillel Halkin. New York: Schocken, 1996. [TMBP]

Bergelson, David. *The End of Everything*. Trans. Joseph Sherman. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.

Classic Yiddish Stories of S. Y. Abramovitsh, Sholem Aleichem, and I. L. Peretz. Ed. Ken Frieden. Trans. Ken Frieden, Ted Gorelick, and Michael Wex. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004. [CYS]

Found Treasures: Stories by Yiddish Women Writers, ed. Frieda Forman et al. Toronto: Second Story Press, 1994. [FT]

God, Man, and Devil: Yiddish Plays in Translation. Trans. and ed. Nahma Sandrow. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999. [GMD]

Recommended Texts (selections available on Blackboard):

The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader. Ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000.

A Treasury of Yiddish Stories. Ed. Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg. New York: Penguin Books, 1990. [TYS] Out of print; used copies of this highly recommended text may be available at the bookstore or at www.amazon.com and www.barnesandnoble.com.

* Digitized texts, available in the two **Recommended Texts** and on Blackboard: Lamed Shapiro's "Eating Days" and David Bergelson's "In a Backwoods Town" are both from *A Treasury of Yiddish Stories* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990); S. Ansky's *The Dybbuk* is excerpted from *The Dybbuk and the Yiddish Imagination: A Haunted Reader*, ed. and trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000). In addition, Bryna Bercovitch's "Becoming Revolutionary" and Frume Halpern's "Goodbye, Honey" are from *Arguing with the Storm: Stories by Yiddish Women Writers*, ed. Rhea Tregobov (New York: Feminist Press, 2008).

Requirements: Regular attendance, class participation, an oral report, four short papers, and a final examination.

Papers are due *in class* on the day when each literary work is being discussed. They should be 3-page (double-spaced) close analyses, focusing on literary aspects such as narrative techniques or figurative language. Because this is a writing intensive class, *each of the first three papers must be revised on the basis of comments by the instructors*. The revision is due one week after the paper has been returned to the student.

Quizzes: To ensure diligent preparation of the reading assignments by all students, there will be random quizzes. Come to class even if you haven't read the assignment as carefully as you would like.

Plagiarism: Acknowledge your sources! Don't even think of taking anything off the web or from another student's paper without using quotation marks and a reference to the site or source. It's unethical, as easy for professors to catch as it is for students to steal, and the consequence is always a failing grade.

Goals: While learning about Yiddish literature, students should develop skills such as close reading, critical thinking, scholarly writing, and public speaking.

In-Class Assignment: In addition to taking occasional quizzes during class time, each student is responsible for an oral presentation. There are many possible formats. You could lead a class discussion of one of the stories we read; develop your own interpretation and work with the class on probing deeper meanings; provide biographical

information about the author or historical context. Please discuss your topic in advance with one of the instructors.

Grading: Attendance and participation (20%), 4 essays and 3 revisions (50%), an oral presentation (10%), and quizzes & final examination (20%).

Attendance: Your final grade will be adversely affected if you miss more than two classes. Save these permissible absences for when you really need them!

“The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort. For more information and the complete policy, see <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>.”

“Students who are in need of disability-related academic accommodations must register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS), 304 University Avenue, Room 309, 315-443-4498. Students with authorized disability-related accommodations should provide a current Accommodation Authorization Letter from ODS to the instructor and review those accommodations with the instructor. Accommodations, such as exam administration, are not provided retroactively; therefore, planning for accommodations as early as possible is necessary. For further information, see the ODS website, <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu/>.”