
European & American Jewish Literature

(Topics in Ethnic Literatures and Cultures)

JSP/LIT/REL 331 & ETS 315

Meets Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2-3:20 p.m.
in 101 Crouse-Hinds

Prof. Ken Frieden
kfrieden@syr.edu

Office: 310 Tolley
Humanities Building

Office hour:
Thursday 3:30-4:30



Overview

After a week of introductions, we begin by analyzing Arthur Schnitzler's dramatic representation of ethnic strife and anti-Semitism, before turning to short stories by Franz Kafka and Stefan Zweig. These European precedents serve as background to our discussions of fiction by American-Jewish writers. Illustrative works by Abe Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Henry Roth, I. B. Singer, Bernard Malamud, Bruce J. Friedman, and Philip Roth raise issues of cultural authenticity, assimilation, intermarriage, displacement, translation, the aftermath of the Holocaust, and flight to the suburbs. *The Norton Anthology of American Jewish Literature* provides a wide selection of short fiction and poetry. Students will post analyses in a Discussion Forum on Blackboard and write four short papers followed by revisions.

Texts (in order of appearance):

Kafka, Franz. *The Complete Stories*. Ed. Nahum N. Glatzer. New York: Schocken, 1995.

[One of the most influential writers in the twentieth century!]

The Norton Anthology of American Jewish Literature (NAAJL). Ed. Jules Chametzky et al. New York: W. W. Norton, 2001. [**Absolutely essential textbook**]

Roth, Henry. *Call It Sleep* [1934]. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991.

[This is the Great American-Jewish Novel.]

Friedman, Bruce J. *Stern* [1962]. New York: Atlantic Monthly, 1984.

[Satire of American Jews fleeing to the suburbs—pioneers on the new frontier.]

Always read the assigned text & bring the book (or selection from Blackboard) to class.

Please refrain from using laptops and cellphones in class!

Readings in PDF (Available on Blackboard):

- Adamic, Louis. *Plymouth Rock and Ellis Island: Summary of a Lecture*. New York: Common Council for American Unity, 1940. [Also two excerpts from his broadsheet survey.]
- Kafka, Franz. [Selection from *The Trial*, Chapter 9: In the Cathedral.] From *Parables and Paradoxes*. New York: Schocken, 1961. [Compare the published text “Before the Law.”]
- Schnitzler, Arthur. *Professor Bernhardi*. Trans. Hetty Landstone. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1928.
- Schwartz, Delmore. “A Bitter Farce.” In *The World is a Wedding*. Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1948.
- Zweig, Stefan. “Buchmendel.” Trans. Eden and Cedar Paul. From *Jewish Legends*. New York: M. Wiener, 1987.

Introduction

30 August: Introductions

- Franz Kafka, “Before the Law” (Photocopy and on Blackboard)
- In groups: Take Louis Adamic’s survey (Photocopy and on Blackboard)

1 September

- Delmore Schwartz, “A Bitter Farce” (Photocopy and on Blackboard)
- Louis Adamic, “Plymouth Rock and Ellis Island” (PDF on Blackboard)
- What is the bitter farce? Does Mr. Fish understand his own reactions?

A. European Traditions

6 September

- Arthur Schnitzler, *Professor Bernhardi* (Digital file on Blackboard; print!)
- Read Acts I, II, and III (pp. 9-106)
- Imagine the staging: set design, costumes, movement on stage.
- Does Professor Bernhardi make an ethical error?
- Is his Jewish identity part of his decision regarding his patient?

8 September:

- Arthur Schnitzler, *Professor Bernhardi*, Acts IV and V (pp. 107-160)
- Selected scenes to be acted in class!

Start reading Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis” for next week

13 September

- Franz Kafka, “The Metamorphosis,” in *The Complete Stories*
- Analyze how we see beyond the limits of Gregor’s point of view.

15 September

Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis" (continued); "A Country Doctor," "Jackals and Arabs," "The Cares of a Family Man," in *The Complete Stories*

20 September

"The Hunter Gracchus" and "A Fragment"; "A Report to an Academy," "The Bucket Rider," "Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk," in *The Complete Stories*

22 September

Stefan Zweig, "Buchmendel" (Digital file on Blackboard)

In class: film clips from *Brainwashed* (*Schachnovelle*, 1960).

Paper #1 due: How does the narrator come to understand the meaning of Buchmendel's demise?

27 September

Abraham Cahan, "A Ghetto Wedding" & Avrom Reyzen, "Equality of the Sexes" in *The Norton Anthology of American Jewish Literature* (NAAJL), 123-43; 145-49.

B. American Expressions

29 September

Yente Serdatsky, "Unchanged"; Marie Antin, "The Lie" (NAAJL, 151-54; 191-206).

In class: Film clips from *Hungry Hearts* (1922)

4 October

Anzia Yezierska, "Children of Loneliness"; Joseph Opatoshu, "Brothers"

Celia Dropkin, "Sonya's Room" (NAAJL, 234-44; 254-57; 262-64).

6 October

Michael Gold, *Jews without Money* (selections in NAAJL, 357-62).

In class: Film clips from *His People* (1925)

11-18 October

Henry Roth, Selections from *Call It Sleep*.

In class: Film clips from *Hester Street* (1975).

Paper #2 due

20 October

A. Leyeles, "New York"; Jacob Glatstein, "Good Night, World" (NAAJL, 356, 373-74)

Fradel Shtok, "The Shorn Head"; Irena Klepfisz, "Fradel Shtok" (NAAJL, 291-94, 1083-85).

In class: New York Klezmer music from the 1920s.

25 October

Delmore Schwartz, "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities"; Grace Paley, "The Loudest Voice" and "A Conversation with My Father" (NAAJL, 540-45, 795-803).

27 October

Tillie Olson, "Tell Me a Riddle"; Saul Bellow, "Something to Remember Me By" (NAAJL 689-715, 749-770).

1 November

Arthur Miller, "Monte Sant' Angelo" (NAAJL, 559-70)
Bernard Malamud, "The Last Mohican" and "The Magic Barrel" (NAAJL,)

3 November

Philip Roth, "Femme Fatale" (NAAJL, 945-60).
Paper #3 due

8 November

Philip Roth, "Eli, the Fanatic"; Woody Allen, "The Scrolls" (NAAJL 918-45, 320-23).

10 November

Chaim Grade, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseynner" (NAAJL, 649-70)

15 November

Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl"; "Envy; or, Yiddish in America" (NAAJL, 858-896)

17 November

Tova Reich, "The Lost Girl"; Max Apple, "The Eighth Day"; and Steve Stern, "Lazar Malkin Enters Heaven" (NAAJL, 1046-55, 1074-81, 1085-93).

22-24 November

Thanksgiving Break

29 November

Bruce Jay Friedman, *Stern*.

1 December

Bruce Jay Friedman, *Stern*.

6-8 December

Bruce Jay Friedman, *Stern*.
Paper #4 due

Requirements

Four two-page papers (with revisions) on assigned or approved topics; group project; active participation. It is recommended, but not required, that you give a short oral presentation, which may be based on one of your papers. Group projects will involve giving a class presentation or making a short video inspired by one of the stories or authors. Each group must discuss the plans for its project in advance with the instructor.

Extra Credit Postings

Students are encouraged to post short responses to readings in our Discussion Forums in Blackboard. These postings and suitable responses to other students' postings will count toward extra credit and may raise your grade substantially.

Grading

Papers and revisions (50%), group project (20%), and participation (30%). Revisions of papers will be due one week after the first drafts are returned.

Final Examination?

Quizzes and a Final Examination will be added if students do not show in class that they have done the readings conscientiously.

Attendance

Your final grade will be adversely affected if you miss more than two classes. Save these permissible absences for when you need them most! If you need to miss a class, please let the professor know in advance; *ask another student for notes*.

Statement on Academic Integrity

Syracuse University's 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 course-specific expectations, as well as about university policy. The university policy governs appropriate citation and use of sources, the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments, and the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. The policy also prohibits students from submitting the same written work in more than one class without receiving written authorization in advance from both instructors.

The presumptive penalty for a first offense by an undergraduate student is course failure, accompanied by a transcript notation indicating that the failure resulted from a violation of Academic Integrity Policy. The standard sanction for a first offense by a graduate student is suspension or expulsion. For more information and the complete policy, see the web site of the Academic Integrity Office, <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu>. Related links: <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/faculty-resources/> <http://academicintegrity.syr.edu/what-does-academic-integrity-mean/>

Many SU courses use Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention system, because the ease of using the Internet has made it tempting for students to “cut and paste” material into papers, without proper citation. We may submit some papers that you write in this class to Turnitin, which identifies “matched text.” Submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RESEARCH & PLAGIARISM IS QUOTATION MARKS!

Statement on Disability Accommodations

If you believe you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located at 804 University Avenue, room 309, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented disabilities “Accommodation Authorization Letters” as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

IN THIS CLASS WE STUDY TEXTS. “TEXT” IS NOT A VERB!