Syllabus

THE YIDDISH-GERMAN ENCOUNTER THROUGHOUT THE AGES - 39852

Last update 19-02-2014

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: History

Academic year: 1

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Aya Elyada

Coordinator Email: aya.elyada@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday 12:00-13:00

Teaching Staff:
Dr. Aya Elyada
Course/Module description:
Yiddish and German, and the interactions between them, present an intriguing case of inter-cultural relations. Of these relations, the linguistic affinity between the two is but one aspect. With their geographical proximity and long history of interaction, the encounter between Yiddish and German had far-reaching implications for the development of both cultures, while undergoing important transformations in varying historical contexts. The course will focus on important chapters in the history of the Yiddish-German encounter from its very early, medieval stages, and up to the twentieth century.

Course/Module aims:
The course seeks to introduce the students to the intricate cultural relations between Yiddish and German throughout the centuries, and thus to shed light on important and relatively unknown aspects of both German and Jewish-Ashkenazi history and culture.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:
- Describe the evolution of Yiddish in its German context
- Explain the role of Yiddish inside Ashkenazi culture and society
- Assess the influence of German on Old Yiddish literature
- Explain the reasons for the interest of early modern Christian scholars with Yiddish literature and their pejorative attitude toward Yiddish culture
- Describe the process of linguistic shift that took place among German Jewry from the late 18th century onwards and explain the internal and external reasons for this shift
- Identify the main arguments in the ongoing debate regarding the relations between Old Yiddish and Middle High German and assess them in their respective ideological frameworks
- Describe the circumstances of the transition of Yiddish culture from western and central Europe to eastern Europe, and analyze the various ways in which German (and German-Jewish) language and culture influenced and shaped the emerging modern Yiddish
- Explain the growing interest of German Jews in the Yiddish culture of the "Ostjuden" at the turn of the century, and describe the cultural implications of that interest
- Assess to what extent one can see in the interest in Yiddish in post-war Germany a case of "postvernacularity"

Attendance requirements(%):
88%
Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: This seminar includes the reading and analysis of primary sources and secondary literature, and is dedicated mainly to students' discussions in class. In addition, students will present papers from the secondary literature to the class, as well as their own projects. The course also includes guidance in writing the final papers, and 3-4 guest lectures.

Course/Module Content:
1. Introduction
2. Historical Background: The evolution of German, the evolution of Yiddish; the origins of Old Yiddish literature
3. German influences on Old Yiddish biblical poetry
4. Influence and reaction - more case studies
5. The German-Christian interest in Yiddish in the early modern period
6. Enlightenment, emancipation, acculturation - historical background
7. The linguistic shift from Yiddish to German
8. Maskilic translations from German
9. Old Yiddish or High Middle German?
10. The 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (I): From west to east - the transition of Yiddish culture from the German territories to eastern Europe
11. The influence of the German-Jewish Novel on the development of Jewish literature in 19th-century eastern Europe
12. The 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century (II): From east to west - modern Yiddish in the Germanic world

Required Reading:
Max Weinreich, "Internal Bilingualism in Ashkenaz", in Howe and Greenberg (eds.), Voices from the Yiddish, Ann Arbor 1972, 279-288
Jean Baumgarten, Introduction to Old Yiddish Literature, New York 2005, Ch. 2, 4
Arnold Paucker, "Yiddish Versions of Early German Prose Novels", Journal of Jewish Studies 10 (1959), 151-167
Arnold Paucker, "Das deutsche Volksbuch bei den Juden", ZDP 8 (1961), 302-17
Leo Landau, Arthurian Legends, or the Hebrew-German Rhymed Version of the Legend of King Arthur, Teutonia 21, Leipzig 1912


Solomon A. Birnbaum, "Old Yiddish or Middle High German?" Journal of Jewish Studies 12:1-2 (1961), 19-31


Joseph Weissberg, "Zur Stellung der altjiddischen Literatur in der Germanistik,"
Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie 91 (1972), 383-406
Jerold C. Frakes, "Critical Ideology in Old Yiddish Studies: The Names of Old Yiddish", Yiddish 6 (1985), 5-14
Dan Miron, A Traveler Disguised: The Rise of Modern Yiddish Fiction in the Nineteenth Century. Syracuse, NY 1996, Ch. 2
Dov-Ber Kerler, The Origins of Modern Literary Yiddish, New York 1999, Ch. 2
Israel Zinberg, A History of Jewish Literature, vol.11, Philadelphia 1978, Ch. 6
Chana Shmeruk, ספרות יידיש: פרקים לתולדותיה, תל אביב
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234-260, 175-197, 1978
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Chana Shmeruk, ספרות יידיש: פרקים לתולדותיה, תל אביב
Elizabeth Loentz, Let Me Continue to Speak the Truth: Bertha Pappenheim as Author and Activist, Cincinnati 2007, Ch. 1
Jeffrey Shandler, Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture, Berkeley 2006, 1-30

Additional Reading Material:
C. J. Wells, German: A Linguistic History to 1945, Oxford 1985
John T. Waterman, A History of the German Language, Seattle 1976
Solomon A. Birnbaum, Yiddish: A Survey and a Grammar, Toronto 1979
Aya Elyada, Yiddish Language of Conversion? Linguistic Adaptation and Its Limits in Early Modern Judenmission, Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 53 (2008), 3-29
David Sorkin, The Transformation of German Jewry: 1780-1840, New York 1987
Jeffrey A. Grossman, The Discourse on Yiddish in Germany: From the Enlightenment to the Second Empire, Rochester, NY 2000, Ch. 2
Zeitschrift 270 (2000), 617-67
Nils Rømer, Tradition und Akkulturation: Zum Sprachwandel der Juden in Deutschland zur Zeit der Haskalah, Münster and New York 1995
Lothar Kahn, "Neglected Nineteenth-Century German-Jewish Historical Fiction", Identity and Ethos (1986), 155-167
Kenneth H. Ober, "Nathan Samuely: A Forgotten Writer in a Neglected Genre", Shofar 18,2 (000): 70-81
Miriam Roshwald, Shtetl, or Polis? The Jewish Community in the Writings of Karl Emil Franzos, Sholem Aleichem, and Shemuel Yosef Agnon, San Bernardino, California 1997 [section on Franzos]
Steven E. Aschheim, Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923, Madison 1982
Jack Wertheimer, Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany, New York 1987
Michael Brenner, The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany, New Haven 1996

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 10 %
Participation in Tutorials 20 %
Project work 70 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information: