The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

THE YIDDISH-GERMAN ENCOUNTER THROUGHOUT THE AGES - 39852

Last update 15-07-2019

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: History

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Aya Elyada

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

Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesday 11:30-12:30

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
- Asses 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 onward 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"
- Analyze historical documents
- Discuss items of research literature and identify their main arguments

- Write a research paper on the topic of cultural interactions and exchange

Attendance requirements(%):
  100%

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.

Course/Module Content:
  - Historical Background: the evolution of German, the evolution of Yiddish
- The origins of Old Yiddish literature and its relations to the German-speaking world

- The German-Christian interest in Yiddish in the early modern period
- The linguistic shift from Yiddish to German
- Old Yiddish or Middle High German?
- The transition of Yiddish culture from the German territories to eastern Europe
- Modern Yiddish in the German-speaking world
- Yiddish in post-1945 Germany: Postvernacular?

Required Reading:
 - Selected primary sources
- Research literature (selected items):
W. Walker Chambers and John R. Wilkie, A Short History of the German Language, New York 1984
Neil G. Jacobs, Yiddish: A Linguistic Introduction, Cambridge 2005
Jean Baumgarten, Introduction to Old Yiddish Literature, New York 2005
Arnold Paucker, "Yiddish Versions of Early German Prose Novels", Journal of Jewish Studies 10 (1959), 151-167
חנא שמרוק, ספרות יידיש: פרקים לתולדותיה, תל-אביב 1978
Marion Aptroot, "Writing 'Jewish' not 'German': Functional Writing Styles and the Symbolic Function of Yiddish in Early Modern Ashkenaz," Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 55 (2010): 115-28
Aya Elyada, "'Eigentlich Teutsch'? Depictions of Yiddish and Its Relations to German in Early Modern Christian Writings," European Journal of Jewish Studies 4.1 (2010), 23-42
Steven Lowenstein, "The Yiddish Written Word in Nineteenth-Century Germany," Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 24 (1979), 179-192

Max Weinreich, "Yidishkayt and Yiddish: On the Impact of Religion on Language in Ashkenazic Jewry," in Joshua A. Fishman (ed.), Readings in the Sociology of Language, The Hague and Paris 1968, 382-413

Jerold C. Frakes, "Accessibility, Audience and Ideology: On Editing Old Yiddish Texts," The German Quarterly 59:2 (1986), 187-202

Dan Miron, A Traveler Disguised: The Rise of Modern Yiddish Fiction in the Nineteenth Century. Syracuse, NY 1996

Delphine Bechtel, "Cultural Transfers between 'Ostjuden' and 'Westjuden': German-Jewish intellectuals and Yiddish Culture, 1897-1930," Leo Baeck Institute Year Book 42 (1997), 67-83

Jeffrey A. Grossman, "From East to West: Translating Y. L. Peretz in Early Twentieth-Century Germany," in Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni (eds.), Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion, New Haven 2000, 278-309

David Midgley, "The Romance of the East: Encounters of German-Jewish Writers with Yiddish-Speaking Communities, 1916–27", in Joseph Sherman and Ritchie Robertson (eds.), The Yiddish Presence in European Literature: Inspiration and Interaction, London 2005, 87–98

Barry Trachtenberg, "Jewish Universalism, the Yiddish Encyclopedia, and the Nazi Rise to Power", in Gennady Estraikh and Mikhail Krutikov (eds.), Yiddish in Weimar Berlin: At the Crossroads of Diaspora Politics and Culture, London 2010, 195-214

Jeffrey Shandler, Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture, Berkeley 2006

Leslie Morris, "1968: The Translation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's Gimpel der Narr Appears in the Federal Republic of Germany", in Sander L. Gilman and Jack Zipes (eds.), Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096–1996, New Haven 1997, 742–748

<u>*Additional Reading Material:*</u>

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

<u>Additional information:</u>
At the end of the course: submitting either a final paper or a seminar