

Jewish Studies Fall 2018 Course Descriptions

COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES (COMP_LIT)

COMP_LIT 270-0-20: Introduction to Yiddish Culture: Literary Images of the Shtetl

M. Moseley, MW 3:30 – 4:50

(See JWSH_ST 266 for description)

GERMAN

GERMAN 266: Introduction to Yiddish Culture: Literary Images of the Shtetl

M. Moseley, MW 3:30 – 4:50

(See JWSH_ST 266 for description)

HEBREW

HEBREW 111-1: Hebrew I

H. Seltzer, MTWTH 10:00-10:50am

This is a course in elementary modern Hebrew. The course is designed to develop all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and an explicit knowledge of Hebrew grammar. Class work centers on learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures. These are introduced and exercised orally in anticipation of dealing with written dialogues and essays. Drills in the texts and on audio files expand and reinforce the new material. Independent lab work is part of the coursework.

HEBREW 121-1: Hebrew II

H. Seltzer, MTWTH 11:00-11:50am

This is an intermediate level course in Hebrew. The purpose of the course is to enlarge the student's vocabulary and to reinforce and expand his/her knowledge of Hebrew grammar in order to improve conversational and writing skills as well as the ability to handle literary texts from biblical to modern.

HEBREW 216-1: Hebrew III: Topics in Hebrew Literature

H. Seltzer, MW 12:30-1:50pm

This is an advanced level course in Hebrew. Literary works from Old Testament to contemporary Hebrew prose and poetry will be read, discussed and analyzed orally and in writing. Northwestern students should have completed and received credit for Hebrew 121-3. New students must have permission of the instructor.

HISTORY

HISTORY 392-0-22/395-0-22: Arabs in a Jewish State

E. Rekhess, MW 3:30 – 4:50pm

The 1948 war created a unique situation: a Palestinian-Arab minority amidst the Jewish state of Israel. Thus, Israel was established as a Jewish state but not exclusively so. The Palestinian Arabs who became Israeli citizens remained nationally and religiously bound to the outside Arab world. This necessarily resulted in a sharp crisis of loyalties, the Arab community being torn between its Israeli citizenship and its Arab national identity. Today the Arab minority constitutes nearly 20 percent of Israel's population. It has undergone intensive processes of change, generally referred to as: Israelization, Palestinization and Islamization. The seminar will focus on minority-majority relations in Israel, with special emphasis on three areas: first, the effect of modernization on the more traditional Arab society; second, the dilemma of national identity (the interrelation between the Israeli, Arab, Palestinian and Muslim/Christian components, the impact of the PLO and Hamas), political participation (Knesset) and the struggle of the Arab minority for equality, and third, the developments following the Oslo Accords, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the Intifada (the October 2000 Uprising; the discourse over the "Jewish and Democratic" nature of Israel; the search for alternative models - "State of its Citizens," separatism, autonomy).

JEWISH STUDIES (JWSH_ST)

JWSH_ST 101-6: First Year Seminar – A Rabbi and a Priest walk into a bar to talk about God

C. Sufrin, TTH 9:30 – 10:50am

(Freshman Seminar)

As the course title suggests, when Jews and Christians get together we expect them to be joking around about practices like wearing prayer shawls, not eating pork, or abstaining from sex. But what happens when Jews and Christians try to talk together in a serious way about the Bible? Or what happens when we die? Or even about the nature of God? In this class, we will consider whether it is possible for people from different faith traditions to learn from one another in a way that is constructive and meaningful while still respecting the differences between them. We will begin with a historical example of an interfaith dialogue gone awry and then turn to examples of contemporary religious thinkers trying to understand the purpose and possibility of interfaith dialogue. While our focus will be on Jews and Christians, our texts will include some Muslim writers as well.

In short: this course is a chance to think about how to talk about our highest values and commitments with those who don't share them.

JWSH_ST 266: Introduction to Yiddish Culture: Literary Images of the Shtetl

M. Moseley, MW 3:30 – 4:50pm

(also COMP_LIT 270-0-20/German 266)

In collective memory the shtetl (small Jewish town) has become enshrined as the symbolic space par excellence of close-knit, Jewish community in Eastern Europe; it is against the backdrop of this idealized shtetl that the international blockbuster *Fiddler on the Roof* is enacted. The shtetl is the central locus and focus of Modern Yiddish Literature; *Fiddler on the Roof* itself was based on a Sholem Aleichem story. In this seminar we shall explore the spectrum of representations of the shtetl in Yiddish literature from the nineteenth century to the post-Holocaust period. We shall also focus on artistic and photographic depictions of the shtetl: Chagall and Roman Vishniac in particular. The course will include a screening of *Fiddler on the Roof* followed by a discussion of this film based upon a comparison with the text upon which it is based, *Tevye the Milkman*.

JWSH_ST 278: Tales of Love and Darkness: Eros and Isolation in Modern Hebrew Literature

M. Moseley, TTH 3:30 – 4:50pm

Few literatures have been more isolated and isolating than Modern Hebrew Literature in its formative years in Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Young Jewish men are afforded a glimpse of the intellectual vistas lying beyond the stifling confines of the traditional Jewish shtetl. Reviled in these traditional communities as “heretics” they sought refuge from ostracism, persecution, in the tenements and boarding-houses of the metropolises of Europe. Umbilically attached to an unspoken language, these outsiders wrote in full awareness that their potential audience consisted largely of each other. This “imagined community” was an exclusively male domain; the handful of female Hebrew writers in Europe constituted an absolute anomaly. It was in the erotic realm that this isolation reached its fullest literary summation, especially in the figure of the “Talush” (“the uprooted man”) which placed center stage effeminate, masochistic Jewish men often subordinated by ruthless gentile women. This literature breathed of sexual anxiety. The course aims to explore the poetic, the ideological and the gender implications of the interwoven themes of eros and isolation in Hebrew Literature from the turn of the 19th century to the present day. In doing so, we shall study the migration of these themes along with Hebrew Literature itself from Europe to Palestine and ultimately the State of Israel. Has the rebuilding of the national “Home” brought the uprooted man his long lost masculinity? And how did the female writer incorporate/become incorporated by the “Talush” narrative? How do we account for the longevity of this sad and pathetic figure?

JWSH_ST 280-7: Reporting the Arab-Israeli Conflict

E. Daskal, MW 11:00 – 12:20pm

The Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the most well-covered topics in the news media but rarely do we stop to think about whether and how the media itself might play a role in this conflict. Ideally, news coverage aims to be an independent, critical, “watchdog” press. The reality, however, is much more complex. This course will examine press coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict through a series of case studies drawn from the Israeli media. In regard to each case we will evaluate the Israeli media’s conduct while addressing issues such as nationality, linguistics, ideology, persuasion mechanism and culture.