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## Term Information

Effective Term Autumn 2026

## General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area Yiddish  
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org Germanic Languages & Lit - D0547  
College/Academic Group Arts and Sciences  
Level/Career Undergraduate  
Course Number/Catalog 3366  
Course Title The East European Jewish Experience  
Transcript Abbreviation Jewish Experience  
Course Description For centuries, Eastern Europe was a center of Jewish life, home to vibrant communities and rich cultural traditions. This course explores Jewish experiences from early settlement and 19th-century town life to revolution, pogroms, and the Holocaust, as well as postwar and post-Communist revival through history, literature, film, art, and music.  
Semester Credit Hours/Units Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course 14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week  
Flexibly Scheduled Course Never  
Does any section of this course have a distance education component? No  
Grading Basis Letter Grade  
Repeatable No  
Course Components Lecture  
Grade Roster Component Lecture  
Credit Available by Exam No  
Admission Condition Course No  
Off Campus Never  
Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark, Wooster

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites  
Exclusions Slavic 3366, Jewish Studies 3366  
Electronically Enforced Yes

## Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings Crosslisted courses: SLAVIC 3366; JEWISHST 3366

## Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 16.0599  
Subsidy Level General Studies Course  
Intended Rank Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior

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## Requirement/Elective Designation

Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- gain an overview of the history, societies, and cultures of East European Jewry; gain insight into the connections between those histories, societies, and cultures and those of Eastern Europe more broadly, as well as those beyond Eastern Europe;
- gain an understanding of the issues that shaped, and indeed continue to shape, the East European Jewish experience, including questions of identity and assimilation, as well as the legacies of trauma and the violent realities of antisemitism;
- learn how the Eastern European Jewish experience was reflected in cultural texts, including short stories, poems, novels, songs, films, and other visual art;
- refine their oral presentation and writing skills, as well as their abilities to interpret and analyze literature, film, and other cultural texts.

### Content Topic List

- Where is Eastern Europe? Who are East European Jews?; An Overview of "Yiddishland" ;19th Century Jewish Life in Eastern Europe: The Shtetl; Women in Yiddish Literature ; Violence and Politics: The 1903 Kishinev Pogrom
- Jewish Life at the Turn of the Century and Beyond: Revolution and Violence; Revolutionary Violence in Soviet Jewish Culture; Revolutionary Violence on the Soviet Screen; Beyond the Pale: Sephardic Culture in Bosnia
- Beyond the Pale: Sephardic Culture in Bosnia; The Modernist Aesthetics of Bruno Schulz: Questions of Identity and Belonging; The Modernist Aesthetics of Dvora Vogel; The Holocaust: An Overview; Stories of Death and Survival
- Neighbors: Helpers, Bystanders, and Collaborators; Bearing Witness Under the "Sign of Erasure"; Poetry and Testimony: Avrom Sutzkever; Jewish Life in Post-War Eastern Europe: An Overview – Plots, Purges, and Executions;
- Trauma and the Soviet Jewish Experience; A Retrospective from Yugoslavia; The "Return": An Overview; The "Return" (cont'd): Piecing Together Family Histories; Yiddish Culture in Contemporary Poland and Ukraine
- Being Jewish in Eastern Europe Today; Conclusions, Reflections, Trajectories: The Influence of East European Jewish Culture in the United States What is the East European Jewish Experience? What is its future?

### Sought Concurrence

No

## Attachments

- East European Jewish Experience syllabus\_edited Aug25[26].pdf: Syllabus  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Miller, Natascha)*
- East European Jewish Experience - GE Traditions Theme submission form[94].pdf: GE  
*(GEC Model Curriculum Compliance Stmt. Owner: Miller, Natascha)*
- East European Jewish Experience - GE Theme course submission form answers[58].pdf: GE  
*(GEC Model Curriculum Compliance Stmt. Owner: Miller, Natascha)*

**Comments**

**Workflow Information**

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Miller, Natascha	02/04/2026 12:53 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Taleghani-Nikazm, Carmen	02/04/2026 12:56 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	02/09/2026 11:02 AM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Neff, Jennifer Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Wade, Macy Joy Steele, Rachel Lea	02/09/2026 11:02 AM	ASCCAO Approval

## SYLLABUS

# SLAVIC/YIDDISH/JEWISHST 3XXX

## The East European Jewish Experience

Fall/Spring 202X (full term)

3 credit hours



Mayer Kirshenblatt, *Purim Play: "The Kraków Wedding,"* c. 1994, acrylic on canvas  
Source: [POLIN Museum of the History of Polish Jews](https://www.polinmuseum.org/)

## COURSE OVERVIEW

### Instructor

Instructor:

Email address:

Office:

Office hours:

### Prerequisites

None

## Course description

For centuries, Eastern Europe was a major site of Jewish life, the home to millions of Jews whose communities developed a rich cultural heritage. This course will explore this heritage and the experience, or rather experiences, of Jews in this region. In particular, we will study the legends and realities of early Jewish communities in Eastern Europe; 19<sup>th</sup> century life and traditions in Jewish towns and beyond; reactions to the many upheavals that occurred at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (including the Bolshevik revolution, civil wars, and emerging nation-states); and the realities of and responses to the pogroms and violence these Jewish communities faced throughout their history, which culminated in their near total destruction during the Holocaust. We will consider post-war and post-Communist Jewish life too, and look at how Jews navigated Soviet realities, the legacy of the Holocaust, and the revival of Jewish life in the region. We will also see how cultural texts—literature, film, visual art, songs, etc.—reflect these experiences, examining, among other topics, the works of the Yiddish masters of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, how Jewish artists dealt with and communicated the horrors of Holocaust and antisemitism, and how art, literature, and other cultural artifacts are being used in the region today to give voice to lost Jewish communities.

## Course learning outcomes

In this course, students will:

- gain an overview of the history, societies, and cultures of East European Jewry;
- gain insight into the connections between those histories, societies, and cultures and those of Eastern Europe more broadly, as well as those beyond Eastern Europe;
- gain an understanding of some of the issues that shaped, and indeed continue to shape, the East European Jewish experience, including questions of identity and assimilation, as well as the legacies of trauma and the violent realities of antisemitism;
- learn how the Eastern European Jewish experience was reflected in cultural texts, including short stories, poems, novels, songs, films, and other visual art;
- refine their oral presentation and writing skills, as well as their abilities to interpret and analyze literature, film, and other cultural texts.

## General education goals and expected learning outcomes

As part of the Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations theme, this course is designed to prepare students to achieve the following Ohio State General Education goals:

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than in the Foundations component.

1.1. Engage in critical and logical thinking about the topic or idea of the theme.

- Examine in greater factual detail the traditions, cultures, and transformations of East European Jewish communities and read and discuss multiple literary texts, films, and scholarly interpretations to gain a deeper understanding of this topic.

1.2. Engage in an advance, in-depth, scholarly exploration of the topic or idea of the theme.

- Read important fiction and recent scholarship, watch major films, participate in regular in-class discussions, present about a particular significant location, and complete varied writing assignments to develop critical and logical thinking about East European Jewish traditions and cultures and their transformations.

2. Successful students will integrate approaches to the theme by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in future.

2.1. Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to the theme.

- Engage in the exploration of each weekly topic through a combination of lectures, readings, films, discussions, and writing assignments to learn how to identify and describe an issue, articulate an argument, find evidence, and synthesize views or experiences orally and in writing.

2.2. Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

- Gain a rigorous, critical, and self-aware engagement not only with East European Jewish experiences, but also with key issues affecting the development and transformation of all cultures and traditions, such as the roles of secularization and urbanization, mass violence, race and ethnicity, and gender.

3. Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of how cultures and sub-cultures develop and interact, historically or in contemporary society.

3.1. Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (e.g., religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.

- Examine the history and experiences of East European Jews during the transformations of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (e.g., secularization, urbanization, changes to gender roles, assimilation) through their representation in literature, film, music, and art, thus allowing for the analysis of the complex transformations of East European Jewish traditions and cultures and how those same communities have sought to understand them through representation.

3.2. Analyze the impact of a "big" idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.

- Describe and analyze diverse experiences and portrayals of the Holocaust and its impact on East European Jewish traditions and cultures (e.g., the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish migration patterns and the Yiddish language).

3.3. Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.

- Discuss relationships between East European Jewish communities and the Slavic-majority regions that they inhabited (e.g., restrictions on Jewish practices, Jewish people's geographic and social mobility or immobility, and the Yiddish language).
- Analyze interactions and divergences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities in Eastern Europe.

3.4. Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.

- This class explores the continuities and transformations that took place among East European Jewish communities throughout the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries including changes to Jewish inclusion or exclusion in the region, the aftermath of mass violence against Jews, and the post-Holocaust revival of Jewish culture in Eastern Europe.

4. Successful students will engage in a systematic assessment of differences among societies, institutions, and individuals' experience within traditions and cultures.

4.1. Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.

- Analyze differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi experiences in Eastern Europe.

- Examine both Jewish and non-Jewish perspectives on the East European Jewish experience.
- Discuss contemporary institutions dedicated to the cultural preservation and revitalization of East European Jewish culture in the region

4.2. Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues.

- Explain what it means to be Jewish in Eastern Europe, where being Jewish was at times treated as a religious affiliation and other times as an ethnicity or race.
- Discuss women's divergent experiences of traditional Jewish life and its transformations in the 20th and 21st centuries (e.g., Jewish women writers' portrayals of Jewish women's lives, as well as these writers' inclusion or exclusion from scholarly discussions).

As part of the Traditions, Cultures, and Transformations theme, this course meets the themes goals by exploring East European Jewish cultures and societies, past and present. It employs multidisciplinary approaches to do so, including film, media, literary and other textual analysis as well as historical inquiry. This course presents East European Jewish traditions and cultures (and sub-cultures, including Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews) as dynamic, informed and impacted by a variety of ideas, institutions, events, and environments that have fostered change and promoted continuity (including urbanization, industrialization, assimilation, womens changing social roles, revolution, occupation, the Holocaust, memorialization). Students will critically evaluate and analyze differences and continuities within East European Jewish traditions, cultures, and subcultures and explore individuals' diverse experiences within these cultures, historically and in contemporary society.

## HOW THIS COURSE WORKS

**Mode of delivery:** This course is taught in person and meets twice a week.

**Credit hours and work expectations:** This is a **3-credit-hour course**. According to [Ohio State policy \(go.osu.edu/credithours\)](https://www.ohio-state.edu/credithours), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct instruction (instructor content and Carmen activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example).

**Attendance and participation requirements:**

- **Preparation:**

All of our class meetings have either assigned readings or films that you need to watch ahead of time. Make sure to take notes, complete assignments, and prepare questions

and comments, so we can have a productive discussion in class. The optional readings can help you expand on the ideas of the respective class meetings and dig deeper.

- **Class meetings:** TWICE WEEKLY

Our class meets in person twice weekly.

- **Office hours:** OPTIONAL

Office hours are your opportunity to consult about course assignments or ask other questions we did not address in class. Do not hesitate to take advantage of them as needed.

## COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

### Readings and other course materials

The following course materials will be posted to Carmen or will be available via streaming services.

#### Required Texts

Alechem, Sholem. "Today's Children." *Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories*. Trans. Hillel Halkin. New York: Schocken Books, 2004.

Bergelson, David. "A Witness." *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Short Fiction by Jewish Writers from the Soviet Union*. Trans. and ed. Harriet Murav and Sasha Senderovich. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2026.

Bialik, Haim Nahman. "Be'ir Hahareigah/The City of Slaughter." Trans. A.M. Klein. *Prooftexts* 25, nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 2005): 8-29.

Brokhes, Rokhl. "The Zogerin." *Found Treasures: Stories by Yiddish Women Writers*. Trans. Shirley Kumove. Ed. Frieda Forman et al. Toronto: Second Story Press, 1994.

Ficowski, Jerzy. "Script of a Dead Cemetery." *A Reading of Ashes*. Trans. Kieth Bosley and Krystyna Wandycz. London: Menard, 1981.

Jacob Glatshteyn, "Good Night, World." Trans. Marc Kaminsky. *The Manhattan Review* 20, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2021-22). <https://themanhattanreview.com/vol20no1/glatshteyn>

Grossman, Vasily. "In the Town of Berdichev." *The Road: Stories, Journalism, and Essays*. Trans. and Ed. Robert and Elizabeth Chander. New York: New York Review of Books, 2010.

Grynberg, Henryk. "Drohobycz, Drohobycz." *Drohobych, Drohobycz and Other Stories: True Tales from the Holocaust and Life After*. Trans. Alicia Nitecki. Ed. Theodosia Robertson. New York: Penguin, 2002.

- Khemlin, Margarita. "About Yosif." *In the Shadow of the Holocaust: Short Fiction by Jewish Writers from the Soviet Union*. Trans. and ed. Harriet Murav and Sasha Senderovich. Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2026.
- Kis, Danilo. "The Knife with the Rosewood Handle." *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*. Trans. Duska Mikic-Mitchell. Funks Grove, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 2008.
- Krajewski, Stanisław. *Poland and the Jews: Reflection of a Polish Polish Jew*. Kraków: Austeria, 2005.
- Miłosz, Czesław. "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto" and "Campo dei Fiori." *New and Collected Poems 1931-2001*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.
- Peretz, I.L. *My Memoirs*. Trans. Fred Goldberg. New York: Citadel, 1964.
- Peretz, I.L. "The Dead Town." *The I.L. Peretz Reader*. Edited by Ruth R. Wisse. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Petrowskaja, Katja. *Maybe Esther: A Family Story*. Trans. Shelly Frisch. New York: HarperPerennial, 2018.
- Reszke, Katke. *Return of the Jew: Identity Narratives of the Third Post-Holocaust Generation of Jews in Poland*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2013.
- Samokovlija, Isak. *Tales of Old Sarajevo*. Trans. Celia Hawkesworth, Zdenko Lesic, and Christina Pribicevic-Zoric. Chicago: Vallentine Mitchell, 1997.
- Schulz, Bruno. *Collected Stories*. Trans. Madeline Levine. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2018.
- Sutzkever, Abraham. "A Wagon of Shoes." *A. Sutzkever: Selected Poetry and Prose*. Trans. Barbara and Benjamin Harshav. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Sutzkever, Abraham. "Testimony at the Nuremberg Trials." *From the Vilna Ghetto to Nuremberg: Memoir and Testimony*. Trans. and Ed. Justin D. Cammy. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2021.
- Szczerek, Ziemowit. "Bruno Schulz's Suicide." Trans. Scotia Gilroy. *Asymptote* <https://www.asymptotejournal.com/nonfiction/ziemowit-szczerek-mordors-coming-to-eat-us-a-secret-history-of-the-slavs/>
- Szewc, Piotr. *Annihilation*. Trans. Ewa Hryniewicz-Yarbough. Normal, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 1993.
- Vogel, Debora. *Blooming Spaces: The Collected Poetry, Prose, Critical Writing and Letters of Debora Vogel*. Trans. and ed. Anastasiya Lyubas. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2020.
- Ulitskaya, Ludmila. "March Second of *That Year*." *Out Visiting and Back Home: Russian Stories on Aging*. Trans. Thomas H. Hoisington. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1998.

## Films

Askoldov, Aleksandr. *Commissar*. 1967.

Eisenberg, Jesse. *A Real Pain*. 2024.  
 Geissler, Benjamin. *Finding Pictures*. 2002.  
 Jewison, Norman. *Fiddler on the Roof*. 1971.  
 Zucker, Adam. *The Return*. 2014.

## Optional Texts

Ficowski, Jerzy. *Regions of Great Heresy: Bruno Schulz, A Biographical Portrait*. Trans. and ed. Theodosia Robertson.

Gitelman, Zvi. *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001.

Gross, Jan T. *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Mendelsohn, Ezra. *The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1983.

Meng, Michael. *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruin in Postwar Germany and Poland*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Michlic, Joanna Beata. *Poland's Threatening Other: The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

Rechtman, Abraham. *The Lost World of Russia's Jews: Ethnography and Folklore in the Pale of Settlement*. Trans. Nathaniel Deutsch and Noah Barrera. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2021.

Veidlinger, Jeffrey. *In the Shadow of the Shtetl: Small-Town Jewish Life in Soviet Ukraine*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Zipperstein, Steven J. *Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History*. New York: Liveright, 2018.

## Course technology

### Technology support

For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the Ohio State IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at [ocio.osu.edu/help/hours](https://ocio.osu.edu/help/hours), and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** [ocio.osu.edu/help](https://ocio.osu.edu/help)
- **Phone:** 614-688-4357(HELP)
- **Email:** [servicedesk@osu.edu](mailto:servicedesk@osu.edu)
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

## Technology skills needed for this course

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen ([go.osu.edu/canvasstudent](https://go.osu.edu/canvasstudent))
- CarmenZoom virtual meetings (for office hours) ([go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings](https://go.osu.edu/zoom-meetings))

## Required equipment

- Computer: current Mac (MacOs) or PC (Windows 10) with high-speed internet connection
- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) to use for BuckeyePass authentication

## Required software

- Microsoft Office 365: All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found [here](https://go.osu.edu/office365help) ([go.osu.edu/office365help](https://go.osu.edu/office365help)).

## Carmen access

You will need to use [BuckeyePass \(buckeyepass.osu.edu\)](https://buckeyepass.osu.edu) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you can connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the [BuckeyePass - Adding a Device help article](https://go.osu.edu/add-device) for instructions ([go.osu.edu/add-device](https://go.osu.edu/add-device)).
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- Download the [Duo Mobile application](https://go.osu.edu/install-duo) ([go.osu.edu/install-duo](https://go.osu.edu/install-duo)) to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service.

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357(HELP) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

## GRADING

### How your grade is calculated

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY	PERCENTAGE
<b>Attendance and Participation</b>	25
<b>Homework</b>	20
<b>Presentation</b>	15
<b>Midterm Close Analysis Assignment</b>	15
<b>Annotated Bibliography</b>	5
<b>Final Paper</b>	20
Total	<b>100</b>

*See course schedule below and Carmen for due dates.*

## Descriptions of major course assignments

### Attendance and Participation (25%)

The following will count towards your attendance and participation grade:

1. **Attendance:** Students should come to class regularly, prepared and on time. I will be assigning every student 30 attendance points. You are allowed 2 absences, no questions asked – these will not hurt your attendance grade. Beyond these 2 absences, you will be docked attendance points. Moreover, since you can't participate if you're not in class, you will also lose other points, as outlined below, that count towards participation. Students that must miss more than 2 class sessions due to illness, religious obligations, sport/band commitments, military orders, jury duty, etc. may have their absence excused and will have an opportunity to make-up participation points, but must provide official documentation.

**Students with more than 8 absences total, excused or unexcused, will not pass this class.**

2. **In-class discussion:** You are expected to actively participate and engage in class activities and discussions. In-class discussion will engage with weekly readings and/or film screening as well as in-class activities that explore the history and experiences of East European Jews during the transformations of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries (e.g., secularization, urbanization, changes to gender roles, assimilation) through their representation in literature, film, music, and art. In these discussions, we will analyze both Jewish and non-Jewish perspectives of the East European Jewish experience, what it

means to be Jewish in Eastern Europe, the diverse experiences of East European Jewish communities, including both Ashkenazi and Sephardi, and their portrayals in cultural art. We will also explore the changes and continuities of these communities over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, particularly engaging with the ruptures occasioned by the Holocaust and other instances of anti-Jewish violence.

I will assign 3 points per class session (minus 2 allowed absences). Points will be determined according to the following rubric:

3 points: Student actively and thoughtfully participates and engages in discussion and other classroom activities.

2 points: Student only participates when approached by the professor, but otherwise shows that they are prepared for class.

1 point: Student is present, but does not actively participate and is unable to answer questions posed by the professor.

In an attempt to facilitate discussion and ease any anxieties anyone may have, I will begin most class sessions with pair/small-group discussion first, before starting a general class discussion, and active engagement in these will count towards your in-class discussion grade.

3. **File upload:** For each class, you should upload a document to Carmen. Be sure to also have access to this document in class. This activity is meant to facilitate in-class discussion and the exploration and analysis of changes and continuities over time in East European Jewish traditions and cultures.

These documents should include:

- 3-5 key words/ideas from the assignment for that class session;
- 1-2 quotations from the reading(s) (or a description of a scene from a film) that you found particularly important/interesting (include page number; for longer passages (more than 6 sentences) you can simply provide the page number and beginning/ending words) and an explanation as to why you found this quote/these quotes important/interesting;
- and any questions or thoughts that the assignment generated.

These files will be graded (out of 3 points – 3 for a document that demonstrates thoughtful engagement; 1 for a card that lacks any real substance).

4. **In-class writing exercises:** Occasionally, I will provide a prompt and ask you to write an informal response to it in class. These will be used to facilitate discussion and will allow you to practice the kind of close-reading and analysis you will need to employ for your midterm and final assignments. Namely, students will reflect on and assess the similarities and differences among East European Jewish communities, explore changes and continuities

in these communities over time, and critically engage with artistic representations of Eastern European Jewish traditions and transformations.

I will collect these responses, and they will be graded (out of 3 points – 3 for a text that demonstrates thoughtful engagement and analysis; 1 for a text that lacks any real substance).

5. **Online discussion boards:** Occasionally, I may choose to supplement our in-class discussions with an online discussion board (either to start generating discussions before class, or to allow us to follow-up on discussions after class). Like the assignments above, these will allow students to further engage with the traditions and transformations, movements, histories, communities, and representations discussed in class.

You are required to participate in these discussion boards by writing at least 1 post and commenting on at least 2 posts written by other students. They, too, will be graded on a 3-point scale.

## Homework (20%)

Your homework grade will be based on the following:

1. **Worksheets:** Throughout the semester, there will be times when, in addition to completing readings, you will have to use those readings to fill out a worksheet. These worksheets will usually involve activities like defining key terms, identifying people and places, and/or noting what events happened on certain dates. Besides ensuring that you're completing readings, these worksheets are meant to help you identify and synthesize key information regarding East European Jewish traditions and transformations and will serve as reference guides for future readings and assignments. Dates for these assignments can be found in the course schedule below.
2. **Quizzes:** I will be posting regular, online quizzes on Carmen based on readings to ensure that assignments are being thoughtfully completed. These will be short, timed quizzes (you will have 20 minutes to complete each, although they should take far less time), with multiple-choice, true/false, matching, and/or short-answer questions. They are also open-book/note. These will help you keep up with the material, identify and synthesize key information and evidence from readings, and help you articulate analysis in writing. In addition, select quizzes will be geared towards not only advanced factual exploration, but also towards developing key research skills that will enable you to engage with critical scholarly analysis about East European Jewish traditions and transformations. While not listed in the schedule below, you should expect there to be a quiz for each class session. I will drop the lowest 2 quiz grades.
3. **Reflection Essay:** At the end of the semester, you will write a 1–2-page (double-spaced) essay reflecting on what this course has contributed to you as a learner. You will assess

what you've discovered about East European Jewish traditions and transformations and connect the key concepts discussed in class to broader contexts, other cultures and traditions, and out-of-classroom experiences. You will also assess how the course has contributed overall to your broader knowledge and skills.

### **Presentation (15%)**

In this course, we will encounter many centers of Jewish life in Eastern Europe—cities like Krakow, Lviv, and Odesa, as well as small towns such as Berdichev, Drohobycz, and Zamość. Throughout the semester, students will conduct advanced factual explorations of one of these key sites of East European Jewish traditions and transformation, giving a presentation on these centers to help set the scene for certain readings/topics. The goal of these presentations is not only to share data about the city/town, but to also get a sense of Jewish life in these places and explore what it means to be Jewish and the diverse experiences of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. As such, presentations should:

- offer a basic historical overview of the city/town (particularly in regard to its Jewish history);
- introduce others to its major Jewish cultural, political, and social sites;
- make note of any important people (historically, culturally, etc.) from the city/town, relevant to our class.

These presentations will be an important component of gaining insight into the East European Jewish traditions and transformations. As such, it is not only your responsibility to participate in a presentation, but to listen and learn from your fellow students who present. I will use information shared in these presentations in homework, quizzes, and other activities to ensure active, engaged attention to all material presented. Dates for these presentations can be found in the course schedule below.

### **Midterm Close Analysis (15%)**

The midterm is a take-home close analysis assignment involving advanced, in-depth scholarly exploration of texts as they relate to the traditions and transformations of East European Jewish culture. You will engage with a literary text or film discussed in class in a critical manner, analyzing its formal components (e.g., narrative voice, imagery, symbolism, etc.) and relating them to key broader themes in the work and in our class as a whole (what it means to be Jewish in Eastern Europe, gender, assimilation, ruptures and continuities that the Holocaust engendered, etc.). 2–3 pages, double-spaced.

### **Annotated Bibliography (5%)**

To prepare for your final paper and advance your scholarly exploration of East European Jewish traditions and cultures and their transformations, you will have to submit an annotated bibliography in which you identify three (3) sources (scholarly article or monograph) useful for your final paper. Cite in MLA style and provide an annotation for each source, i.e. 5–7 sentences (1) briefly summarizing the source’s content and (2) critically assessing how this source is useful to your paper.

## Final Paper (20%)

Building upon the critical engagement of East European Jewish traditions and cultures and their transformations done previously this semester, you will write a 6–8-page paper (double-spaced and including bibliography). In this paper, you will conduct an advanced analysis of a literary text or film discussed in class and critically engage with the scholarly articles and/or monographs that you have identified as useful in your annotated bibliography assignment. Your paper will engage with a major theme in the work and connect it to one or more key issues discussed in class (such as urbanization, secularization, Jewish/non-Jewish relations, diverse perspectives on what it means to be Jewish in Eastern Europe, gender, the Holocaust, etc.)

## Late assignments and Extra Credit

Students requiring extra time to complete assignments should get in touch with me. If you have a legitimate excuse for not turning in work on time, you must request an extension before the assignment is due. Otherwise, late assignments will incur a penalty, at the discretion of the instructor. Extra credit opportunities will also be provided throughout the semester. Please keep in mind, however, that **extra credit will not make up for continually not participating or submitting assignments. It should not be considered an end-of-the-semester bail out.**

## Grading scale

93% - 100% = A

90% - 92% = A-

87% - 89% = B+

83% - 86% = B

80% - 82% = B-

77% - 79% = C+

73% - 76% = C

70% - 72% = C-

67% - 69% = D+

60% - 66% = D

Below 60% = E

## OTHER COURSE POLICIES

### Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful.

- **Writing style:** While there is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, you should remember to write using good grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A more conversational tone is fine for non-academic topics.
- **Tone and civility:** Let's maintain a supportive learning community where everyone feels safe and where people can disagree amicably.
- **Citing your sources:** When we have academic discussions, please cite your sources to back up what you say. For course materials, list at least the title and page numbers. For online sources, include a link.
- **Backing up your work:** Consider composing your academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work, and then copying into the Carmen discussion. I would also recommend doing this for short-answer questions on exams.

## Academic integrity policy

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the [Committee on Academic Misconduct](http://go.osu.edu/coam) (COAM; [go.osu.edu/coam](http://go.osu.edu/coam)) expect that all students have read and understand the University's [Code of Student Conduct](http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/) (<http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>) and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute Academic Misconduct.

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so please review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in

connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee ([Faculty Rule 3335-5-48.7 \(B\)](#)). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

In other words, if I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by University Rules to report those suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that a student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If you have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, you can consult the Code of Student Conduct as well as contact me.

### **Policy on the use of AI by students (as outlined by the OSU Committee on Academic Misconduct):**

"All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use "unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship or on a course assignment" unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing" of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students — undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

"To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor."

**The use of ChatGPT and/or other AI tools to complete assignments is prohibited in this course.**

## **Student Services and Advising**

University Student Services can be accessed through BuckeyeLink. More information is available here: <https://contactbuckeyelink.osu.edu/>

FOR UNDERGRAD COURSES: Advising resources for students are available here:  
<http://advising.osu.edu>

## Copyright for instructional materials

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course.

## Your mental health

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, death of a significant other and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the semester are encouraged to contact the OSU [Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service \(CCS\)](http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu) (<http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu> or call **614-292-5766**). CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at **614-292-5766**. Emergency help is also available 24/7 through the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org) ([suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org)) or by dialing **988** to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. [The Ohio State Wellness app](http://go.osu.edu/wellnessapp) ([go.osu.edu/wellnessapp](http://go.osu.edu/wellnessapp)) is also a great resource.

## Student Advocacy Center

[The Student Advocacy Center](#) can assist students with appeals, petitions and other needs when experiencing hardship during a semester.

## Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a welcoming community. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any

other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office (CRCO):

Online reporting form: <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605

Email: [civilrights@osu.edu](mailto:civilrights@osu.edu)

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects.

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <https://civilrights.osu.edu/title-ix> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at [titleix@osu.edu](mailto:titleix@osu.edu).

## **Mandatory Reporter Statement**

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role as an instructor. It is my goal that you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. I will seek to keep the information you share private to the greatest extent possible. However, I am required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on Ohio State's campus with the University. Students may speak to someone confidentially by calling 1-866-294-9350 or through the [Ohio State Anonymous Reporting Line](#).

## **Respect for diversity in this course**

The Ohio State University affirms the importance and value of diversity in the student body. Our programs and curricula reflect our multicultural society and global economy and seek to provide opportunities for students to learn more about persons who are different from them. We are committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth

and dignity of every person; fosters sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among each member of our community; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. Discrimination against any individual based upon protected status, which is defined as age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status, is prohibited

## **Intellectual Diversity**

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

## **Religious accommodations**

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief

or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement and the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#). (Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#))

## **ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Requesting accommodations**

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic, or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion.

### **SLDS contact information:**

- Phone: [614-292-3307](tel:614-292-3307)
- Website: [slds.osu.edu](http://slds.osu.edu)
- Email: [slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu)
- In person: [Baker Hall 098, 113 W. 12th Avenue](#)

## Accessibility of course technology

This online course requires use of CarmenCanvas (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- Canvas accessibility ([go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility](https://go.osu.edu/canvas-accessibility))
- Streaming audio and video
- CarmenZoom accessibility ([go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility](https://go.osu.edu/zoom-accessibility))
- Collaborative course tools

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Refer to the Carmen course for up-to-date assignment due dates as well as any changes to the readings assigned.

	Topic	Readings and Assignments (to be completed prior to date listed)
<b>SETTING THE SCENE: INTRODUCTIONS, KEY TERMS, HISTORIES</b>		
<b>Week 1</b>	Course Information and Introductions Where is Eastern Europe? Who are East European Jews?	
<b>Week 1</b>	An Overview of “Yiddishland”	The Cultural Guide to Jewish Europe: “Yiddishland”; “Belarus”; “Poland”; “Ukraine”; “Russia”; “Lithuania” Virtual Shtetl Project  <b>Worksheet</b>
<b>JEWISH LIFE IN THE PALE AND BEYOND</b>		
<b>Week 2</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> Century Jewish Life in Eastern Europe: The Shtetl	Sholem Aleichem, “Today’s Children” Watch Jewison, <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> (select scenes)  Optional reading: Excerpts from Gitelman, <i>A Century of Ambivalence</i>  <b>Kyiv Presentation</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	The Shtetl as a Ghost Town: I.L. Peretz	I.L. Peretz, “The Dead Town”; selections from <i>My Memoirs</i>  Optional reading: Excerpts from Rechtman, <i>The Lost World of Russia's Jews</i>  <b>Zamość Presentation</b>
<b>Week 3</b>	Women in Yiddish Literature	Rokhl Brokhes, “The Zogerin”  <b>Minsk Presentation</b>

<b>Week 3</b>	Violence and Politics: The 1903 Kishinev Pogrom	Haim Nakhman Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter"  Optional reading: Excerpts from Steven J. Zipperstein, <i>Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History</i>  <b>Kishinev Presentation</b>
<b>Week 4</b>	Jewish Life at the Turn of the Century and Beyond: Revolution and Violence	Isaak Babel, "Gedali"  Optional reading: Excerpts from Mendelsohn, <i>The Jews of East Central Europe between the World Wars</i>  <b>Odesa Presentation</b>
<b>Week 4</b>	Revolutionary Violence in Soviet Jewish Culture	Vassily Grossman, "In the Town of Berdichev"  <b>Berdichev Presentation</b>
<b>Week 5</b>	Revolutionary Violence on the Soviet Screen	Aleksandr Askoldov, <i>Commissar</i>
<b>Week 5</b>	Beyond the Pale: Sephardic Culture in Bosnia	Excerpts from Isak Samokovlija, <i>Tales of Old Sarajevo</i>  <b>Sarajevo Presentation</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	Beyond the Pale: Sephardic Culture in Bosnia	Excerpts from Isak Samokovlija, <i>Tales of Old Sarajevo</i>
<b>Week 6</b>	The Modernist Aesthetics of Bruno Schulz: Questions of Identity and Belonging	Selections from Bruno Schulz, <i>Collected Stories</i>  Optional readings: Kirsch, "The Battle Over Bruno Schulz's Final Works"; Excerpts from Ficowski, <i>Regions of Great Heresy</i>  <b>Drohobycz Presentation</b>
<b>Week 7</b>	The Modernist Aesthetics of Dvora Vogel	Selections from Dvora Vogel, <i>Blooming Spaces</i>  <b>Lviv Presentation</b>
<b>Midterm Close Analysis Assignment</b>		

<b>KHURBN/THE HOLOCAUST – THE DESTRUCTION</b>		
<b>Week 7</b>	The Holocaust: An Overview	Jacob Glatshetyn, “Good Night, World”  <b>Worksheet</b>
<b>Week 8</b>	Stories of Death and Survival	Henryk Grynberg, “Drohobycz, Drohobycz”
<b>Week 8</b>	Stories of Death and Survival	Leonid Gorovets, <i>Ladies' Tailor</i> (screening)
<b>Week 9</b>	Neighbors: Helpers, Bystanders, and Collaborators	Czesław Miłosz, “A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto” and “Campo dei Fiori”  Optional reading: Excerpts from Gross, <i>Neighbors</i>
<b>Week 9</b>	Bearing Witness Under the “Sign of Erasure”	David Bergelson, “A Witness”
<b>Week 10</b>	Poetry and Testimony: Avrom Sutzkever	Avrom Sutzkever, “A Wagon of Shoes”; excerpts from Sutzkever’s testimony at the Nuremberg Trials  <b>Vilnius Presentation</b>
<b>POST-WAR REALITIES AND RETROSPECTIVES</b>		
<b>Week 10</b>	Jewish Life in Post-War Eastern Europe: An Overview – Plots, Purges, and Executions	Ludmila Ulitskaya, “March Second of <i>That Year</i> ”  Optional Reading: Gitelman, <i>A Century of Ambivalence</i> , 144–73  <b>Worksheet</b>
<b>Week 11</b>	Trauma and the Soviet Jewish Experience	Margarita Khemlin, “About Yosif,” 1–25  Optional Reading: Excerpts from Veidlinger, <i>In the Shadow of the Shtetl</i>
<b>Week 11</b>	Trauma and the Soviet Jewish Experience (cont’d)	Margarita Khemlin, “About Yosif,” 26-53
<b>Week 12</b>	A Retrospective from Yugoslavia	Danilo Kis, “The Knife with the Rosewood Handle”
<b>Week 12</b>	March '68 in Poland: Expulsion, Erasure, and the Spark of Revival	Stanisław Krajewski, <i>Poland and the Jews</i> , 17–28  Optional Reading: Michlic, <i>Poland’s Threatening Other</i> , 248–58

<b>“RETURNS” AND FUTURES: THE CASE STUDIES OF POLAND AND UKRAINE</b>		
<b>Week 13</b>	The “Return”: An Overview	Jerzy Ficowski, “Script of a Dead Cemetery”  Optional Reading: Meng, <i>Shattered Spaces</i> , 163–85  <b>Worksheet</b> <b>Kraków Presentation</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	The “Return” (cont’d): Piecing Together Family Histories	Selections from Katja Petrowskaja, <i>Maybe Esther</i>
<b>Week 14</b>	The “Return” (cont’d): Ideals and Realities	Watch Benjamin Geissler, <i>Finding Pictures</i> Excerpts from Piotr Szewc, <i>Annihilation</i> Ziemowit Szczerek, “Bruno Schulz’s Suicide”
<b>Week 14</b>	Yiddish Culture in Contemporary Poland and Ukraine	Klezmer from contemporary Poland Virtual tour of Kyiv’s Museum of Sholem Aleichem
<b>Week 15</b>	Being Jewish in Eastern Europe Today	Excerpts from Katke Reszke, <i>Return of the Jew</i> Watch Adam Zucker, <i>The Return</i>
<b>Week 15</b>	Conclusions, Reflections, Trajectories: The Influence of East European Jewish Culture in the United States What is the East European Jewish Experience? What is its future?	Watch Jesse Eisenberg, <i>A Real Pain</i>  Optional Reading: Gitelman, <i>A Century of Ambivalence</i> , 244–74  <b>Reflection Essay</b>
<b>Final Exam Period: Final Paper Due</b>		

## **The East European Jewish Experience**

### **GE Theme course submission worksheet: Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations**

#### **Briefly Describe how this course connects to or exemplifies the concept of this Theme**

This course explores East European Jewish cultures and societies, past and present. It employs multidisciplinary approaches to do so, including film, media, literary and other textual analysis as well as historical inquiry. This course presents East European Jewish traditions and cultures (and sub-cultures, including Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews) as dynamic, informed and impacted by a variety of ideas, institutions, events, and environments that have fostered change and promoted continuity (including urbanization, industrialization, assimilation, womens changing social roles, revolution, occupation, the Holocaust, memorialization). Students will critically evaluate and analyze differences and continuities within East European Jewish traditions, cultures, and subcultures and explore individuals' diverse experiences within these cultures, historically and in contemporary society.

#### **Connect this course to the Goals and ELOs shared by *all* Themes**

##### **1.1 Engage in critical and logical thinking**

This course will build skills needed to engage in critical and logical thinking about the Eastern European Jewish experience, past and present, by:

- Reading and watching various literary texts and films dealing with various facets of East European Jewish cultures and their transformations over time.
- Regular attendance and in-class discussion that require critical analysis and engagement with assigned readings, films, and other course materials. In class discussions, students will not only demonstrate that they did readings/viewings, but will articulate critical engagement with course materials, conducting deep analysis of said materials and connecting them to the broader themes regarding East European traditions and transformations emerging over the course of the semester.
- File uploads for every class session that require students to summarize and synthesize course readings. Students will have to highlight main arguments and/or themes in the text, determine relevant information, and generate pertinent questions that demonstrate critical insight and engagement.
- Occasional online discussions and in-class writing assignments to further facilitate critical engagement with key texts and topics in the course.

- Several worksheet assignments that will aid students in logically thinking through key texts, allowing them to identify and synthesize key information regarding the East European Jewish experience presented in said texts.
- Several quizzes (featuring multiple-choice, true/false, and short answer questions) in which students will identify and synthesize key information from readings, demonstrate comprehension of course materials, and analytically engage with said materials via short, written analysis.

### **1.2 Engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of topic**

Students will engage in in-depth, scholarly exploration of topics related to Eastern European Jewish traditions and transformation by:

- Giving a presentation on a historical center/city of the Eastern European Jewish experience based on in-depth scholarly exploration into the site's Eastern European Jewish life and history. Students will gain a more thorough insight into Eastern European Jewish cultures and histories by researching Jewish life in a particular location; identifying and synthesizing key information about this location to provide a brief historical overview of the place in regards to its Jewish life; and determine key sites and figures of Jewish life from the place.
- Completing a midterm close analysis of a literary text or film discussed in class in a critical manner, analyzing its formal components and connecting it to the broader themes discussed in class related to the East European Jewish experience.
- Writing a final paper that requires advanced analysis of and critical engagement with a literary text or film discussed in class as well as scholarship available on said text or film, connecting their analysis to one or more key issues regarding East European Jewish traditions and transformation discussed in class.
- In addition, to prepare for the final paper and to engage more with scholarly material related to East European Jewish traditions and transformation, students will have to submit an annotated bibliography identifying 3 sources they will use in this paper, synthesizing and critically evaluating leading scholarship on the topic to determine what will be useful to them for their final paper.

### **2.1 Identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences**

Students will engage in the exploration of each weekly topic through a combination of lectures, readings/films, discussions, and writing assignments to learn how to identify and describe an issue, articulate an argument, find evidence, and synthesize views or experiences orally and in writing:

- Readings/Viewings: Course materials come from a variety of places in the region (including Poland, Ukraine, Bosnia, Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, etc.), periods (from 19<sup>th</sup> century Yiddish life to 20<sup>th</sup> century upheavals to 21<sup>st</sup> century reflections on Jewish life in Eastern Europe today) and perspectives (i.e. taking into account women’s voices, Sephardic experiences, etc) to help students build a general overview of East European Jewish experiences, traditions, and transformations. Optional readings from secondary sources offering contextualization to the required readings and giving examples of current critical scholarship dealing with Jewish life in the region are also provided.
- Each class session engages with a critical literary text or film dealing with East European Jewish life. Each session opens with a lecture, and/or student presentation, offering a general overview and contextualization pertinent to the readings. Class discussion, focused on textual analysis and connecting the text to real-world circumstances and events, then takes place. This way, via readings and in-class discussions, students engage critically with literary texts and films while also examining how said texts are reflecting and responding to real-world phenomena, building a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of East European Jewish life and cultures (for example, students will learn about general features regarding 19<sup>th</sup> century shtetl life via lecture and an in-class presentation on Kyiv and then discuss how Sholem Aleichem’s story “Today’s Children” relates and what perspectives it offers on such life).
- Written assignments are geared towards (1) identifying and synthesizing key information provided in readings and class discussions and (2) critically engaging and analyzing with texts to understand and demonstrate how they relate to key themes of the course. For example, file uploads, worksheets, and quizzes allow students to identify, summarize, and describe key information in texts, while the midterm close analysis and final paper allow students to engage in deep textual analysis to articulate a deeper critical insight into the East European Jewish experience.

**2.2 Demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.**

Students will conduct critical self-reflection regarding their learning experience in this class via:

- In-class discussion, during which students will be drawn to make connections between topics discussed in class regarding the East European Jewish experience

and other cultures and traditions, gaining not only deeper insight into Jewish life and history, but also a broader understanding of how certain phenomena, including urbanization, secularization, and mass violence, have affected other peoples and cultures.

- An end-of-the-semester reflection essay, in which they will be required to reflect on what they have learned about the East European Jewish experience in the class, connect what they have learned to other cultures, traditions, and experiences, and assess how the course has contributed to their broader knowledge base and skills.

## **Goals and ELOs unique to Traditions, Cultures, & Transformations**

### **3.1 Describe the influence of an aspect of culture (religious belief, gender roles, institutional organization, technology, epistemology, philosophy, scientific discovery, etc.) on at least one historical or contemporary issue.**

Students will learn about, engage with, examine and analyze various aspects of culture on the East European Jewish experience, including secularization, urbanization, gender roles, assimilation, and race and racism, observing and critically analyzing the impacts of those phenomena on Eastern European Jewish life and beyond through a variety of assignments:

- Readings, in-class discussion, and various written assignments (file uploads, worksheets, quizzes) will allow students to identify, synthesize, and describe various aspects of culture and their impacts on East European Jewish life and traditions.
- Other assignments, including the midterm close analysis and final paper, will allow students to more critically engage with various aspects of Eastern European culture and their complex transformations and developments over time. Moreover, such assignments will allow students to demonstrate how communities have sought to understand and deal with such transformations through literary and filmic representations.

### **3.2 Analyze the impact of a “big” idea or technological advancement in creating a major and long-lasting change in a specific culture.**

Students will learn about and analyze the impact of antisemitic violence, including pogroms and the Holocaust, and its major impact on East European Jewish traditions and cultures.

- Via course readings and lectures, students will learn, for example, about the destruction wrought by the Holocaust and how it completely changed Eastern European Jewish life, leading to the annihilation of major communities, the widespread migration and displacement of survivors, and the suppression of the Yiddish language and culture.
- Via course readings and in-class discussion, students will also engage with artistic representations of such violence, gaining deeper insights into the changes occasioned by the Holocaust. Students will, for example, compare Bruno Schulz's pre-World War II depictions of Drohobycz and compare it to Henryk Grynberg's post-war account of the Holocaust in the same town, seeing how two literary texts reflect the changing landscape of East European Jewish life during this period of history.
- Various written assignments, including file uploads, worksheets, and quizzes, will allow students to identify and synthesize key information regarding this topic, while the final paper will give them the opportunity to critically engage and analyze a text dealing with the Holocaust and its impact on Jewish life in the region.

### **3.3 Examine the interactions among dominant and sub-cultures.**

- Students will learn and read about and discuss multi-faceted and ever-changing relationships between East European Jewish communities and the Slavic-majority regions they inhabited, examining, for example, anti-Jewish and antisemitic beliefs that deeply influenced shtetl life (e.g. due to government restrictions on where Jewish people were allowed to live) and often led to pogroms and violence; non-Jewish interactions in and responses to the Holocaust, from saving and hiding Jews from Nazis to abetting Nazi Germany in its destruction of the Jews; and contemporary philosemitic celebrations of Eastern European Jewish life and projects geared to reviving such life in the region.
- Students will learn about, discuss, and compare Ashkenazic and Sephardi communities in Eastern Europe. While the focus of course material will be on Ashkenazic Jewish life, which thrived in particular in Central and Eastern Europe, students will also learn about Sephardic communities in Southeastern Europe, and will have the opportunity, through readings, class discussions, and assignments (file uploads, quizzes as well as presentations, midterm close analysis, and final paper) to engage with and critically analyze the similarities and differences between Ashkenazic and Sephardi communities in the Eastern European region as a whole as presented in course readings and lectures.

### **3.4 Explore changes and continuities over time within a culture or society.**

Course readings and lectures present, and will allow students to explore and critically engage with, the continuities and transformations that took place among East European Jewish communities from the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the 21<sup>st</sup> century and their representations in literary texts and films. After an introduction to the region's Jewish communities as a whole, students will:

- delve into 19<sup>th</sup> century shtetl life, including the experience of Jewish women at the time;
- encounter the many changes, and reactions to and pushbacks against those changes, that occurred in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including modernization, urbanization, and assimilationist movements;
- explore the massive changes to East European Jewish communities wrought by anti-Jewish and antisemitic violence, particularly the Holocaust;
- study post-war realities, gaining insight into how Jewish life in the region continued and changed after the Holocaust and what constitutes Jewish life in the region today.

As with other topics, in-class discussion and written assignments will allow students to identify and synthesize key information regarding the changes and continuities of Jewish life in Eastern Europe over the last several centuries, while also providing the opportunity for analysis of literary texts and films and critical engagement with how they represent these traditions and transformations.

### **4.1 Recognize and explain differences, similarities, and disparities among institutions, organizations, cultures, societies, and/or individuals.**

Students will gain a varied and wide-ranging perspective into the East European Jewish experience by engaging with both differences and similarities amongst various communities, Jewish and non-Jewish in the region. Students will, for example:

- Learn about, discuss, and compare Ashkenazic and Sephardi communities in Eastern Europe. While the focus of course material will be on Ashkenazic Jewish life, which thrived in particular in Central and Eastern Europe, students will also learn about Sephardic communities in Southeastern Europe, and will engage with and critically analyze the similarities and differences between Ashkenazic and

Sephardi communities in the Eastern European region as a whole as presented in course readings and lectures.

- Examine and critically engage with varied perspectives on East European Jewish experiences by both Jews and non-Jews (comparing, for example, Jewish representations of the Holocaust by writers such as Jacob Gltshetyn and those by non-Jewish writers such as Czesław Miłosz).
- Learn about and discuss contemporary institutions dedicated to the cultural preservation and revitalization of East European Jewish culture in the region, engaging in particular with the phenomenon of the “Jewish return” in Poland and Ukraine and how writers, artists, scholars, and institutions involved in the “return” are framing the East European Jewish experience.

As with other topics, students will, through readings, class discussions, and other written assignments, identify and summarize key similarities and differences among institutions, cultures, and societies regarding their engagement with and perspective on East European Jewish life.

#### **4.2 Explain ways in which categories such as race, ethnicity, and gender and perceptions of difference, impact individual outcomes and broader societal issues.**

- Students will learn about and critically engage with the varied perspectives on what it means to be Jewish in Eastern Europe and beyond, both in terms of self-identifying as Jewish and being identified by others as Jewish. Course readings and lectures will demonstrate that Jewishness was at times treated as a religious affiliation, at times as an ethnicity, and at times as a race, or some combination thereof, by both Jews and non-Jews in the region. Students will see how such questions of Jewish identity affected Jewish life and government policy (i.e., identifying who was Jewish and therefore slated for annihilation during the Holocaust or expelled from countries during Soviet purges). Questions of contemporary Jewish identification in the region will also be addressed. Students will, moreover, engage with how such questions of identity and identification are addressed in literary texts and films. Students will, moreover, be given the opportunity to reflect on and critically analyze such questions via class discussion, file uploads, quizzes, and other assignments.
- Students will also gain insight into women’s experiences of traditional Jewish life and its various transformations over time. Students will engage with Jewish women writer’s portrayals of Jewish life, particularly of Jewish women’s lives (i.e. reading and discussing Rokhl Brokhes’s story “The Zogerin”). They will also reflect upon

these writers' inclusion and exclusion from critical scholarship (i.e. reflect of Bruno Schulz's wide-ranging popularity vs. Dvora Vogel's relative anonymity outside of more academic circles). Aside from readings engaging with women's perspective, assignments including class discussion, file uploads, quizzes, etc. will allow students to identify and synthesize key information related to Jewish women's lives in Eastern Europe, while the midterm close analysis and/or final paper will give them the opportunity to engage more critically and in-depth with the issue.