

## **READINGS IN MODERN YIDDISH LITERATURE**

Kathryn Hellerstein  
GRMN 408/JWST 438  
Fall, 1998

### **TEXTS:**

I. L. Peretz, *Fun Peretses Oytser* (Workmen's Circle). (OP, will use photocopies)  
Uriel Weinreich, *Modern English-Yiddish, Yiddish-English Dictionary*.  
Alexander Harkavy, *Yiddish-Hebrew-English Dictionary*  
Eleanor Gordon Mlotek and Joseph Mlotek, *Mir Trogn a Gezang* (The New Yiddish Songbook).  
OR, Eleanor Gordon Mlotek and Joseph Mlotek, *Pearls of Yiddish Song* (Workmen's Circle)  
BULKPACK OF XEROXES (to purchase from professor)

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS:**

Course meetings: Tuesday - Thursday 3-4:30; 320 Williams Hall. This course will survey modern Yiddish literature through readings of Yiddish prose and poetry from the end of the nineteenth century through the 1980s. The class will be conducted as much as possible in Yiddish; reading knowledge of Yiddish is required. Homework will be due in class on the dates specified below. Most of the texts will be available in the Bulk Pack.

In addition to a midterm essay (5-7 pages), the students will be asked to give a presentation to the class on a piece of Yiddish literature (a poem, a short story, or a novel) and/or on Yiddish songs from the Freedman Jewish Sound Archive in Van Pelt Library, and to write a final essay (10 pages undergraduates, 15 pages graduate students), which can deal with the same topic as the presentation. (Writing will be done in Yiddish as much as possible.)

### **SCHEDULE:**

- 9/10** Introduction Two poems by Moyshe-Leyb Halpern "Dertseyl" "Harbst"
- 9/15** Overview I. L. Peretz: "Oyb nisht nokh hekher" (1900-01) (pp. 117-123)
- 9/17** [Chone Shmeruk: *Encyclopedia Judaica, Modern Yiddish Literature*] Dan Miron: *A Traveller Disguised: A Study in the Rise of Modern Yiddish Fiction in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1973), pp. 1-66. I. L. Peretz I "Sholem Bayis" (1891) (pp. 39-45)
- 9/22** Rosh Hashana -- no class

**9/24** "Bontshe shvayg" (1894) (194-203) Ruth R. Wisse: Y. L. Peretz and the Making of Modern Jewish Culture (1991), pp. 37-70. I. L. Peretz II

**9/29** "Tsvishn tsvey berg" (1900-01) (pp. 147-167)

**10/1** "Baym goyses tsukopns" (pp. 138-146) Ruth R. Wisse, pp. 71-109.

**10/6** Sukes -- no class

**10/8** Moyshe-Leyb Halpern

Xeroxes of poems

Xeroxes of criticism: Ruth Wisse, "The Street Drummer," Chapter 4 in A Little Love in Big Manhattan; and Kathryn Hellerstein, "The Demon Within: Moyshe-Leyb Halpern's Subversive Ballads" (Prooftexts).

**10/13** Simkhes Toyre -- no class

**10/15** Halpern, con't

**10/20** Halpern, con't

**10/22** Yankev Glatshteyn Poems: "1919," "Turtletoybn," "Avishag," "Tsu mayn tsvey-hundertyorikn geburtstog," "Mir di vortproletarier," "Sheeny Mike," "A gute nakht velt," "Es iz unz bafaln a hunger," "On yidn," "Documents of Introspectivism" (Harshav, 773-804), especially "Introspectivism" (Manifesto of 1919).

**10/27** Glatshteyn, con't

**10/29** Celia Dropkin: "A tentserin" (and other short stories, 1935) "Odem," "Di Tsirkus-dame," (poems, 1935) Irena Klepfisz: "Queens of Contradictions: A Feminist Introduction to Yiddish Women Writers," in Found Treasures (Toronto, 1994), pp. 21-58. Kathryn Hellerstein, "Canon and Gender: Women Poets in Two Modern Yiddish Anthologies," Shofar 9,4 (Summer, 1991), pp. 9-23.

**11/3** Dropkin, con't. MIDTERM ESSAY DUE (5-7 pp.)

**11/5**

Anna Margolin

Poems (1929):

"Ikh bin geven a mol a yingling"

"In kafe"

"Shlanke shifn"

"Antrakht"

"Mayn shtam redt"

"Sheyne verter fun marmor un gold"

"In tunkeln tsimer"

Abraham Novershtern, "Who Would have Believed that a Bronze Statue Can Weep: The Poetry of Anna Margolin" (1991)

### **11/10**

Kadya Molodowsky

Short stories:

"A shtub mit zibn fenster" (1957)

"Der farlorener shabes" (1957)

### **11/12**

Molodowsky, con't

Poems:

"Froyen-lider" (1927)

"Olke mit ir bloye parasolke" (1931)

"Dzshike gas" (1933)

"Osyses" and "Yerushe" (1937)

"Eyl khanon,"

"Khad gadye,"

"Der melekh dovid aleyn iz geblibn" (1946)

"Un vos vet zayn,"

"Dos gezang fun shabes,"

"Ikh bin a viderkol" (1965)

Kathryn Hellerstein, "Introduction to The Selected Poems of Kadya Molodowsky" (forthcoming) (pp. 1-56).

### **11/17**

Malka Heifetz Tussman

Poems (1949-1974):

"Knekhtshaft,"

"Duner, mayn bruder,"

"Midbar vint"

"Tate ziser"

"Fargesn"

"Tsulokhes"

K. Hellerstein, "Malka Heifetz Tussman" from Jewish- American History and Culture: An Encyclopedia.

Marcia Falk, "With Teeth in the Earth: The Life and Art of Malka Heifetz Tussman," Shofar 9,4 (Summer,1991).

### **11/19**

Itsik Manger

Poems:

"Afn veg shteyt a boym"

Khumesch lider (1935) (selections)

Chone Shmeruk: "Medresh itsik and the problems of Its Literary Traditions," Medresh itsik (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 5-29.

11/24

Abraham Sutskever

Poems:

"Glust zikh mir tsu ton a tfile" (1942)

"Unter dayne vayse shtern" (1943)

"Farbrente perl" (1943)

And selected poems (1945-1995)

David G. Roskies: Against the Apocalypse (1984)

Chapter Nine, "The Burden of Memory," pp. 225-257.

**11/26** Thanksgiving -- no class

**12/1** Isaac Bashevis Singer

"Di nodl" (1966)

Chone Shmeruk: "The Use of Monologue as a Narrative Technique in the Stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer," The Mirror and Other Stories (1979), pp. 5-34.

**12/3** STUDENTS' IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS 12/8 STUDENTS' IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS

**12/16** FINAL PAPER DUE