

Request for Curriculum Council Action

DEC 1 - 1999

TO: Mona Gardner, Associate Dean
CC: Irv Epstein, General Education Director

DATE SUBMITTED: 12.01.99
(Please submit 15 copies of your proposal)

FROM: (Name) Marina Balina (Department) SUCLL

1. Proposed Action (Please check all that apply):

	Title	Number	Units
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> New Course	<u>Strangers in Their Own Home: Yiddish</u> <u>Culture of Eastern Europe</u>	<u>LC 242</u>	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Existing Course for which General Education credit is sought:		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Deletion		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Change title from		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
to		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Change number from		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
to		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>

2. Are you requesting General Education unit and/or flag credit? Yes No (If No, skip to #4.)

3a. Please check the category, if any, for which you are requesting General Education unit credit:

- Analysis of Values
- The Arts
- Contemporary Social Institutions
- Cultural and Historical Change
- Formal Reasoning
- Intellectual Traditions
- Literature
- Modern and Classical Languages
- The Natural Sciences
- Issues
- Laboratory
- Physical Education

3b. Please check the flag(s), if any, you are seeking:

- Writing Intensive
- Global Diversity
- U.S. Diversity

4. Please insert here the proposed catalog course description. Course descriptions should be limited to no more than 50 words, not counting (a) title; (b) prerequisite; (c) General Education category; and (d) when offered.

see attached.

Over>

5. Please list any prerequisites: none

6. When will this course first be offered? Spring 2001

7. Please indicate how often course is offered. Check only the item that best describes this course.

- Offered each semester
- Offered each Fall Term
- Offered each spring
- Offered each May Term
- Offered each semester and May Term
- Offered occasionally
- Offered in alternate years
- Offered in alternate years, Fall Term
- Offered in alternate years, Spring
- Offered in alternate years, May Term
- Offered annually
- Offered every third semester
- Offered as needed
- Offered on request
- Offered by arrangement

8. Is/are any other department(s) affected in any way by this request (e.g., course is cross-listed, team-taught, etc.)?

No. Yes. In what way?

This course will be part of REES program, International Studies

Judora O. Amalga

Signature of the Head(s) of the Affected Department(s) or School(s)

9. **WRITTEN RATIONALES:** If this proposal presents a new course (whether for General Education credit or not), an existing course for which General Education credit is now being sought, a May Term course, or a new major, minor or concentration, please attach a written rationale, following the guidelines found in the *Curriculum Development Handbook*.

10. The Curriculum Council assumes that the faculty members of your department have seen and approved of this request. Please sign below if this assumption is correct:

Marina Balina

Signature of Faculty Member Primarily Responsible for This Proposal

Marina Balina

Signature of the Head of the Department or School

LC 242: "Strangers in Their Own Home: Yiddish Culture of Eastern Europe"

Proposed Catalog Course Description: This course will examine the intellectual traditions that influenced the growth and development of Yiddish culture between 1800 and the present. The focus will be placed on traditional values in the life of the Jewish community in Russia and Eastern Europe, their positive as well as restrictive impact on individual Jewish experience. The study of the intellectual traditions will be reflected through three major areas of human experience: literature, arts, and film. Texts will be read in English translation.

The course will carry General Education credit in Intellectual Traditions and Global Diversity Flag.

REQUEST FOR CURRICULUM COUNCIL ACTION

Marina Balina, MCLL Department

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The course will carry General Education credit in Intellectual Traditions and Global Diversity Flag.

Course Content: Among the major intellectual issues to be discussed will be problems of Haskalah (Jewish form of European enlightenment), the emerging culture of Maskilim (secular Jew), the relationship with the Christian world, the attraction to solve the "Jewish Question" with non-religious political solutions. During this course the attempt will be made to address Zionism and anti-Semitism as two conflicting ideologies and investigate their impact on Jewish intellectual tradition. The discussion on the existence of Yiddish culture under the restrictions of the Soviet totalitarian system will assist in the understanding of the difficult relationship of Jewish émigré communities toward their homeland. Examples will be drawn from the following geographical regions: Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Poland, Czech Republic, and Slovakia.

Course Enrollment: The maximum enrollment in this course will be 20.

Frequency Offered: Every other year in the spring. I intend to offer this course beginning spring 2001.

Required Texts:

Ruth Wisse, ed., *A Shtetl and Other Yiddish Novellas*

Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*

Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye the Dairyman*

Lusy Dawidiwicz, ed., *The Golden Tradition*

Beatrice Weinreich, ed., *Yiddish Folktale*

Richard I. Cohen, *Jewish Icons: Art and Society in Modern Europe*

The following films will be included as part of the instructional material:

Shtetle, Dir. Jack Kuper, 1995

Seed of Sarah, Dir. Andrea Weiss, 1998

Warsaw Story, Dir. Amir Mann, 1996

Voices of the Children, Dir. Zuzana Justman, 1996

Commissar, Dir. Rolan Bykov, 1984

Course Prerequisite: Since this is an introductory course, there are no prerequisites.

CC Guidelines for Written Rationales

1. *How does this course fit in with your overall program and or faculty and student interest?* The Russian and East European Studies Team is currently revising its curriculum due to the major changes in its offerings. Previous concentrations on "Russia only" do not correspond with the latest developments in the field of Slavic Studies. The nationwide decline in numbers among students of Russian language and increased interest in other East European countries forced us to re-think our present courses. At the present point, IWU offers only one course in Russian history that is only taught occasionally and does not cover most of the recent changes in the dynamics of political and cultural life and has not been taught for the last three years. The new courses in Political Science (Comparative Politics, Politics of the former Soviet Union) and the well-established holocaust course that includes a significant component on Polish History are the only offerings on campus that reflect on the diverse issues of East European History. None of those courses introduces the students to culture and literature of the region. The new course, "Strangers in Their Own Home: Yiddish Culture of Eastern Europe," is organized around a common topic of investigation that is relevant to major East European cultures and at the same time it will permit to teach over the limitations of state borders.
2. *Who will teach this course? Is there adequate staffing?* I will teach this course. Since it will be offered periodically, I do not anticipate any staffing difficulties.
3. *Are you deleting a course to make space for this one?* No.
4. *Why are you offering the course at this level?* This course is designed to be an introduction to intellectual issues that shaped Yiddish culture, and, thus, conducive to an initiate to the field.
5. *If the proposed course unit is more or less than 1, please explain.* The proposed course will be worth 1 unit.
6. *Are the library, computer, media or other resources adequate?* Yes.

Request for Intellectual Traditions Category

Title of proposed new course: LC 242: Strangers in their own Home: Yiddish Culture of Eastern Europe.

Course Criteria:

1-2. Courses examine ideas rather than events, works or art or literature, or cultural practices. Thus, although historical materials, art, literary texts, and cultural artifacts may be examined in the course, such works should be investigated for the ideas articulated in them as they pertain to the subject matter of the course.

Courses focus on ideas which have shaped culture, the processes by which texts and traditions come to be seen as important, and, where appropriate, alternative voices which confront traditions.

This course will focus on the historical transformation of two major contradictory traditions that shaped Yiddish culture in Russia and Eastern Europe: assimilation to the host culture and preservation of Jewish tradition within the host culture.

The readings of literary (Kafka, Babel, Peretz, Pasternak, Sholom Aleichem, Levanda), philosophical (Freud, Deutscher, Gilman), and political (Lenin, An-sky, Jabotinsky) will be combined with discussions of movies and works of visual art. We will try to reveal the dialogical relationship between these two ideas (assimilation vs. preservation) and examine the ways in which these ideas have shaped Jewish identity. Yiddish cultural tradition will be illustrated by its direct influence on three groups that existed within Jewish communities of Russia/Eastern Europe: Jewish population of the shtetl who spoke Yiddish and created an extraterritorial corpus of Yiddish songs, rites, and poetry (Polish, Ukrainian, Belorussian); so-called non-Jewish Jews – Jewish intellectuals with a strong interest in Jewish intellectual tradition but equally strong rejection of Yiddish culture, which they viewed as the “bad” culture of uneducated Jews (German tradition, Czech tradition); and the third group that Sander Gilman called “self-hatred Jews” who, although officially converted to religions other than Judaism, used elements of Yiddish culture in their artistic work (Russian tradition).

3. Courses examine the development of ideas over time and in relation to other ideas. Courses on a single figure, for example, should, where appropriate, devote time to studying the wider intellectual conversation of which that figure is a part.

This course examines the development of concepts that underline Yiddish cultural tradition and concentrate on the following periods:

1. Yiddish culture of Galut (Pale of Settlement): Living within The Tradition.

Here two stereotypical approaches to Jewish culture will be discussed: romanticized myth of a Jew and the anti-Semitic image of an unwanted and mistrusted outsider. Works of literature (Sholom Aleichem) and films (“Shtetl”) will provide the material for this study.

2. Yiddish Culture and Revolution: Destruction of the Tradition.

The major focus in the study of this period will be the Maskilim ("secular Jew") tradition and its relationship toward Yiddish culture. Jewish nihilism and Jewish participation in the revolutionary movement would be the focus of the discussions. Works of literature (Babel, Pasternak), political texts (Lenin, An-sky) and visual art (Chagall, the movie "Commissar"), will provide the material for this study.

3. Yiddish Culture during World War II: Destruction of People/ Survival of the Tradition.

This period will introduce the students to the paradox of the survival of Yiddish cultural tradition despite the mass-destruction of the Jewish population in Russia and Eastern Europe. Two films ("Warsaw Story", "Voices of Children") as well as selected readings will provide material for discussion.

4. Yiddish Culture after WWII: Tradition Revised.

This segment of the course will address the revival of the Yiddish culture of Eastern Europe in the most recent period. Due to the large emigration from the former Soviet Union to Germany, two German cities, Berlin and Cologne, became newly established centers of Yiddish culture. Jewish communities in Prague and Warsaw underwent significant revitalization since many secular Jews who were hiding their Jewishness made an attempt to go back to their roots after their countries started their way to democracy. An issue for investigation of this period is the following: what cultural traditions did survive? What is their relationship to the host culture now? Is the old dilemma, assimilation vs. preservation, still decisive for Yiddish culture in Russian/Eastern Europe? To study this period I will employ the most current articles, a variety of internet material, and slides with contemporary artwork.

4. Courses actively engage students in interpreting and evaluating primary texts (including texts in translation), which proved the majority of reading for the course and which students analyze in written essays and oral discussions.

The students will be engaged in commenting on and discussing a large number of philosophical, political, and literary texts of Russian, Polish, Ukrainian, German, and Czech authors. Students will be asked to present short response papers and prepare reports on previously assigned topics. The opportunity to visit Devon Avenue in Chicago, the area of cultural and business activities for the Russian and Polish Jewish communities will be provided.

A visit to the collection of contemporary art at the Art Institute in Chicago will introduce students to several works by Chagall, El Lisizky, Lea Grundig, and Max Liebermann. The informal writing assignments following these visits will become part of the course assessment.

Assessment: through active participation in class discussions, two group presentations, three short response papers on different aspects of the course content.

Encountering Global Diversity Flag

Flag Criteria:

- 1. Courses compare the U.S. and another contemporary society or societies, or examine the encounters between non-U.S. societies, or extensively one non-U.S. society.**

This course examines the encounters between non-U.S. societies and investigates the cultural and intellectual traditions of Yiddish culture in their interactions with the various host cultures (Russian, Polish, German). The brief introduction to the traditions of the host culture, investigation of similarities and differences within Eastern European traditions and their relationships with the world of Yiddish culture will contribute to the studies of non-U.S. societies. Extensive investigation of one non-U.S. culture (Yiddish culture) is at the core of this course.

- 2. Courses use such materials as primary texts, films, or other appropriate materials arising directly from the non-U.S. society(ies).**

The films, primary texts and visual materials arise directly from the societies under investigation. Although the materials selected for this course are in translation, they all provide strong evidence of cultural tradition when put under investigation. Documentaries are represented by Czech, Polish, and Russian directors. Feature films are subtitled Polish and Russian productions. Texts are direct translations from German, Yiddish, Polish, Russian, and Czech.