

# EN2K6-30 Yiddish Literature in Translation: A World Beyond Borders

**26/27**

**Department**

English and Comparative Literary Studies

**Level**

Undergraduate Level 2

**Module leader**

Rochelle Sibley

**Credit value**

30

**Assessment**

100% coursework

**Study location**

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

---

## Description

### Introductory description

N/A

[Module web page](#)

### Module aims

The module aims to introduce students to a range of key political, literary and cultural developments in Yiddish poetry and prose fiction from the late nineteenth century to the present day. The reading focuses on writing from Europe, North America and South America in order to discuss Yiddish as a transnational literature, exploring the relationship between language, environment and identity in Eastern European and diasporic Yiddish-speaking communities.

### Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

TERM 1

Week 1— Introduction to Yiddish literature

Selected readings from Ilan Stavans, *On Borrowed Words* (Chapter 2), Aaron Lansky, *Outwitting History*, Paul Kriwaczek, *Yiddish Civilisation* (Chapter 1)

Unit 1: Yiddish Warsaw and beyond

Week 2 — Y. L. Peretz, "Bontshe the Silent" (1906), "If Not Higher", "The Golem" and "The Dead Town"

Week 3 — I. B. Singer, *Satan in Goray* (1933)

Week 4 — I. J. Singer, *The Brothers Ashkenazi* (1936)

Week 5 — Sarah Hamer-Jacklyn, "The Holy Mothers" (1946) and Lili Berger, "The Teacher Zaminski

and his Pupil Rifkele" (1993) and "Jewish Children on the Aryan Side" (1978)

Unit 2: Yiddish Beyond the Pale

Week 7 — Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye the Dairyman* (1894)

Week 8 — Rokhl Brokhes, "The Neighbour" (1922) and "The Shop" (1922-24 and "Golde's Lament"

(1907)

Week 9 — Avrom Sutzkever selected poems from *Selected Poetry and Prose*

Week 10 — Kadya Molodovsky, selected poems from *Paper Bridges*

TERM 2

Unit 3: Soviet Yiddish

Week 1— Dovid Bergelson, "On the Eve of Battle" (1923)

Week 2 — Moishe Kulbak — *The Zelmenyaners* (1936)

Week 3 —Peretz Markish, selected poems and Leyb Kvitko, selected poems

Week 4 — Yenta Mash, selected stories from *On the Landing*

Unit 4: Yiddish in Diaspora

Week 5 — Yiddish London: Esther Kreitman, "Blitz" (1950) and "Becoming a Tramp" (1950); "The New World" (1949)

Week 7 — Yiddish New York 1: Morris Rosenfeld, *Selected poems from Songs from the Ghetto* (1898), Mani Leyb, "I Am" (1955), A Leyeles, *New York* (1926) and Jacob Glatshteyn, "To A Friend Who Wouldn't Bother to Strain his Noodleboard Because Even So It Is Hard to Go Hunting When Your Rifle is Blunt and Love Is Soft as an Old Blanket" (1937)

Week 8 — Yiddish New York 2: Yenta Serdatzky, "She Waits" (1922), Celia Dropkin, "The Acrobat", "The Train Sings a Song" and "New York at Night by the Banks of the Hudson", and Blume Lempl, "Correspondents" (1992)

Week 9 —Yiddish Canada: Rokhl Korn, "Shadows" (1957), Ida Maze, "Denah" (1970) and Chava Rosenfarb, "A Cottage in the Laurentians" (1984); Rokhl Korn, "On the Other Side of the Poem" (1962)

Week 10 — Yiddish Argentina: Mordechai Alpersohn, "The Guachito 'Happy Moses" (1943), Borekh Bendersky "An Evil Eye" (1954) and Mimi Pinzon, "The Courtyard without Windows" (1965)

## Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- acquire knowledge of selected texts and concepts relating to the Yiddish literatures and cultures
- develop analytical and critical skills through close reading/viewing of the set texts

- demonstrate knowledge of relevant cultural and critical contexts within which to situate the set texts
- show a familiarity with key themes and debates in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Yiddish studies
- exhibit a capacity for archival skills, clear/concise expression and critical analysis
- research and construct a convincing argument, drawing on appropriate resources

## Indicative reading list

[Reading lists can be found in Talis](#)

## Subject specific skills

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the set texts in their cultural, political, and literary contexts

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the political, social, subjective, and historical implications of Eastern European and diasporic Yiddish literature

Develop an understanding of Yiddish as a transnational literature and culture

## Transferable skills

Use historical and culturally-based approaches to literature as a social text.

Display critical reading and writing abilities.

## Study

### Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	18 sessions of 2 hours (100%)
Total	36 hours

### Private study description

Reading & research.

### Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

## Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

## Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
<b>Assessment component</b>			
Assessed essay 1 3,500-word essay	45%		Yes (extension)
<b>Reassessment component is the same</b>			
<b>Assessment component</b>			
Assessed essay 2 3,500-word essay	45%		Yes (extension)
<b>Reassessment component is the same</b>			
<b>Assessment component</b>			
Presentation and Handout Individual presentation and handout (10%)	10%		Yes (extension)
<b>Reassessment component is the same</b>			

## Feedback on assessment

Written comments; opportunity for further oral feedback in office hours

---

## Availability

### Courses

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ39 Undergraduate English and Classical Civilisation

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-Q300 Undergraduate English Literature
- Year 2 of UENA-QP36 Undergraduate English Literature and Creative Writing
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ34 Undergraduate English and History (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UTHA-QW34 Undergraduate English and Theatre Studies
- Year 2 of UFIA-QW25 Undergraduate Film and Literature
- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ52 Undergraduate Philosophy, Literature and Classics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UCXA-QQ37 Undergraduate Classics and English

This module is Option list D for:

- Year 2 of UPHA-VQ72 Undergraduate Philosophy and Literature