

Slavic and Eastern Languages 375 (S: 3)
English 175 (S: 3)
Boston College/ Fall Semester 2010
Classes: M W F 2-2⁵⁰ Lyons 207

Professor Maxim D. Shrayer
Office: Lyons Hall 210
Office hours: M 1-2; W3-4*

JEWISH WRITERS IN RUSSIA AND AMERICA (SL 375/EN 175)

(this course fulfills the cultural diversity requirement)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The experience of Jewish writers living in Russia and America from the 1880s until the present, examined through prose, poetry, drama and memoirs written in English or translated into English from Russian, but also from Hebrew and Yiddish. The responses of Jewish writers to Zionism, the Russian Revolution and the Shoah, with attention to anti-Semitism, emigration/immigration, varieties of acculturation and assimilation, and the future of Jews in Russia and America. *All readings and discussions are in English.*

REQUIRED TEXTS (books for sale at the BC Bookstore and on reserve at O'Neill; please use **only** the required editions/translations):

Bellow, Saul. *Ravelstein*. New York: Penguin, 2001.

Babel, Isaac. *Red Cavalry and Other Stories*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2005.

Malamud, Bernard. *The Assistant*. New York: Farrar Strauss & Giroud, 2003.

Miller, Arthur. *Incident at Vichy*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1965.

Ozick, Cynthia. *The Puttermessaer Papers*. New York: Vintage International, 1997.

Roth, Philip. *Goodbye, Columbus and Five Short Stories*. New York: Vintage, 1995.

Sholem Aleichem. *Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories*. New York: Schocken Books, 1987.

Shrayer, Maxim D. *An Anthology of Jewish-Russian Literature: Two Centuries of Dual Identity in Prose and Poetry*. Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2007 (*Anthology*).

Shrayer-Petrov, David. *Jonah and Sarah: Jewish Stories of Russia and America*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003.

Jewish Writers in Russia and America: A Selection of Reading Materials. BC Press (*Selection*).

* To schedule an appointment, please contact Ms. Demetra Parasirakis at (617) 552-3910 or demetra.parasirakis@bc.edu.

The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe. Ed. David Gershon Hundert, 2 vols. Yale University Press, 2008. Full free online version: <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org> (YIVO).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- attendance of all class meetings and active participation in class discussions;
- one 10-minute oral presentation by groups of two students;
- two short papers (about 5 double-spaced pp./1300 words; hard copy), due in class, Oct. 25 and Nov. 22;
- midterm examination, Oct. 6;
- final examination, Dec. 14.

The FINAL GRADE will be calculated as follows:

- 30% daily attendance, class participation;
- 10% oral presentation;
- 30% two short papers;
- 10% midterm examination;
- 20% final examination

A = excellent B = good C = satisfactory D = unsatisfactory but passing F = failure
plus and minus are discretionary qualifiers.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Class attendance is MANDATORY.

Boston College values the academic integrity of its students and faculty. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic integrity (BC Catalog; <http://www.bc.edu/offices/stserv/academic/resources/policy.html#integrity>). If you have any questions, please approach the instructor. Violations of academic integrity will be reported to your class dean and judged by the academic integrity committee in your school. If you are found responsible for violating the policy, penalties may include a failing grade as well as possible probation, suspension, or expulsion, depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the violation.

REFERENCE WORKS:

The O'Neill Library owns a number of reference and encyclopedic works in the areas of Jewish and Judaic studies. The following items may prove useful in your study:

- Abramson, Glenda, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture from the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989. DS 102.8.B46 1989
- Barnavi, Eli, ed. *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People*. Rev. Dennis Charbit. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. DS 117 .J8513 1992

- Goodman, Martin et al., eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. BM 70 .O95 2002
- Hundert, Gershon David, ed. *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. 2 vols. Yale University Press, 2008. DS 135 .E8 Y578 2008
FULL FREE TEXT ONLINE: [HTTP://WWW.YIVOENCYCLOPEDIA.ORG](http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org)
- Kantor, Mattis. *The Jewish Timeline Encyclopedia*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1989. DS 114.K36 1989
- Kerbel, Sorrel et al., eds. *Jewish Writers of the Twentieth Century*. New York: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2003. PN842.J48 2003
- Nelson, Emmanuel S., ed. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Multiethnic American Literature*. 5 vols. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2005. PS 153. M56 G74 2005.
- Wigoder, Geoffrey, ed. *The New Standard Jewish Encyclopedia*. New York: Facts on File, 1992. DS 102.8.S 73 1992
- Encyclopedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: The Macmillan Company, 1971. 16 vols. DS 102.8. E496.

Additionally, numerous reference works on literary history, terminology, and theory are in print. The library will have many different titles in the stacks and in the reference area. The following titles have been popular among students:

- Cuddon, J. A. *A Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991.
- Drabble, Margaret, ed. *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985.
- Preminger, Alex and T. V. F. Brogan, eds. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. New York: MJF Press, 1993.
- Prince, Gerald. *Dictionary of Narratology*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1987.
- Terras, Victor, ed. *Handbook of Russian Literature*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1985.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

I will distribute a bibliography of English-language books and edited collections; the bibliography may prove useful in your preparation to presentations, term papers, and exams. Please note that this is not an exhaustive or complete bibliography, and that it does not include articles published in periodicals. I will be happy to make further suggestions for study and research.

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS:

- W, Sept. 8 Introduction; “Russia” & related maps in *YIVO*,
<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Russia>

- F, Sept. 10 Bialik, Poems in *Selection*; “Bialik” in *YIVO*,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Bialik_Hayim_Nahman
 Semyon Yushkevich, Intro & *The Jews* (excerpt) in *Anthology* 1: 133-141
 “Pogroms” in *YIVO*,
<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Pogroms>
- M, Sept. 13 Tschernichovsky, “Dumplings,” in *Selection*; “Tschernichovsky” in *YIVO*,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Tchernichowsky_Shaul
 “Hebrew literature” (only the general part), in *YIVO*,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Hebrew_Literature
- W, Sept. 15 Sholem Aleichem, ix-xli; 1-69+notes; “Sholem Aleichem” in *YIVO*,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Sholem_Aleichem
 “Yiddish literature” (only the general part) in *YIVO*,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Yiddish_Literature
- F, Sept. 17 Sholem Aleichem, 69-131; 279-284+notes
- M, Sept. 20 David Aizman, Intro & “The Countrymen,” in *Anthology* 1: 113-132
- W, Sept. 22 S. Ansky, Intro & “The Book” in *Anthology* 1: 174-179;
The Dybbuk, in *Selection*; “The Dybbuk” in *YIVO*,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Dybbuk_The
- F, Sept. 24 S. Ansky, *The Dybbuk*, in *Selection* (ctnd.; please read the second translation)
 Lev Lunts, Intro & “Native Land” in *Anthology* 1: 255-267
- M, Sept. 27 Babel, Intro in *Anthology* 1: 307-310; *Red Cavalry*, ix-xxix, 3-88
 “Union of Soviet Socialist Republics” & related maps in *YIVO*,
http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Union_of_Soviet_Socialist_Republics

W, Sept. 29	Babel, 91-163
F, Oct. 1	Babel, 163-232
M, Oct. 4	Babel, 235-309
W, Oct. 6	Vera Inber, Intro & “The Nightingale and the Rose” in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 338-345 Elizaveta Polonskaya, Intro & Poems in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 323-327
F, Oct. 8	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
M, Oct. 11	NO CLASSES: COLUMBUS DAY
W, Oct. 13	Osip Mandelstam, Intro & Poems & “Judaic Chaos” in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 237-247.
F, Oct. 15	Eduard Bagritsky, Intro & Poems in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 375-384; Semyon Kirsanov, “Intro & “R” in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 370-374
M, Oct. 18	Ilya Ehrenburg, Intro & “To the Jewish Nation” in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 180-184; 277 <i>Julio Jurenito</i> , 9-173 in <i>Selection</i>
W, Oct. 20	Ehrenburg, <i>Julio Jurenito</i> , 174-317 in <i>Selection</i>
F, Oct. 22	Vassily Grossman, Intro & “The Old Teacher” in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 539-560 Yuri German, Intro & <i>Lieutenant of the Medical Corps</i> (excerpt) in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 584-590 “Holocaust” in <i>YIVO</i> , http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Holocaust
M, Oct. 25	Lev Ozerov, Intro & “Babi Yar” in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 573-579; Pavel Antokolsky, Intro & “Death Camp” in <i>Anthology</i> 1: 580-583

M, Oct. 25	FIRST PAPER DUE IN CLASS
W, Oct. 27	Malamud, <i>The Assistant</i> , 1-71
F, Oct. 29	Malamud, <i>The Assistant</i> , 72-159
M, Nov. 1	Malamud, <i>The Assistant</i> , 160-237; “The Jewbird” in <i>Selection</i>
W, Nov. 3	Roth, 139-158
F, Nov. 5	Roth, 159-200
M, Nov. 8	Roth, 247-298
W, Nov. 10	Miller, 1-71
F, Nov. 12	Miller, 1-71 (cntd.); Allen Ginsberg, <i>Kaddish</i> in <i>Selection</i> ; Genrikh Sapgir, Intro & poems in <i>Anthology 2</i> : 711-722
M, Nov. 15	Boris Slutsky, Intro & poems in <i>Anthology 2</i> : 639-647; 794-796; Lev Ginzburg, Intro & “Only my heart was broken...” (excerpt) in <i>Anthology 2</i> : 826-837
W, Nov. 17	Ozick, 3-101
F, Nov. 19	Ozick, 105-236
M, Nov. 22	Ludmila Ulitskaya, Intro & “Genele the Purse Lady” in <i>Anthology 2</i> : 1103-1113

M, Nov. 22 SECOND PAPER DUE IN CLASS

W, Nov. 24-F, Nov. 26 NO CLASSES: THANKSGIVING VACATION

M, Nov. 29 Shrayer-Petrov, Intro & poems in *Anthology 2*: 1056-1062;
Shrayer-Petrov, *Johan and Sarah*, ix-xix, 1-108
“Refuseniks” in *YIVO*,
<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org:80/article.aspx/Refuseniks>

W, Dec. 1 Shrayer-Petrov, 109-169

F, Dec. 3 Bellow, 1-93

M, Dec. 6 Bellow, 94-159

W. Dec. 8 Bellow, 160-233

T, Dec. 14 FINAL EXAMINATION: 9 AM
