Course Description
This course will focus on the Jews of Eastern Europe from the end of the Middle Ages through the present, by focusing on the variety of cultural forms and expressions they have created. From tradition to modernity, Shtetl to Socialism, religious scholarship to secular literature, we will examine the rich cultural life of East European Jews in all its myriad manifestations, with specific emphasis on transformations in the culture of Yiddish-speaking Jews in Poland and Russia. Because literature and language played extraordinarily important roles in the East European Jewish world’s many transformations, we will be examining Jewish life through the prism of fiction in addition to analyzing historical texts, memoirs, art, music, and especially film.

Required Reading (available at the College Bookstore)
Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*
Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence*
Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Golden Tradition*
Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories*
S. Ansky, *The Dybbuk and Other Writings*
Isaac Babel, *Collected Stories*
Additional Readings will be available on eDisk

Course Requirements & Grading
**Group Work (Havruta) 20%**: Small group work, involving discussions of primary sources, broad topical questions, debates, etc. will be an integral part of our class, and will make up 20% of your final grade. Students will be assigned to groups of 2 with a study partner (Havruta) who you will work with for all group assignments. Most of the time there will be discussion questions assigned that your group will provide written answers to in class. Groups will also be called on to give oral summaries or lead class discussions. All grades will be on a √, √+, √- basis.

**Class Discussion/Participation (20%)** Participation in class discussions and other in-class assignments is an important part of class and will count for 20% of your final grade. All students are expected to participate in class discussions and contribute to the learning environment of the class. I will grade you based on your general preparedness and participation in class discussions on a √, √+, √- basis. It is also your responsibility to read the required texts before we discuss them and bring the appropriate books to class. Discussion questions for most reading assignments will be posted on eDisk and should be prepared to discuss in class. Unexcused absences will result in a 0 participation grade for the class missed.
**Film Response Papers (20%):** Students will write 3 short response essays (2-3 pages) on the films required for discussion. There will be a total of 5 required films and students will choose 3 of 5 to write on. Students can write on more than 3 and drop the lowest score. Guidelines to be provided.

**Final Research Projects (40%):** The final projects will require students to research an aspect of East European Jewish culture—music, art, film, literature, websites, Holocaust memoirs, museums, photo histories, family histories, etc—and present it orally to the rest of the class along with a written research synopsis (8-10 pages) to me. The research synopsis will be due on the last day of class, **December 11**, and the oral presentations will take place in one of the last three or four class meetings. Project Proposals must be submitted for approval by **October 2**. (Guidelines to be provided)

**Class Format, Policies, & Resources**

--**Class Format:** This is meant to be more of a discussion than a lecture course. I will make some short power point presentations in most classes, but they will tend to be interactive and call on students to participate in some way. Group work and full-class discussion will take up a major part of class time as well.

--**Class Etiquette:** Please arrive on time and don’t leave early without prior notification. Be courteous to me and your classmates by not talking when someone else is, turning off your cell phones, not reading outside materials or chatting on your laptops, etc. Laptop use in class is o.k. as long as you are using it for taking notes or doing class-related work.

--**Academic Honesty:** All written course work must be done individually and all outside sources included in your work (e.g. books, websites, course lecture notes, etc.) must be cited properly. Proper guidelines for maintaining academic honesty will be distributed.

--**Grading Scale:** The following grading scale will be used in this class: 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+; 63-66=D; 60-62=D-; 59 and below=F. For assignments receiving straight letter grades, A=96, B=86, C=76, D=66, F=59.

--**Consultation with Professor:** Students are encouraged to consult with me during office hours, or by scheduling an appointment, and are welcome to meet with me whenever the need arises. Questions can be directed to me in person, via e-mail and through my office tel. #. 358-4675.

--**Internet resources:** Course materials such as the syllabus, assignment guidelines, power point outlines, required course readings, and discussion questions will be available in the distribution folder for this class located on **eDisk**. Only pre-approved websites may be used for citing in research.

--**Films:** All films listed on the syllabus are on reserve at ATS; some will be viewed in part or in full in class, others are intended as required viewing outside of class for the film response papers.
Course Schedule

Unit One—Tradition

Week #1 (9/4) Introduction & Overview
Topics: Introduction of Students/Professor; Overview of Course topics & themes, Syllabus, etc.
Film: Fiddler on the Roof (clip in class)

Week #2 (9/9—9/11) Unit One—Part I: In the Beginning
Topics: Historical origins of East European Jews; traditions & culture
9/9 Readings: Heschel, “The East European Era in Jewish History” (eDisk)
9/11 Readings: Bartal, pp. 1-37
All Discussion Questions for the readings are located on eDisk

Week #3 (9/16—9/18) Unit One—Part II: Spiritual Revolution: The Birth of Hasidism
Topics: Origins, Teachings, & Culture of Hasidism; Depictions of & Opposition to Hasidism
9/16 Readings: Bartal, pp. 47-57; “The Hasidic Movement—Reality and Ideals,” (eDisk)
9/18 Readings: Dawidowicz, pp. 93-110; Hasidic texts, Bans of Hasidism (eDisk)

Week #4 (9/23—9/25) Unit One—Part III: The Culture of the Shtetl: Memories & Myths
Topics: Traditional characteristics of Jewish Shtetl life; constructing memories of the shtetl
9/23 Readings: “Portrait of a Shtetl,” Ain; Introduction to Life is With People (eDisk)

Unit Two—Transformation

Week #5 (10/2, No class on 9/30) Unit Two—Part I Beginnings of Modernization
Topics: Jews of Russia, Austria & Poland; Emancipation, Secularization & Modernization; Changes in traditional Jewish life
10/2 Readings: Bartal, pp.58-101
**Research Project Proposals due in class on 10/2

Week #6 (10/7) Unit Two—Part II: Enlightening the Shtetl: Between Tradition & Modernity
Topics: The Jewish Enlightenment Movement (Haskalah) and its Opponents; Modernization and Its Discontents
10/7 Readings: Bartal, pp. 102-133; Dawidowicz, pp. 113-129, 148-168;
10/9 No Class, Yom Kippur
Week #7 (10/14-10/16) Unit Two—Part III: From Shtetl to Socialism: New Jewish Movements

Topics: 1881 and its aftermath; Radical Jewish Movements, Socialism and Zionism; Secular Jewish Culture and Identity

10/14 Readings: Gitelman, pp. 1-41; “Two Jews, Three Opinions: Politics in the Shtetl at the Turn of the Century” (eDisk)
10/16 Readings: Dawidowicz, pp. 367-393, 405-434; Ansky, pp. 70-93 (“Sins of Youth” and “Hunger”)

Week #8 (No class on 10/21, Fall Break, 10/23) Unit Two—Part IV: Literature and Life

Topics: Rise of Modern Jewish Literature; the Crisis of modern Russian Jewry

10/23 Readings: Gitelman, pp. 42-58; Dawidowicz, pp. 281-297; Sholem Aleichem, pp. 135-163, 217-238

Week #9 (10/28-10/30) Unit Two—Part IV cont.: Classics of Yiddish Literature

Topics: Yiddish literature, Sholem Aleichem, Tevye the Dairyman

10/28 Readings: Tevye the Dairyman, pp. 3-69
10/30 Readings: Tevye the Dairyman, pp. 69-131

Film: Tevya (ATS) Film Response due in class on 10/30

Week #10 (11/4-11/6) Unit Two—Part V: Between Two Worlds

Topics: Secular Jewish Culture and the Arts

11/4 Readings: Ansky, Introduction and The Dybbuk (pp. 1-49)
11/6 Readings: Dawidowicz, pp. 321-332

Film: The Dybbuk (ATS) Film Response due in class on 11/6

Unit Three—Dissolution

Week #11 (11/11-11/13) Unit Three—Part I: War & Revolution

Topics: Jews and the Russian Revolution; Impact of World War One on Jewish life

11/11 Readings: Gitelman, pp. 59-87; Ansky, pp. 171-208
11/13 Readings: Babel, pp. 11-30 197-236, 311-333

Film: The Commissar (ATS) Film Response due in class on 11/13

Week #12 (11/18-11/20) Unit Three—Part II: Between the Wars

Topics: Jewish life in the Soviet Union & Poland between WWI & WWII

11/18 Readings: Gitelman, pp. 88-114; From Soviet and Kosher, pp. 1-43 (eDisk)
11/20 Readings: Babel, pp. 408-442

Film: Image Before My Eyes (ATS) Film Response due in class on 11/20

Week #13 (11/25) Unit Three—Part III: Destruction

Topics: World War Two and The Holocaust

Readings: Gitelman, pp. 115-143
Film: *The Pianist* (ATS) **Film Response due in class on 12/2**

**Week #14 (12/2-12/4) Unit Three—Part IV: Destruction & Return**

**Topics:** Jewish life in Eastern Europe during and after WWII; Student Presentations

**12/2 Readings:** Gitelman, pp. 144-173

**12/4 Readings:** TBA

**Week #15 (12/9-12/11) Student Presentations**

**No Readings**

**Research Projects due in class on 12/11**