

Professor Kathryn Hellerstein
748 Williams Hall/ 6305 215-898-7103
khellers@mail.sas.upenn.edu

GRMN261/JWST261/ENGL279/CINE 279/COML265
Spring 2014, University of Pennsylvania
TR 12-1:30; Page 1

Professor Kathryn Hellerstein
GRMN 261/ JWST 261/ ENGL 279/ CINE 279/ COML 265
JEWISH FILMS AND LITERATURE
University of Pennsylvania
Spring 2014

Tuesday-Thursday, 12-1:20 PM, Williams Hall 214

DESCRIPTION

From the 1922 silent film *Hungry Hearts* through the first "talkie," *The Jazz Singer*, produced in 1927, and beyond *Schindler's List* (1993), Jewish characters have confronted the problems of their Jewishness on the silver screen for a general American audience. Alongside this Hollywood tradition of Jewish film, Yiddish film blossomed from independent producers between 1911 and 1939, and interpreted literary masterpieces, from Shakespeare's *King Lear* to Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye the Dairyman* and Sholem Asch's *Uncle Moses* primarily for an immigrant, urban, Jewish audience.

In this course, we will study a number of films and their literary sources (in fiction and drama), focusing on English-language and Yiddish films within the framework of three problems of interpretation: a) the different ways we "read" literature and film; b) the various ways that the media of fiction, drama, and film "translate" Jewish culture; and c) how these translations of Jewish culture affect and are affected by their implied audience.

SYLLABUS:

TEXTS:

Buy at the Penn Book Center (130 South 34th Street) (215-222-7600) **or read in Rosengarten**

- Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories*, trans. and ed. Hillel Halkin (Schocken, 1987, 0-8052-0905-0)
- Joseph Stein, *Fiddler on the Roof; Based on Sholem Aleichem's Stories* (Limelight Eds, 1990, 0-87910-136-9)
- Abraham Cahan, *Yekl and The Imported Bridegroom* (New York: Dover, 1970)
- Anzia Yezierska, *How I Found America: Collected Stories of Anzia Yezierska* (New York: Persea, 1991)
- Philip Roth, *Goodbye Columbus* (Vintage, 1987) (1959)
- Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Enemies: A Love Story* (Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1972)
- *Coursepack*, available on Blackboard

FILMS:

- The 15 films we will watch this semester will be screened according to the schedule on the syllabus. One copy of each is also on reserve in Rosengarten in Van Pelt Library. Many of

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these films can also be rented from Netflix or found on YouTube.

- At the end of the syllabus, you will find a list of the films and the dates and places they will be screened.
- **Watch each film at least once, either at the film screenings (below), on reserve at Rosengarten, or if possible rent the film yourself (Netflix, etc.).**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- ❖ Grades will be based on:
 - Class attendance, preparation (reading and watching films), and participation (10%)
 - Informal response papers, pop-quizzes, class summaries, discussion questions (as assigned) (10%);
 - Two short essays (4-5 pp.) (20% each)
 - One final essay (10-12 pp.) (40%).
- ❖ **N. B.: The syllabus includes 2 required meetings outside of class:**
 - Monday, Feb. 1, 7-10 PM, SCREEN 2 DOCUMENTARIES. **Place TBA**
 - Wednesday, April 9, Freedman Jewish Sound Archive, Van Pelt Library. **Exact time TBA)**

SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Jewish??? Films??? Literature???

1/16/2014 Introduction and Background
Delmore Schwartz, "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities"
Mel Brooks, *History of the World: Part One* (1981)

PART I: THE CULTURAL AGENDA OF TRANSLATION: FROM THE SHTETL TO HOLLYWOOD

Week 2: How to Read a Yiddish Classic (in English)

1/21 Discussion:
READING: Sholem Aleichem, "Tevye the Dairyman," in *Tevye the Dairyman and the Railroad Stories*, trans. and ed. Hillel Halkin, pp. 3-131. (Focus on "Tevye Strikes it Rich," "Hodl," "Chava," "Lekh-Lekho")

1/23 Sholem Aleichem, continued

Week 3: From Page to Screen, From Europe to America

1/27 FILM: Screening of *Tevye*, (96 minutes) 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402

1/28 Discussion of *Tevye* (96 minutes) (USA, 1939), dir. Maurice Schwartz.

1/30 Discussion:

READING: In Bulkpack:

Seth L. Wolitz, "The Americanization of Tevye or Boarding the Jewish *Mayflower*," *American Quarterly* (December, 1988) 40, 4, 514-36.

Week 4: *Jews in Hollywood; Tevye on Broadway; AND A Yiddish Film Goes Hollywood*

2/3 Screening of *Shadows in Paradise: Hitler's Exiles in Hollywood and The Brothers Warner*; 7-10 PM [makeup class] in COHN 402

Screen dvds of 2 DVDs:

- *Shadows in Paradise: Hitler's Exiles in Hollywood* (2008, USA, 60 min., Peter Rosen, dir.)
- *The Brothers Warner* (2008, 60 min., Cass Warner, director, USA)

2/4 Discussion: READING: Joseph Stein, *Fiddler on the Roof* (play)

2/5 FILM: Screening of *Fiddler on the Roof* (3 hours) 7-10 PM in DRLB room A2

2/6 Discussion:

READING: Joseph Stein, *Fiddler on the Roof* (play) (continued)

FILM: *Fiddler on the Roof* (3 hours) (USA, 1971), dir. Norman Jewison; and screenplay Joseph Stein, based on the play by Joseph Stein and the Tevye stories by Sholem Aleichem.

PART II: THE ORDEAL OF AMERICANIZATION

Week 5: OLD WORLD, NEW ROMANCE

2/11 *The Literary Version, 1896*

Discussion:

READING: Abraham Cahan, *Yekl* (pp. 1-89)

2/13 Discussion: Cahan, *Yekl*

Week 6: The Film Version, 1975

2/17 Screening of *Hester Street*, (90 minutes), 7-8:30 PM in COHN 402

2/18 Discussion:

FILM: *Hester Street* (1975, 90 min., US, Joan Micklin Silver)

2/20 Discussion continued, *Hester Street*
FIRST SHORT ESSAY DUE (4-5 PP.)

Week 7: SWEATSHOP AND STRANGE LOVE-- Literary, 1918; Film, 1932

2/24 Screening: *Uncle Moses*, (87 min.), 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402

2/25 Discussion:
READING: In Bulkpack:
Sholem Asch, *Uncle Moses* (1918), from *Three Novels*, trans. Elsa Krauch (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1938, pp. 3-176).
FILM: *Uncle Moses* (1932, 87 min., US, dir. Maurice Schwartz)

Week 8: A WOMAN GOES TO HOLLYWOOD—The Literary Version and the Film Version, 1920s

2/27 Discussion:
READING: Anzia Yezierska, *Hungry Hearts* in *How I Found America* (pp. 1-129). Also “The Picture of the Century” and “My Life—A Column a Day” (from *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*, pp. 41-55 and 75-82, in BULKPACK).

3/3 Screening: *Hungry Hearts* (80 min.), 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402

3/4 Discussion:
FILM: *Hungry Hearts* (USA, 1922) (silent), producer Samuel Goldwyn Company, dir. E. Mason Hopper, screenplay Julian Josephson, based on book *Hungry Hearts* by Anzia Yezierska. (80 minutes)

Week 9: THE FIRST TALKIE—Literary Versions and the Film, 1920s

3/6 Discuss: READING: (in the Bulkpack)

- "Day of Atonement," Samson Raphaelson (short story), from *The Jazz Singer*, Robert L. Carringer, ed. University of Wisconsin Press, 1979 (Wisconsin-Warner Screenplay Series, pp. 147-167).
- Selection from the theater play, Samson Raphaelson, *The Jazz Singer* (NY: Brentano's, 1925, pp. 119-153). (Act III)
- Selection from the screenplay, Alfred A. Cohn, adaptation and continuity, from the screenplay by Samson Raphaelson, *The Jazz Singer*, in Robert L. Carringer, ed. University of Wisconsin Press, 1979 (Wisconsin-Warner Screenplay Series, pp. 124-133).

3/11 AND 3/13 NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK!

3/17 Screening: *The Jazz Singer* (89 min.), 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402

3/18 Discussion:
FILM: *The Jazz Singer* (1927, 89 min., US, Alan Crosland) (Al Jolson)

PART III: AMERICAN VISIONS OF ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE HOLOCAUST

Three Films—1947, 1965, 1993

Week 10:

3/19 **Screening: *Gentleman's Agreement* (118 min.), 7-9:30 in DRBL room A2**

3/20 Discussion:
FILM: *Gentlemen's Agreement* (1947, 118 min., US, Elia Kazan)

3/24 **Screening of *The Pawnbroker* (116 min.), 7-9 PM in COHN 402**

3/25 Discussion:
FILM: *The Pawnbroker* (US 1965) 116 minutes b/w, Sidney Lumet

Week 11:

3/26 **Screening of *Schindler's List* (1993, 185 min), 7-10: 15 PM in DRBL room A2**

3/27 Discussion:
FILM: *Schindler's List* (1993, 185 min., US Steven Spielberg)

4/1 Discussion:
READING: Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Enemies: A Love Story* (Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1972)

Week 12:

4/2 **Screening: *Enemies: A Love Story* (119 min) 7-9:30 PM, in DRBL room A2**

4/3 Discussion:
FILM: *Enemies: A Love Story* (film) (1989, 119 min., US. Paul Mazursky)

PART IV: ACCULTURATION, ASSIMILATION, ETHNICITY

Week 13: *Becoming Middle Class—the Literary Version, 1959, and Film Version, 1969*

4/8 Discussion:
READING: Philip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus* (novella) (1959)
SECOND SHORT ESSAY DUE (4-5 PP.)

4/9 **MAKE-UP CLASS #2--Time and Place TBA: “Yiddish Songs in Context”—Robert Freedman, Penn’s Robert and Molly Freedman Jewish Sound Archive**

4/10 Discussion:

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READING: Philip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus* (novella) (1959) continued

4/15 NO CLASS—PASSOVER

4/16 Screening: *Goodbye, Columbus* (105 min), 7-9 PM in DRBL room A2

4/17 Discussion:
FILM: *Goodbye, Columbus* (1969, 105 min., US, Larry Peerce)

4/22 NO CLASS—PASSOVER

Week 14: *Jews and Others—Comedy and Changes, 1970s-1980s*
4/23 Screening of *Annie Hall*, (94 min.) 7-9 PM in DRBL room A2

4/24 Discussion:
FILM: *Annie Hall* (Woody Allen) (1977, 94 min., US, Woody Allen)

Week 15: *Yiddish Dybbuks, Jewish Comedy in 2009*
4/28 Screening of *A Serious Man* (2009) 7-9 PM in DRBL room A2

4/29 Discussion:
FILM: *A Serious Man* (2009, 105 min., Dir. Joel and Ethan Coen)

5/9 FINAL PAPER DUE (10-12 PP.) 12 PM

SCREENINGS OF FILMS FOR JEWISH FILMS AND LITERATURE, SPRING 2014

On Campus: in COHN 402 OR DRLB A2

SPRING 2014

- 1/27 Screening of *Tevye*, (96 minutes) 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402
- 2/3 Screening of *Shadows in Paradise: Hitler's Exiles in Hollywood and The Brothers Warner*; 7-10 PM [makeup class] in COHN 402
- 2/5 Screening of *Fiddler on the Roof* (3 hours) 7-10 PM in DRLB room A2
- 2/17 Screening of *Hester Street*, (90 minutes), 7-8:30 PM in COHN 402
- 2/24 Screening: *Uncle Moses*, (87 min.), 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402
- 3/3 Screening: *Hungry Hearts* (80 min.), 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402
- 3/17 Screening: *The Jazz Singer* (89 min.), 7-9:00 PM in COHN 402
- 3/19 Screening: *Gentleman's Agreement* (118 min.), 7-9:30 in DRLB room A2
- 3/24 Screening of *The Pawnbroker* (116 min.), 7-9 PM in COHN 402
- 3/26 Screening of *Schindler's List* (1993, 185 min), 7-10: 15 PM in DRLB room A2
- 4/2 Screening: *Enemies: A Love Story* (119 min) 7-9:30 PM, in DRLB room A2
- 4/16 Screening: *Goodbye, Columbus* (105 min), 7-9 PM in DRLB room A2
- 4/23 Screening of *Annie Hall*, (94 min.) 7-9 PM in DRLB room A2
- 4/28 Screening of *A Serious Man* (2009) 7-9 PM DRLB room A2

SECONDARY SOURCES

Bernheimer, Kathryn, *50 Greatest Jewish Movies; A Critic's Ranking of the Very Best* (Carol Pub. Group, 1998), 240 pp.
(Not in Van Pelt)

Dessner, David and Lester D. Friedman, eds., *American-Jewish Filmmakers: Traditions and Trends* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1993) (318 pp.)
PN1998.2.D47 1993

Erens, Patricia, *The Jew in American Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1985)
(OP)
PN 1995. 9. J46. E7 1984

Friedman, Lester D. *The Jewish Image in American Films; Seventy Years of Hollywood's Vision of Jewish Characters and Themes*, Carol Pub. Group, 1987.

Friedman, Lester D. *Hollywood's Image of the Jew* (1982) PN 1995.9.J46.F7

Friedman, Lester and Diane Carson, eds., *Shared Differences: Multicultural Media and Practical Pedagogy* PN 1995.9.M56.S52.1995

Friedman, Lester and ? ,eds., *Unspeakable Images: Ethnicity and American Cinema*
PN 1995.9. M56 U57 1991

Hoberman, J. *Bridge of Light: Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds* (NYC: MOMA and Schocken, 1991. (PUT ON RESERVE)

Hoberman, J. and Jeffrey Shandler, *Entertaining America: Jews, Movies, and Broadcasting* (New York and Princeton: Jewish Museum and Princeton UP, 2003)

Rogin, Michael, *Blackface, White Noise; Jewish Immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1998) (pb).
PN 1995.9.N4.R64.1996

"Day of Atonement," Samson Raphaelson (short story), and "The Jazz Singer" (screenplay), Alfred A. Cohn, adaptation and continuity, in Robert L. Carringer, from *The Jazz Singer*, Robert L. Carringer, ed. University of Wisconsin Press, 1979 (Wisconsin-Warner Screenplay Series), pp. 147-167 and 124-133.
PN1997. J353. J3

Selection from the play, *The Jazz Singer*, Samson Raphaelson (NY: Brentano's, 1925) PS
3535 A66 J3 1925

Michael Alexander, *Jazz Age Jews* (Princeton, 2001)