

HISTORY OF JEWISH LANGUAGES

MES/JS/LING 326

Spring 2006 (114 Candler library)

TT 1:00-2:15

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Content: Around the world, wherever Jews have lived, they have spoken somewhat differently from the non-Jews around them. Their languages have differed by as little as the addition of a few Hebrew words or by so much that they are largely unintelligible to outsiders. This class explores this spectrum of Jewish linguistic practice, including languages like Judeo-Arabic, Yiddish and Judeo-Spanish, as well as the use of Yiddish words among secular Jews in America today.

The following issues will be dealt with through lectures, discussions, readings, and assignments:

- How do Jews distinguish themselves linguistically from non-Jews?
- What constitutes a Jewish language?
- What are the differences between a language, a dialect and a religiolect/ethnolect?
- What are some similarities and differences between Jewish languages in different times and places?
- How are Jewish languages different from the related non-Jewish languages, and in what ways are they bearers of Jewish culture?
- How does language help to construct identity and create community boundaries?

In addition, students will obtain some basic skills of linguistics and dialectology.

Course Requirements:

- No knowledge of any specific language is required. No prerequisites.
- Students are expected to **attend class regularly** and arrive in class on time. Students must **complete all assigned readings** before the class meeting and be prepared to **participate actively in discussions** of the readings. They are also expected to attend a few out-of-class activities, such as films and lectures.

- Students are required to **turn in all written assignments on the dates scheduled**. Late work will not be accepted.
- Assignments:
 - 1) Three **tests**.
 - 2) Eight **two-page reports**, due on the Tuesday of weeks 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12, on the readings and issues discussed in class during the previous two to four sessions. It is best to focus on one main topic in the reports. Students should begin to develop their own interpretations and responses to the materials and topics. The instructors will read and respond to these assignments on a weekly basis.
 - 3) A **bibliography** of at least 12 entries, of which a minimum of 5 must be annotated. The topic of the bibliography should focus on one Jewish language or on one major issue in Jewish linguistics. This assignment is due on **February 9**.
 - 4) An **in-class oral presentation** (using PowerPoint or the like) on a language. Students will also submit **a single page abstract, with a formal outline** of the presentation as well as a bibliography of the works cited (if different from the bibliographical assignment).
 - 5) A **final writing project** (15-20 pages), written in stages throughout the semester. A two-page proposal with bibliography is due on **February 21**; a five-page abstract and detailed outline on **March 9**; and a rough draft on **April 4**. Revisions will be graded and will be based on instructors' evaluations and suggestions for improvement (including grammar, style, etc.). Final paper is due on **April 27**.

Composition of Final Grade:

Two-page reports & class participation	15%
bibliographical assignment	10%
in-class presentation	10%
writing project	35%
tests	30%

Please make sure to visit the website www.jewish-languages.org
The course satisfies the GER V.C.2.

Absence: Attendance in class is required. Absences can be excused for medical reasons (with a note from your doctor or health service) or for participation in official school functions (with a note from the Dean). Three (3) unexcused absences will lower your final grade by one-half letter grade; six unexcused absences will lower your grade by one full letter, and so forth.

Cell phones must be turned off before entering the classroom.

Honor Code

The Emory College Honor Code is in force at all times in this class.

See http://www.college.emory.edu/current/standards/honor_code.html (esp. Article 4)

Week 1

Introduction

Thursday, January 19 Course objectives and requirements
 Overview of Jewish communities and languages around the world
 and throughout history

Readings:

TH Birnbaum 1971; Hary 1992: Jewish Languages, 71-74; Lowenstein 2000: Chapter 1.

Week 2

Introduction to linguistics I

Tuesday, January 24 Linguistics and dialectology; Language/dialect/variety/religiolect/
 ethnolect/idiolect; style shifting, levels and registers
Two-page report is due

Thursday, January 26 Phonetics I

Readings:

TU Wardhaugh 2002: 1-38.

TH Yule 2003: Chapters 20-21.

Week 3

Introduction to linguistics II

Tuesday, January 31 Phonetics II
Two-page report is due

Thursday, February 2 **Test #1**

Readings:

TU Yule 2003: Chapters 5-6.

Week 4

Components of Jewish languages

Tuesday, February 7 What is a Jewish language/variety/religiolect? The continuum of
 Jewish languages

Thursday, February 9 Hebrew/Aramaic components
Bibliography is due

Readings:

TU Myhill 2004: 1-57 (**GR** — the whole book); Weinreich 1980: Chapter 2, Yiddish in the
 Context of Jewish Languages.

TH Hary 1999: 67-91; Sabar 1999: 387-397; Schwarzwald 1985: 139-156.

Week 5

Hebrew and Aramaic

Tuesday, February 14

The Semitic language family
 Periodization of Hebrew
Two-page report is due

Thursday, February 16

Aramaic as a Semitic language
Presentation 1: The revival of spoken modern Hebrew
Presentation 2: Jewish Neo-Aramaic

Readings:

TU Bar-Asher 1999; Freedman 1992: 155-162; Halevi 2002; Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 1-28 (**GR** also 50-56; 76-86, 112-129; 202-209, 267-277).

TH Neo-Aramaic in EJ; Harshav 1993, Chapters 17-30.

Week 6

Judeo-Arabic

Tuesday, February 21

Periodization, orthography, status
Proposal and bibliography for Final Writing Project are due

Thursday, February 23

Two case studies:
 The Jews of Cairo (The Purim of the Cairene Jewish Community)
 The Jews of Sefrou

Readings:

TU Hary 1995: 73-82; Hary 1996; Khan 2002.

TH Hary 1992: 79-86; 103-114; 115-129; 204-215; 233-239; Stillman 1988. 12-30.

Week 7

Bible and liturgical text translations

Tuesday, February 28

Bible translations and standardization of languages
 The Judeo-Arabic *Sharh*
Two-page report is due

Thursday, March 2

Translations in other languages
 Diglossia, multiglossia and continuuglossia in Judeo-Arabic
 Jewish languages in diglossia with Hebrew

Readings

TU Hary 2000; Hary, Wein 2005.

TH Hary 2003; Ferguson 1959; Jochnowitz 1985; Schwarzwald 1990[92]; Selections about Yiddish *Taytsh* (TBA).

Week 8

Yiddish

Tuesday, March 7

The history of Yiddish
Presentation 3: Yiddish
Two-page report is due

Thursday, March 9

Film: *A Shlemiel, the Shlamazel and the Poppess – Yiddish*
Abstract and detailed outline of Final Writing Project are due

Readings:

Herzog. 1978; Katz 1985; Kuznitz 2002; Pilowski 1985; **GR** Yiddish Language.

Week 9

Jewish Languages I

Tuesday, March 21

Presentation 4: Judeo-French and Judeo-Provençal
Presentation 5: Judeo-Italian and Judeo-Portuguese
Presentation 6: Judeo-Greek and Judeo-Berber
Two-page report is due

Thursday, March 23

Judeo-Spanish, Hakitiya
Presentation 7: Judeo-Spanish

Readings:

TU Judeo-Berber; Judeo-French; Judeo-Greek; Judeo-Italian; Judeo-Provençal – all in EJ;
 Jochonowitz 1978; Kiddle 1978.

TH Harris 1982; Ladino in EJ; Schwarzwald 2002. **GU** Sephiha 1985.

Week 10

Comparative Jewish linguistics

Tuesday, March 28

Comparative Jewish linguistics
Two-page report is due

Thursday, March 30

Test #2

Readings:

TU Birnbaum. 1979; Benor 2005; Bunis 1981; Stillman 1991. **GR** Fishman 1985: 3-20; Wexler 1981: 101-138.

Week 11

Jewish languages II

Tuesday, April 4

The Karaites

Presentation 8: The languages of the Karaites

The Jews of India

Presentation 9: Jewish Malayalam

Rough draft of Final Writing Project is due

Thursday, April 6

Film: TBA

Presentation 10: Judeo-Persian, Judeo-Tat and Judeo-Tajik

Readings:

TU Selections about the Karaites and the Jews of India (TBA); India Diaspora (on reserve).

TH Judeo-Persian; Judeo-Tat – in EJ; Khan 2002.

Week 12

Language, ethnicity and religion

Tuesday, April 11

How do we understand the connection between language, ethnicity and religion?

Two-page report is due

Thursday, April 13

Passover – no class

Readings:

Rickford and Rickford 2000

Week 13

Tuesday, April 18

Test #3

Thursday, April 20

Passover – no class

Week 14

Jewish English

Tuesday, April 25

Jewish English

Submit ten examples of Jewish English (instructions in class)

Thursday, April 27

Students' presentations

Final Writing Project is due

Readings:

Benor 2001; Gold 1985.

*Have a Productive Semester
And Good Luck!!!*

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