

So, Nu?

7+ Awesome Reasons to Study Yiddish at UCLA!

1. There's no culture more unique in the world: *for centuries it flourished on every continent and produced a wealth of literature, music, folk expressions, humor, and creative influences on other cultures.*

2. Yiddish at UCLA is Exceptional: *Yiddish has been taught at UCLA for over 40 years, and UCLA is the ONLY university in the world that offers a class in Yiddish film, and one of the few that (will soon) have a Chair in Yiddish. UCLA also has one of the largest holdings of Yiddish books, with over 20,000 volumes!*

3. You're interested in Jewish Music: *Yiddish has an extensive repertoire of music, from folk, theater and art songs, to lullabies and rousing anthems. Yiddish is key to contemporary klezmer and informs the work of avant-garde Jewish musicians worldwide.*

4. You're interested in Comparative Literature: *Many great works of Jewish literature were written in Yiddish: Sholem Aleichem's Tevye stories (a.k.a. "Fiddler", the most staged play in the world); S. Ansky's ghostly play, "The Dybbuk"; Y.L. Peretz's stories; the Nobel Laureate I. B. Singer's novels, etc.. Modern Yiddish writers created dazzling avant-garde and emotionally resonant poetry. Yiddish lit dates back to the 1400's, when best sellers, from Aesop's Fables to King Arthur, were rendered in Yiddish versions. Writers are still publishing new works of Yiddish literature today.*

5. You're interested in Theater and Film: *The Yiddish theater repertoire encompasses hi-brow and low-brow dramas, comedies, and musicals. In the early 20th Century, Yiddish theater artists were among the most innovative performers in the world; in the US, Yiddish theater had an enormous influence on American theater. Today, Yiddish plays are still being performed in cities in the Americas, Israel, and Europe, and there's probably even one in English translation on NY's Off-Broadway right now.*

6. You want to see another side to the Holocaust: *Most of the Jews caught up in the Holocaust were Yiddish speakers. Many used Yiddish as a form of spiritual resistance and to help mount an armed resistance: keeping diaries, writing songs to raise morale, communicating across national language barriers, and keeping precise records of holding onto humanity in the face of genocide. After World War II, survivors wrote some of the first responses to the Holocaust— memoirs, histories, poems, even films — in Yiddish.*

7. You're interested in American Jewish History and Culture: *Yiddish sources are invaluable for understanding Jewish life in the United States. The vast majority of Jews living in the US today are descendants of Yiddish-speaking immigrants who came from E. Europe in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In Yiddish these immigrants created their own American culture: theater, newspapers, cabarets, novels, popular songs, humor, political organizations, schools, clubs, radio broadcasts, poetry, movies. It remains to this day one of the most important examples of American culture created in a language other than English.*

So, nu? Become a real maven and enroll in Yiddish 101A in Fall 2013!

Tu Th 11 - 12:50 Rolfe 3115 Instructor: Miri Koral

+ More reasons? Keep reading:

8. You're interested in Jewish folklore: Yiddish is wealthy in folktales, riddles, proverbs, jokes, folk songs, Purim plays, and other forms of traditional Jewish folk culture from around the globe.

9. You're interested in Women's and Gender Studies: Yiddish has long had special associations with women's culture in Ashkenazic Jewry. Yiddish books were often published especially for women readers, offering access to the Bible and its commentaries, Jewish law and customs, and prayer. Jewish women writers turned to Yiddish to write memoirs, fiction, and poetry. The relationship of Yiddish and Hebrew in modern cultural politics has revealing implications for the gendering of Jewish life.

10. You're interested in Diaspora studies: Yiddish culture is an exemplary unique diasporic phenomenon. For centuries, Yiddish language and lore served as a "portable culture" that Jews took with them across Europe, the Americas, Israel, Australia, South Africa, and China. Scholarship on Yiddish-speaking communities sheds important light on how this and other diasporas work.

11. You're interested in Jewish life in Israel: Yiddish has been spoken by Jews living in Palestine and Israel for several centuries. For years, Yiddish was more widely spoken than Hebrew, and Yiddish was a major influence on the grammar, idioms, and vocabulary of the Hebrew spoken in Israel today. There is a growing interest in Yiddish language and culture among younger Israelis.

12. You're interested in modern Jewish politics: In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Yiddish played a key role in developing modern Jewish (and non-Jewish) political movements, promoting a wide array of political ideas— Zionism, socialism, communism, anarchism, Diaspora nationalism. Yiddish played a key role in organizing Jewish political parties and trade unions, and also provided a voice for Orthodox Jewish responses to modern political ideas.

13. You're interested in Jewish religious life: For centuries, Yiddish enabled the study of religious texts, explaining Jewish law and custom, and prayer. Yiddish translations of the Bible and other sacred texts reveal how generations of Jews have interpreted scripture. Yiddish books on Jewish religious practice demonstrate how Jews have understood laws and developed local customs.

14. You're interested in secular Jewish life:

Yiddish-speaking Jews pioneered the creation of a modern Jewish culture that celebrates the history and creativity of Jews separate from religious life. Secular Yiddish culture has thrived in Eastern Europe, Israel, and the Americas. During the 20th century, secular Yiddishists in the United States created their own school systems, summer camps, choirs, political organizations, and rituals.

15. You're interested in Hasidism: Yiddish was the daily language of the first hasidim, and the language has played a key role in Hasidic spirituality ever since. Legends about the Baal Shem Tov and other *rebeyim* were first told in Yiddish, as were the mystical tales of Nahman of Bratslav. Today, Yiddish is the vernacular employed by most Hasidim around the world, who believe that use of the language sanctifies their daily life.

If you sit at home, you won't wear out your boots! *Az men zitzt in der heym tserayst men nit di shtivl*

אויב מען זיצט אין דער היים, צערײַסט מען ניט די שטייחול! שטייחול!

