

The Jewish Theological Seminary of America  
Graduate School

Spring 2004      LIT. 5518 Introduction to Yiddish Folklore      David G. Roskies  
Monday 10:20-12:10

**Objectives:** This course begins with an historical-methodological overview of Yiddish folkloristics from the beginning of the twentieth century until the present and proceeds from there to examine the life and lore of ordinary folk, male and female, young and old, pious and deviant, at work and play, in good times and bad, in the Old World and the New.

**Requirements:** One mid-term paper, 8-10 pages in length, due on March 22, and a final, take-home examination. All the readings for this course are contained in the two-part course packet, which you may purchase from the Faculty Secretary on the 8th floor of the Tower. Students who are Yiddishly-challenged may pair up with a study-partner.

### I. Schools

26 Jan.      *The Gay Science of Folklore*

Steven M. Lowenstein - Folk Traditions (2000)  
Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett - Problems in the Early History  
of Jewish Folkloristics (1989)

2 Feb.      *Ethnopoetics*

Irina Serheyeva - Kiev Collection of S. An-sky's Manuscripts (2001)  
S. Yudovin - Yidisher folks-ornament (1920)  
S. Ansky - Di yidishe folksshafung (1908)  
S. Ansky - Mutual Influences between Christians and Jews (1920)  
L. I. Shternberg & S. Ansky - Questionnaire (1913)

9 Feb.

***Marxism***

Susan A. Slotnick - The Contributions of the Soviet Yiddish Folklorists (1976)

H. Aleksandrov - Forsht ayer shtet! (1928)

Moshe Beregovski - Jewish Folk Music (1934)

23 Feb.

***The Pan-Ashkenaz School***

Mordecai Kossover - Yidishe maykholim (1958)

Isaac Rivkind - Yidishe gelt (1959)

1 Mar.

***Regionalism***

Steven M. Lowenstein - Regional Cultures (2000)

N. Weinig - Organizatsye un arbet fun an etnografishn krayz (1934)

Uriel Weinreich - Culture Geography at a Distance (1962)

Uriel Weinreich - Yiddish and Colonial German in Eastern Europe (1958)

8 Mar.

***Structuralism***

Axel Olrik - Epic Laws of Folk Narrative (1908)

Beatrice Silverman Weinreich - Genres and Types of Yiddish Folk Tales about the Prophet Elijah (1965)

Beatrice Silverman Weinreich - Toward a Structural Analysis of Yiddish Proverbs (1961-77)

15 Mar.

***Performance***

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett - The Concept and Varieties of Narrative Performance in East European Jewish Culture (1974)

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett - Performance of precepts/precepts of performance: Hasidic celebrations of Purim in Brooklyn (1990)

In-class analysis of Act II of Ansky's *The Dybbuk* (Poland, 1937)

## II. Settings

22 Mar.     *The Shtetl*

Alla Sokolova - The Podolian Shtetl as Architectural Phenomenon  
(2000)

**Writing Assignment:** Sokolova's shtetl ethnography in the light of Yiddish folkloristics.

29 Mar.     *The Heder*

Yekhiel Shtern - A Kheyder in Tyszowce (1950)  
S. Bastomski - Yidishe folksretenishn (1923)  
Sh. Lehman - Di kindervelt (1923)  
Diane Roskies - Alphabet Instruction in the East European Heder  
(1978)  
Beatrice Silverman Weinreich - Problemen un uvdes baym forshn  
yidishe retenishn (2003)

19 Apr.     *Purim and Parody*

E. Lifschutz - Merrymakers and Jesters among Jews (1930)  
M. Beregovski - Jewish Musical-Theatrical Folk Performance (1949)  
Mekhires-yoysef-shpil (1940)

26 Apr.     *Urban Ghettos*

Sh. Lehman - Ganovim un gneyve (1923)  
Shimon Huberband - Ghetto Folklore (1941)  
Sh. Shaynkinder - Af di gasn (1941)  
I. Kaplan - Dos folksmoyl in natsi-klem (1948)  
Gila Flam - Singing for Survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto,  
1940-45 (1992)

6 May

*Immigration*

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett - Studying Immigrant and Ethnic Folklore (1983)

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett - Culture Shock and Narrative Creativity (1978)

Mark Slobin - Tenement Songs: The Popular Music of the Jewish Immigrants (1982)