


YIDC02 - Jiddischfilmens guldålder: En introduktion till judisk kultur, 15 högskolepoäng

The Golden Age of Yiddish Cinema: An Introduction to Jewish Culture, 15 credits 

VT 2021 - Thursday 15:00-18:00

Dr. Jan Schwarz, Associate Professor
Centre for Languages and Literatures
Helgonabacken 12
Lund University
P.O. Box 201,
SE-221 00, Lund, Sweden

Jan.Schwarz@sol.lu.se

Office: Absalon 309B

Ph. +46462227393

+46723616161 (mobil)

Requirements:

There will be reviews of the films (1-2 pages each) and exam (hemtenta). Also, a term paper (max 10 pages) about a Yiddish film that is presented at the end of the course. The term paper and reviews can be submitted in Swedish or English. The Canvas platform will be used to exchange messages and information. The students are required to give notice to the teacher if prevented from attending the class. The course will be taught on-line via zoom.

Course description:

Eight Yiddish films introduce the main tenets of modern Jewish culture in Central-and Eastern Europe, the USA, Russia (until 1917) and the Soviet-union during the first half of the twentieth century: the golden age of the Yiddish cinema.

The Yiddish cinema is a fascinating expression of the world of Ashkenazi Jewish culture during a turbulent period of rapid social, political, and cultural change. The primary aim is to demonstrate how the films feature the main tenets of Jewish life in the first half of the twentieth century: emigration, break-

up of the traditional family, secularization, revolution, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

Three of the films are based on Yiddish literary and dramaturgical works which will be introduced and compared with the film versions (Tevye the Dairyman, Uncle Moses, and The Dybbuk). Holocaust commemoration and trauma in Poland are the main themes in the only post-war film, Our Children, 1947.

All the films will be shown with English subtitles and be made available via YouTube and/or DVD.

Syllabus:

February 4: 15.00-18.00 – Introduction

Screening: The Yiddish Cinema, 1991. Narrated by David Mamet. 60 min.

February 11: 15.00-18.00 – Introduction to Modern Jewish Culture: The Golden

Age of Yiddish Cinema

February 18: 15.00-18.00 – A Yiddish Silent Movie: Molly Picon
East and West Austria 1923

February 25: 15.00-18.00 – The Lower East Side of New York: Scholem
Asch's Novel
Uncle Moses USA 1930

March 4: 15.00-18.00 - A Yiddish Musical: Itzik Manger
Yiddle with his Fiddle. Poland 1936

March 11: 15.00-18.00 – The Jewish Romeo and Juliette: Sh. Ansky's
Mystery Drama
The Dybbuk. Poland 1937

March 18: 15.00-18.00 – Jewish Tradition and Folklore
The Purim Player Poland 1937

March 25: 15.00-18.00 – Tevye the Dairyman: Scholem Aleykhem's
Monologues
Tevye the Dairyman USA 1939

April 1: 15.00-18.00 – Jewish Enlightenment vs. Tradition
The Vilna Town Cantor USA 1940

April 8: 15.00-18.00 – Holocaust Trauma and Comedy:
Our Children Poland 1947

April 15: 16.00-18.00 - Yiddish Cinema in the 21th Century

April 22: 16.00-18.00 - Presentation of film projects

April 29: 16.00-18.00 - Submission of term paper/take home exam

Secondary sources

The Digital Yiddish Theater Project: <https://yiddishstage.org>

The books are available in the SOL and University Library.

J. Hoberman, 1991. Bridge of Light: Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds. The Museum of Modern Art. New York.

Choosing Yiddish: New Frontiers of Language and Culture. Eds Shiri Goren Rabinovitch, and Hannah S. Pressman. Wayne State UP 2013.

Juri Slezkine, The Jewish Century Princeton UP 2004.

Benjamin Harshav, The Polyphony of Jewish Culture. Stanford UP 2007.

Eric A. Goldman, Visions, Images and Dreams: Yiddish Film – Past & Present. Homes & Meier Publishers 2011.