

English 563.003/Jewish Studies 490.006  
TR 9:30-10:45 in 4208 White

Prof. Susan Bernstein  
6115 White/R 11:00-1:00  
sdbernst@wisc.edu

## Transatlantic Jewish Literature



“Immigrant Seder” London, 1900

### Description

Just as current trends in literary studies explore literature across national and hemispheric boundaries, this course investigates a transatlantic diasporic Jewish dialogue through authors who wrote about Jewishness in Europe and in the North America. The first half of the course focuses on the work of three Victorian Anglo-Jewish writers from London, Grace Aguilar, Amy Levy, and Israel Zangwill, including his play “The Melting Pot,” first performed exactly a century ago in New York in 1908. Then we turn to turn-of-the century immigrants in New York. Finally, we’ll read Eva Hoffman’s post-Holocaust *Lost in Translation* about her passage from Poland to Canada. Among the topics we will discuss are culture and religion; cosmopolitanism, diaspora, and national culture; the critical analysis of race; patriotism, antisemitism, philosemitism, semitic discourse, and multiculturalism; and the meanings of conversion, and acculturation or assimilation in the history and politics of identity. This is a **Writing Fellows** course designed for students with some experience in literary analysis and substantial interest in theories of identity, race, gender, and religion, and Jewish cultural studies.

### Requirements

Class attendance, active participation, and 7 commentaries	25%
Two 5-7pp double-spaced papers	50%
One “Crossing” project and final paper	25%

### Required Texts (Available at A Room of One’s Own, 307 W. Johnson St.)

Grace Aguilar, *Grace Aguilar: Selected Writing* (Broadview)  
Amy Levy, *Reuben Sachs* (Broadview)  
Israel Zangwill, *Children of the Ghetto* (Wayne State)  
Abraham Cahan, *Yekl and The Imported Bridegroom* (Dover)  
Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* (Persea)  
Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation* (Penguin)

**Course reader** for English 563/Jewish Studies 490 (Bernstein) at Printex, 627 State Street. for \$13.02

## Calendar for English 563.003/Jewish Studies 490.006

\* = in course reader \*\*LINK in L@UW **boldface** = work due

### I. Introduction: Jewishness, history, identity, language

- Jan. 22 T Course Introductions  
Jan. 24 R \*Sara R. Horowitz, "The Paradox of Jewish Studies in the New Academy"  
\*Nadia Valman, "Semitism and Criticism: Victorian Anglo-Jewish Literary History"

### II. From Romance to Revolt to Revision in Victorian England: Aguilar, Levy, and Zangwill

- Jan. 29 T Aguilar, "The Escape" and *The Perez Family* (pp. 61-179)  
**commentary 1**  
Jan. 31 R Aguilar, from *The Spirit of Judaism* (pp. 211-46)  
Aguilar, from *The Jewish Faith* (pp. 301-306)  
Aguilar, "History of the Jews in England" (pp. 313-53)  
Feb. 5 T Aguilar, from *The Women of Israel* (pp. 247-300)  
Appendix B, Review of *The Women of Israel* (pp. 366-68)  
Appendix C, Romantic and Victorian Contexts (pp. 372-82) **commentary 2**  
Feb. 7 R Levy, "Jewish Women and Women's Rights," "The Jew in Fiction," "Middle-Class Jewish Women of To-Day" (pp. 171-81)  
Levy, (App. B): "Captivity," "A Ballad of Religion and Marriage" (pp. 190-92)  
Feb. 12 T \*Deborah Cohen, "Who Was Who? Race and Jews in Turn-of-the-Century Britain" \*\* "Race and Ethnicity"  
Feb. 14 R Levy, (App. B): "Cohen of Trinity" (pp. 181-88), and Appendix D (pp. 215-33)  
Feb. 19 T *Reuben Sachs* (chaps 1-10, pp. 55-111)  
Feb. 21 R *Reuben Sachs* (finish) **commentary 3**  
Feb. 26 T Reviews (Appendix A), Eliot and Blind (in Appendix C), Allen (Appendix E)  
Feb. 28 R *Children of the Ghetto* (Book I, chaps 1-2) **Paper 1 due (Writing Fellows)**  
Mar. 4 T *Children of the Ghetto* (Book I, chaps 3-13)  
Mar. 6 R *Children of the Ghetto* (Book I, chaps 14-25) **Papers returned; conferences**  
Mar. 11 T *Children of the Ghetto* (Book II, chaps 1-9) **commentary 4**  
Mar. 13 R *Children of the Ghetto* (Finish, chaps 10-18) **Revised paper 1 due**

### \*\*SPRING BREAK\*\*

### III. Transatlantic Crossings and Melting Pots

- Mar. 25 T \*Zangwill, "The Melting Pot"  
Mar. 27 R \*David Biale, "The Melting Pot and Beyond: Jews and the Politics of American Identity"  
\*Emma Lazarus, "In Exile," "The New Colossus"  
\*Hana Wirth-Nesher, "Language as Homeland in Jewish-American Literature"  
Apr. 1 T Cahan, "Yekl"  
Apr. 3 R Cahan, "The Imported Bridegroom" **commentary 5**  
Apr. 8 T Yeziarska, *Bread Givers* (Book I: "Hester Street")  
Apr. 10 R *Bread Givers* (Books II and III, "Between Two Worlds" and "The New World")  
**commentary 6**  
Apr. 15 T Cahan, "A Providential Match," "A Sweatshop Romance," "Circumstances,"  
"A Ghetto Wedding"  
Apr. 17 R FILM: "Hester Street" **Paper 2 due**

### IV. Diaspora and Modern Exile: post-Holocaust crossings

- Apr. 22 T *Lost in Translation* ("Paradise") **Projects due in class**  
Apr. 24 R *Lost in Translation* ("Exile") **Papers returned; conferences**  
Apr. 29 T *Lost in Translation* ("The New World") **commentary 7**  
May 1 R \*\*"Crossings" Projects—class discussion **Revised paper 2 due**  
May 6 T TBA  
May 8 R **Final Paper on "Crossings" projects and course material**

## **EXPLANATION of English 563/Jewish Studies 490 syllabus**

### **Attendance and Participation**

Class attendance and participation are essential to this discussion-based course. More than three absences of ANY sort (“excused” or “unexcused”) adversely affects your grade. It is crucial to arrive in class on time. Any late arrivals disrupt the class. If you must leave early, be sure to tell me ahead of time. Active participation means contributing to class discussions. You may use your commentaries as the basis of observations you make in class, and questions are always welcome. I am always impressed by regular contributors in class, so make an effort to speak in class at least once a week if you’re interested in a high grade. If you are absent for any reason, please email me immediately, and we can make arrangements if course work is due on a day you miss class.

### **Course Website**

This course also has its own Learn@UW website. You will need to use a browser (e.g. Netscape, Explorer) to get onto the Internet to this URL address: <https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu/> At this point, you will be prompted to provide your WiscWorld username and password, and then click “Login.” Now you will see your L@UW homepage which will list any of your current courses using L@UW. To get to the *course* homepage, click on the link to “English 563/Jewish Studies 490 Transatlantic Jewish Literature.” As the semester unfolds, more material will appear on this website under “course content,” such as paper assignment guidelines. You will find links to various authors and some relevant visual images, and I will often post announcements that appear in the “News” section on the homepage. I suggest checking the website between classes. You can also access this website through MyUW.

### **Glossary**

You will find on the course website L@UW a Glossary of terms relevant to the course. I will add terms to the Glossary as the semester unfolds, and you may also recommend specific words that we come across in our assigned readings.

### **Commentaries** (due on 1/29, 2/5, 2/21, 3/11, 4/3, 4/10, 4/29)

You will write seven very short papers (500 words) on the first two essays, and on Aguilar, Levy, Zangwill, Cahan, Yezierska, and Hoffman. You’ll find a more detailed description of this assignment under “Course Content.” The purpose is for you to demonstrate your engagement with the material. Focus on a passage or a few sentences that intrigue, confuse, surprise, provoke you in some way and discuss this. Keep in mind the questions that drive this course: the variant ways in which Jewishness has been defined and experienced as religious, racial, ethnic, or national identities; different strains of “semitic” discourse (antisemitic, philosemitic, or something else). Frame your commentary with a quotation from the reading at the top to focus your remarks. Everyone will sign up to be a convener for one of these seven commentaries. If you are a convener, your job is to post your commentary in the designated spot in the “Discussion” area of the website no later than 9pm the night before the due date, and to be prepared to talk about your commentary in class. Be sure to pose questions to inspire some class discussion. I will collect your commentaries in class on the due dates. I will use three categories for assessing your commentaries (excellent, satisfactory, unsatisfactory).

### **Papers** (5-7 pp double-spaced, due dates for #1: 2/28 and 3/13; due dates for #2: 4/17 and 5/1)

These two papers focus on assigned readings from units one and two (for the first paper) and unit three or the first text for unit four (for the second paper). Paper guidelines for each assignment will be posted on the course website. Consider the commentaries as testing-ground for these papers, and do read through the commentaries (both your own and your colleagues) as you think about your paper topics.

### **Crossing Projects** (up to 4pp., due in class no later than 4/22)

The project is an opportunity for you to explore identity “crossings” in a more open-ended fashion. You may choose to write creatively about one of the characters or stories we’ve explored, or to provide a family history (whether fiction, creative nonfiction, or based on an interview) about “crossing” or immigration or diasporic identity. You may explore Jewishness specifically in relation to some of our material this semester. You may write narrative, fiction or nonfiction, poetry, or documentary, or you may use visual material, or design a website, or do a review of relevant websites or blogs, or films. This assignment is ungraded.

## **EXPLANATION of English 563/Jewish Studies 490 syllabus** (continued)

### **Final Paper** (4-5 pp., due 5/8)

Your final paper for this course should use one or a selection of the “Crossing” projects to synthesize material from the full sweep of the semester. Use the projects as a springboard into a retrospective on some specific aspect of the course. You should plan to refer to at least one essay we’ve read, and two or three other assigned texts.

### **Assignments**

You’ll find more detailed instructions on assignments on the website under “Content” approximately one week before each due date. I will email the class once I upload the assignment onto the website.

### **Writing Fellows**

Elianna Lippold-Johnson [lippoldjohns@wisc.edu](mailto:lippoldjohns@wisc.edu)

Siri Helleloid [helleloid@wisc.edu](mailto:helleloid@wisc.edu)

Katy Williams [cawilliams@wisc.edu](mailto:cawilliams@wisc.edu)

are the Writing Fellows assigned to this course. For your first two papers, you will hand in a full, revised draft of your paper on the dates indicated on the course calendar, including a cover sheet where you will describe your thesis and other aspects of your paper (the cover sheet will be distributed in class and on the course website). A week later, you will receive in class your drafts with written comments from your writing fellow. You will meet with your writing fellow for an individual conference on your paper. Finally, you will revise your paper again based on your discussion with your writing fellow, and hand in both versions (before and after conference drafts) along with a cover letter to me. See the course calendar for various due dates. You will have the same Writing Fellow for both papers, and you’ll learn who you will work with probably by the third week of the semester.

**Extensions** are only granted if requested before the due date, and only in case of illness or other emergency. (A printer failure does not qualify.) All extensions will have a definite new due date established. Papers received after the new due date will be subject to late paper penalties.

**Plagiarism:** plagiarism is a serious breach of academic integrity and may be grounds for failure on the assignment plagiarized. If you use **2 or more words** in a row from another source, it **must** be placed in quotation marks and footnoted. Otherwise, it is plagiarism. For more on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the UW Writing Center's handout “Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Acknowledging Sources” (online at: <http://www.wisc.edu/students/plagiarism.pdf>). It would also be wise to review the UW's student guide on academic misconduct (at: <http://www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm>).

**Access and Accommodation:** We will make every effort to honor requests for reasonable accommodations made by individuals with disabilities. (If you think you qualify for accommodation, please contact the McBurney Disability Resource Center [263-2741; <http://jumpgate.acadsvcs.wisc.edu/~mcburney/>] to establish your eligibility for services.) Requests for accommodation can be responded to more effectively if we receive them as far in advance as possible, preferably at the beginning of the semester. Such requests are confidential.

**Religious Observance:** If religious holidays or observances conflict with your participation in this course, please come talk to me **well in advance** to work out alternative arrangements. The deadline for the “crossing” projects for 4/22 is firm. If this presents a conflict, you may hand this assignment in a week early.

**Reminders:** If any other problems arise, either academic or personal, which might jeopardize your performance in the course (such as successive absences or missing deadlines), please contact me by email or in person as soon as possible. If you are unable to contact me, ask a friend or family member to do so. Keep in mind the drop dates for the semester: Jan. 30 (drop by this date avoids notation on transcript), Feb. 1 (for full tuition remission), Feb. 15 (last day for 50% remission on dropped courses), Mar. 28 (last day to drop courses at all, no tuition remission). For more on these dates, see <http://registrar.wisc.edu/deadlines.php?term=1084>