Course Description
This course explores the rich world of Russian Jewish culture from its very foundations. After a brief foray into antiquity, our study will begin in late-1700s and will examine the processes of secularization which accompanied the rise and development of Jewish and Russian literature and culture. The course will familiarize students with important movements such as Hasidism, the Jewish Enlightenment, Zionism, and Socialism asking how and why they arose in the context of the Russian Empire. Reading literary, theological and political works by Jewish and Russian writers, our aim will be to understand the creative and often-troubled relationships among them. The course will acquaint students with the classical works of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, examining them alongside works of Russian writers. This introductory course will help students gain the background necessary to pursue higher-level courses in Slavic and Jewish studies. All materials will be provided in English translation and no prior knowledge is required.

Objectives
The aim of this course is to provide you with a core knowledge of the texts and ideas that created and comprised the world shared by Jews and Russians living in the Russian Empire. Students will gain deep insights into the following topics: 1. The foundations of Jewish religious and cultural practice in the Russian Empire, 2. The process of secularization, and the rise of secular Jewish literature, 3. The cultural and literary context of the Russian Empire and way that Jewish literature interacted with it. 4. An understanding of various Jewish and Russian movements of the late 19th century, 5. Knowledge of the classic texts of Russian-Jewish literature written in Hebrew, Yiddish and Russian, 6. Training in effective analytical and writing practices, and the ability to think, argue, and write about literature.

Materials:
1. An online course packet will be shared with students on the first day of class. Printing is strongly recommended.
2. Two required novels are to be purchased at the university bookstore or ordered on Amazon.
   1. *Pioneers: A Tale of Russian-Jewish Life in the 1880s*
      by S. A. An-sky (Author), Michael R. Katz (Translator)
      Publisher: Indiana University Press
   2. *The Zelmenyaners: A Family Saga*
      by Moyshe Kulbak (Author), Hillel Halkin (Translator), Sasha Senderovich (Introduction)
      Publisher: Yale University Press
Note: You are expected to bring the assigned reading to class.

Grading:
Preparedness and in-class participation: 15%
Failure to come to class prepared and ready to contribute to discussion, missed readings, or tardiness will negatively affect your participation grade.

Written assignments and their due dates:
15%: Weekly response paragraphs on the assigned reading for that week, to be brought to every Friday class, and submitted.
30%: Midterm exam, in class: Monday November 3
10 %: Completed Draft of Final Paper (To be revised based on professor’s feedback) Due: Dec 1
30 %: Revised paper, due on the last day of class. Due: Dec 14
Note: Please refer to the UW website for letter-grade breakdown and disability policy.

Schedule of Readings:
Week 1: Sept 4-8 Introduction
M- Labor Day
W- Introduction
F- Isaac Bashevis Singer’s “Yentel the Yeshiva Boy” pg. 1-37

Week 2: Sept 11-15 The Rabbinic Tradition
M- “Yentel the Yeshiva Boy,” 38- until end
W- “The Oven of Ahnai,” “These and Those”
F- Watching Talmudic Stories and “Yentel the Yeshiva Boy” film

Week 3. Sept 18-22 Jewish Enlightenment and the Critique of Tradition
M- Y. L. Gordon’s “The Tip of the Yud” pg. 1-48 (153 in the text)
W- Gordon “The Tip of the Yud” page 153 until the end.
F- Sept 22, no class

Week 4. Sept 25-29 The Hassidic Tradition
M- Guest Lecture: “The Origins of Hassidism”
W- Selection from Hassidic sayings, adapted from Hassidic Tales (by Martin Buber)
F- Poems by Y. L Gordon, “For Whom Do I Toil,” “Awaken My People”

Week 5. Oct 2-6 Satire and Realism
M- Saltykov-Schadrin “How One Plain Peasant Fed Two High Officials”
W- Y. L. Peretz “Bonshe the Silent”
F- Oct 6, no class

Week 6. Oct 9-13
M- The Brief Travels of Benjamin the Third by Mandele the Book Peddler, Prologue, chapters 1, 2
W- Chapters 3, 4, 5
F- Oct. 13 no class

Week 7. Oct 16-20
M- The Brief Travels of Benjamin the Third, chapters 6, 7, 8,
W- Chapters 9,10, 11
F - Chapters 12, 13, 14 (end)
Week 8. Oct 23-27
M- S. A. An-sky Pioneers, chapters 1-10 (the last chapter is always included in the count)
W- Chapters 11-19
F- Chapters 20-31

Week 9. Oct 30- Nov 3
M- Pioneers continued, chapters 32-37
W- chapters 38-end
F- Midterm exam in class

Week 10. Nov 6-10 Yiddish Prose
M - Sholem Aleichem “The Yom Kippur Scandal”, class is meeting at the Sholem Aleichem conference, in Pyle Center Room 325/326
W- Anton Chekhov “Rothschild’s Fiddle”
F- Dostoyevsky “Isay Fomich”

Week 11. Nov 13-17 Materialism in the Russian Empire
M- Kovner, “Notes of a Jew”
W- Kovner “I Confess to Dostoyevsky”
Th- Make up class: Professor Eliyahu Stern, “Jewish Materialism” Thursday 3pm, Vandeberg Auditorium
F- Guest Lecture on Materialism in Russian Empire

Week 12. Nov 20-24 Zionism and Nationalism
M - “Socialist Jews Confront the Pogroms” by Pavel Borisovich Avelrod
W- “The Jewish Factor in My Socialism” by Chaim Zhitlowsky – Midterm Exam handed out
F- Nov. 24 Thanksgiving – no class

Week 13. Nov 27- Dec 1
M- Chaim Nahman Bialik, poem: “On the Slaughter”
W- Chaim Nahman Bialik, “The City of Slaughter”
F- “A Few Facts of My Life” by Ahad Ha’am, and “The Most Important Person in my Life” by Chaim Nahman Bialik Draft of Paper Due at the end of class

Week 14. Dec 4-8 Jewish Life under Communism
M- Moyshe Kulbak, The Zelmenyaners, A Family Saga, pages 3-46
W- Pages 47-96
F- Pages 97-124

Week 15. Dec 11-15
M - Moyshe Kulbak, The Zelmenyaners cont. pages 127-193
W - pages 193-end.
Revised Final Paper Due on Dec. 13