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Keene Flint Hall 021
MWF: 12:50-1:40
Course Site: <https://ufl.instructure.com/courses/416228>

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Office Hours (Zoom):
W: 4-5, Th: 4-5
(and by appointment)

EUH 3931: Jewish Life in Revolutionary Russia

Course Description:

To be Jewish in the Russian Empire in the hundred years between 1850 and 1950 was to experience a time of unprecedented tumult. This class explores Jewish lives in this revolutionary period. Beginning with shtetl life, it follows Russian Jews as they negotiated tradition and assimilation, revolutionary socialism and Zionism, the need for community and the pull of emigration. The second half of the class explores the place of Jews in the Russian Revolution, the Soviet Union, and in the Holocaust. The revolution created paradoxes for Soviet Jews, bringing some into the halls of power while turning others into enemies of the Soviet state. The main project for the course uses interactive storytelling to engage with Jewish lives in difficult times.

Course Goals:

1. Familiarize students with the history of Jewish people in Russia and the Soviet Union.
2. Practice analysis of primary sources in a broader social and political context.
3. Gain technical skills with the platform Twine.

Class Meetings:

The class meets three times per week. The class on most Mondays and Wednesdays will be in Classroom Building, Room 210 (CBD 210). On Fridays the class will meet online, as allowed under the Hy-Flex model. Having some classes online will facilitate discussions that will be difficult in the hybrid classroom setting.

Course Assignments:

Participation (15%): Engagement in discussions that demonstrate a student's having read and understood assigned materials. Participation can be online in Canvas discussions.

Discussion Groups (15%): Twice per semester, students will be responsible for writing and posting discussion questions to Canvas for Friday class discussion. The groups will meet and discuss the questions while filling out a shared document online.

Response Papers (20%): Students will write two book reviews (~700 words) of primary or secondary-source works related to the class. I will provide a list of relevant works, but students

are welcome to propose their own. The reviews should focus on some aspect of Jewish life or politics in Russia. I recommend students choose works related to their main project.

Story Project (35%: 10% for proposal, 15% for the first draft, 10% for technical execution (Does it look good? Does the language sound right? Are there errors?) and presentation):

The major project for the course is a game using the non-linear storytelling tool Twine (<http://twinery.org>) that will allow the user to “play” through the life of a Jewish person, a family, or an official specializing in Jewish issues. The story can be non-fiction (e.g., a retelling of real events), historical fiction (an incident that did not happen but could have happened) or something between. The game, even if it is fiction, must include sources with citations and include a bibliography. If the game is non-fiction, it should still include non-linear elements. Players must have some choices that will reveal information, even if these choices cannot impact the outcome of the story. The finished product should reflect knowledge of how Jewish lives unfolded or how the Russian and/or Soviet state interacted with Jews.

Work on the project will be segmented. The class will have technical seminars on Twine. Students should submit a single-spaced, one-page proposal for their project. Approximately three weeks later, students should produce a draft of the game. For the final classes, students should revise and implement the script in a game to present. The game should take no less than five minutes to play.

Final Essay (15%): After reflecting on their game, students will write a paper (~1500 words) contextualizing the game and analyzing how it fits into the history of Jewish life in the region more broadly. The essay should address the concepts from the readings and class discussions.

Required Texts:

Frieden, Ken, ed. *Classic Yiddish Stories of S.Y. Abramovitsh, Sholem Aleichem, and I.L. Peretz*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2004. (Other volumes with the same stories may be possible.)

Gessen, Masha. *Where the Jews Aren't: The Sad and Absurd Story of Birobidzhan, Russia's Jewish Autonomous Region*. New York: Schocken Books, 2016.

Slezkine, Yuri. *The Jewish Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006; 2019.

Weinberg, Robert. *Blood Libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Zipperstein, Steven. *Pogrom: Kishinev and the Turn of History*. New York: Liveright, 2018.

Other readings will be posted on Canvas or are available online. If you prefer a hard copy of the readings, please look at the syllabus and order books accordingly.

Academic Integrity: The University of Florida holds its students to the highest standards, and we encourage students to read the University of Florida Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (Regulation 4.040), so they are aware of our standards. Any violation of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution and

may result in academic sanctions and further student conduct action. The two greatest threats to the academic integrity of the University of Florida are cheating and plagiarism. Students should be aware of their faculty's policy on collaboration, should understand how to properly cite sources, and should not give nor receive an improper academic advantage in any manner through any medium.

Lateness Policy: An important part of students' work is meeting deadlines. Late assignments will be docked three percentage points per day overdue. Under extraordinary circumstances extensions will be granted but every effort should be made to avoid the need to take an extension.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

Online Evaluations: Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Grading Policy:

You can find University of Florida's grading policies here:

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-gradingpolicies/>

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	93-100
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
C-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62

Recording:

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate verbally are agreeing to have their voices recorded.

If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared.

As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Course Schedule:

IN = In Class

ON = Online

Jan. 11 (ON): Introductions

Jan. 13 (IN): The Russian Empire and Its Jews

Reading:

Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age Shtetl* (excerpts, online)

Jan. 15 (ON): Thinking about Jews in Modern Life

Reading:

Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, introduction and chapter 1

Jan. 20 (IN): The Imperial State and the Jewish Community

Reading:

Abramovitsh, “Fishke the Lame” (*Classic Yiddish Stories*, 32-54)

Jan. 22 (ON): Jewish Life around the Great Reforms

Reading:

Avrutin, “The Power of Documentation: Vital Statistics and Jewish Accommodation in Tsarist Russia,” *Ab Imperio* (on Canvas)

Jan. 25 (IN): Overview of Twine

Assignment:

Look at Twine site (<http://www.twinery.org>)

Make a simple story (anything!) on Twine’s online editor (<http://twinery.org/2/>)

Jan. 27 (IN): Tradition, Assimilation, Emigration I

Reading:

Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 110-147 (2004 edition, 105-144 in 2019 edition) (chapter 3 from start to section that starts “Overall”)

Jan. 29 (ON): Tradition, Assimilation, Emigration II

Reading:

Aleichem, “Hodel” and “Chava” (*Classic Yiddish Stories*, 56-88)

Feb. 1 (IN): Radical Ideologies: Socialism

Reading:

Zimmerman, “Was the Jewish Labor Bund in Czarist Russia a ‘National Movement’?” *Jewish Political Studies Review* (on Canvas)

Feb. 3 (IN): Radical Ideologies: Zionism

Reading:

Leo Pinsker, "Auto-Emancipation" (available on *Jewish Virtual Library*,
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/quot-auto-emancipation-quot-leon-pinsker>)

Feb. 5 (ON): Radical Ideologies III (Discussion)

Reading:

Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 147-168 (2004 edition; 144-165 in 2019 edition) (to section that begins "The Great War")

Trotsky, *My Life* (excerpt)

*Book Review 1

Feb. 8 (IN): Anti-Jewish Violence in Russia: Origins

Zipperstein, *Pogrom*, chapters 1-2

Feb. 10 (IN): Jewish Emigration

Zipperstein, *Pogrom*, chapters 3-4

Feb. 12 (ON): Pogroms

Zipperstein, *Pogrom*, chapters 5-6

Feb. 15 (IN): Twine II

Feb. 17 (IN): The Revolution of 1905 and Its Aftermath

Weinberg, *Blood Libel*, 1-73

Feb. 19 (ON): The Beilis Trial

Weinberg, *Blood Libel*, Documents: 22-24, 29-30, 37, 54-59, 63-64

Feb. 22 (IN): Russian Revolution and Civil War I

Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 168-205 (to end of chapter 3)

Feb. 24 (IN): Russian Revolution and Civil War II

Babel, *Red Cavalry* ("Gedali," "Goose" and "Rebbi" on Canvas)

Feb. 26 (ON): Russian Revolution and Civil War III

Bemporad, *Legacy of Blood*, 14-34 (on Canvas)

*Book Review 2

Mar. 1 (IN): Jewish Studies Trip

Mar. 3 (IN): Twine III

Mar. 5 (ON): Jews and the Revolution

Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 206-268 (2004 edition; 204-69 in 2019 edition)

Mar. 8 (IN): Soviet and Kosher
Shternshis, “Passover in the Soviet Union, 1917-41” (on Canvas)

*Proposal Due

Mar. 10 (IN): The Soviet Regime and Jews
Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't*, chapters 1-5

Mar. 12 (ON): Birobizhan Experiment I
Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't*, chapters 6-8

Mar. 15 (IN): Stalinist Terror
Reading:
Viola, “Antisemitism in the ‘Jewish NKVD’ in Soviet Ukraine on the Eve of World War II,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (on Canvas)
Slezkine, *Jewish Century*, 269-284 (2004 edition; 269-286 in 2019 edition)

Mar. 17 (IN): Birobizhan and Terror + Holocaust I
Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't*, chapter 10-12

Mar. 19 (ON): Project workshop

*Book Review 3 (makeup)

Mar. 22 (IN): The Holocaust II
Belsky, “Fraught Friendships” (from *Shelter from the Holocaust*, on Canvas)

Mar. 24: RECHARGE DAY

Mar. 26 (ON): The Holocaust III
Grossman, “The Hell of Treblinka” (on Canvas)

Mar. 29 (IN): The Aftermath of War
Reading:
Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't*, chapters 13-19

*Script Due

Mar. 31 (IN): Postwar Antisemitism
Reading:
Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't*, chapters 13-19

Apr. 2 (ON): The Doctors’ Plot
Reading:
Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 284-312 (2004 edition; 286-314 in 2019 edition)

Apr. 5 (IN): Soviet Jews in the Cold War I

Readings:

Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, 326-365 (2004 edition; 329-371 in 2019 edition)

Apr. 7 (IN): Soviet Jews in the Cold War II

Reading:

Nathans, “Refuseniks and Rights Defenders” (on Canvas)

Apr. 9 (ON): Legacies of Eastern European Jewish Culture

Gessen, *Where the Jews Aren't*, chapter 20-epilogue

Apr. 12 (IN): Presentations

Apr. 14 (IN): Presentations

Apr. 16 (IN): Presentations

Apr. 19 (IN): Presentations

Apr. 21 (ON): Conclusions