# Yiddish Studies

## Minor Program in Yiddish Studies

Students in any field may complete a minor in Yiddish Studies. A combination of six language and literature/culture courses are required for the minor, which should be designed in consultation with the program coordinator: Jessica Kirzane, jkirzane@uchicago.edu.

Six courses are required for the minor, typically:

- YDDH 10100-10200-10300 Elementary Yiddish for Beginners I-II-III
- Three additional courses, which may include:
  - YDDH 20100 Intermediate Yiddish I and YDDH 20200 Intermediate Yiddish II: Archival Skills
  - YDDH 21001 Advanced Yiddish I: Yiddish One-Acts
  - YDDH 22321 Advanced Seminar in Yiddish: Lamed Shapiro
  - YDDH 23421 Advanced Seminar in Yiddish: Representations of Race and Racism
  - Yiddish literature/culture courses

Students who elect the minor program in Yiddish Studies must meet with the program administrator before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor and must submit the Consent to Complete a Minor Program form (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf) to their College adviser.

Courses in the minor may not be double-counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors, and may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and more than half of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

## Summary of Requirements: Minor in Yiddish Studies

Six courses are required for the minor, typically:

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| YDDH 10100-10200-10300 | Elementary Yiddish for Beginners I-II-III | 300 |
| Three additional Yiddish courses | | 300 |
| Total Units | | 600 |

## Yiddish Courses

**YDDH 10100-10200-10300. Elementary Yiddish for Beginners I-II-III.**
The goal of this sequence is to develop proficiency in Yiddish reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Touchstones of global Yiddish culture are also introduced through song, film, and contemporary Yiddish websites.

**YDDH 10100. Elementary Yiddish I. 100 Units.**
The goal of this sequence is to develop proficiency in Yiddish reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Touchstones of global Yiddish culture are also introduced through song, film, and contemporary Yiddish websites.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 20300

**YDDH 10200. Elementary Yiddish for Beginners II. 100 Units.**
In this course, students will extend basic Yiddish speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. By the end of the course, students should have a basic understanding of regional Yiddish variations in pronunciation and spelling, be able to understand and participate in a conversation in an increasingly comfortable and complex way, read simple texts with ease, have experience tackling more complex texts with the aid of a dictionary, and write short compositions with grammatical complexity. In the course of language study, students will also be exposed to key topics in the history of the Yiddish language and culture.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): YDDH 10100
Equivalent Course(s): YDDH 37400, JWSC 20400

**YDDH 10300. Elementary Yiddish III. 100 Units.**
In this course, students will acquire intermediate Yiddish speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. By the end of the course, students should be able to conduct a conversation on a wide range of topics, be comfortable tackling complex texts with the aid of a dictionary, and write short compositions with grammatical complexity. In the course of language study, students will also be exposed to key topics in the history of the Yiddish language and culture. Students will also be introduced to basic Yiddish research skills.
Equivalent Course(s): YDDH 37500, JWSC 20500

**YDDH 11500. Elementary Yiddish in Vienna. 100 Units.**
This course introduces students to the fundamentals of the Yiddish language, with an emphasis on developing basic skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. Students will learn the Hebrew alphabet as used in Yiddish and acquire core vocabulary and grammatical structures through communicative practice. The course also incorporates exploration of Yiddish culture from Central and Eastern Europe, including music, literature, visual art, and everyday cultural life, situating the language within its historical and cultural contexts.
Instructor(s): Eidel Malowicki Terms Offered: Spring. Study Abroad course in Vienna
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 20350

**YDDH 21004. Advanced Yiddish: Reading Academic Yiddish Texts. 100 Units.**
What is the language of Yiddish Scholarship? Today, we find Yiddish studies largely in English, Polish, German, and Hebrew - and only rarely in Yiddish itself. But it was only a few short decades ago that Yiddish Studies scholarship was regularly produced in Yiddish, both simply because it was the shared language of its scholarly community and as a defiant activist sensibility that Yiddish could and should remain a language of scholarly inquiry. Through this course, students will read articles from late 20th century Yiddish academic journals such as YIVO Bleter, Yidishe Shprakh, Kheshbn, Leket, and Oksforder Yidish, exploring how academic language activists used Yiddish to express and circulate their research in addition to using it as a language for reading and research. Students will write short response essays and will try their hand at writing their own academically-oriented scholarship in Yiddish. Ultimately, students will be encouraged to produce proposals to give talks in Yiddish about their own scholarship, either for the Farbindungen conference or the Symposium for Yiddish Studies in Germany (Dusseldorf), two contemporary conferences in which presentations in Yiddish are encouraged. Students must have completed intermediate Yiddish or its equivalent to take this course and are encouraged to speak with the instructor if they are unsure about placement.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): YDDH 31004, JWSC 21025

**YDDH 21721. Women Who Wrote In Yiddish. 100 Units.**
This course explores memoirs, plays, essays, poetry, novels, and journalistic writing of women who wrote in Yiddish, as well as a discussion of the context in which they wrote and their reception and self-perception as "women writers." This course will be taught in English with readings translated from Yiddish.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 31721, JWSC 27651, GNSE 21721, YDDH 31721

**YDDH 21723. Jewish Civilization III: Chicago Jewish History and Culture. 100 Units.**
In this course, students will explore key moments in Chicago Jewish History and culture. We will read and examine primary source documents from the founding of the city's first Jewish communities, hospitals, and philanthropic institutions to the public performance of Jewish identity at Chicago's World's Fairs to the 2020 Metropolitan Chicago Jewish Population Survey. Drawing upon literary, journalistic, and archival accounts, we will uncover the vibrancy of Chicago's historic Jewish immigrant neighborhoods, Jewish urban politics, and Jewish suburbanization, mapping out a multivocal understanding of Jewish life in the city. The course will have a research project component.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 12007, CHST 21723

**YDDH 21724. Jewish Civilization III - Mothers and Motherhood in Modern Jewish Culture. 100 Units.**
This Jewish Civilization III course will focus on mothers and motherhood in modern Jewish culture. From sentimentalized keepers of Jewish tradition to objects of ridicule burdened by stereotypes of overbearing, guilt-inducing behavior, Jewish mothers hold a prominent role in Jewish self-representations. Writing alongside or against these stereotypes, Jewish mothers themselves have struggled with the obligations and expectations of Jewish motherhood. Engaging with a variety of literary, theological, historical, and pop culture texts, this class explores Jewish feminisms in relation to motherhood, Jewish fictions of motherhood, and the role of motherhood in Jewish religious life and thought. This course includes material from a variety of different contexts for modern Jewish life, but places particular emphasis on American Jewish history and culture.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered in 2025–26
Note(s): Students who wish to take this course for Civilization Studies credit, must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. The course may also be taken as an independent elective.
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 12004, RLST 22013, GNSE 16004

**YDDH 21726. Jewish Civilization III: The Holocaust: Victim's Voices. 100 Units.**
This course approaches the history of the Holocaust through the literature of witness produced by its victims. Through an examination of a range of sources, primarily literary art (fiction, memoir, poetry) as well as video testimony and visual art, students will consider major concerns in the study of the Holocaust such as representation, authority, memory, testimony, translation and language. Students are advised that these readings will bear witness to human suffering and human cruelty, and they should be prepared to encounter emotionally taxing material. This course is part of the Jewish Civilization sequence, though the earlier two sections of the sequence are not prerequisites for this course.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 22016, JWSC 12012

**YDDH 25127. Yiddish on One Foot!: Introduction to Yiddish Literature and Culture. 100 Units.**
This course will explore the 1,000-year history of Yiddish language, literature, music, and artistic expression, covering key tests in Old Yiddish; the rise of secular literature; modern experiences of urbanization, immigration, and political change; the impact of the Holocaust and contemporary Yiddish life. Knowledge of Yiddish is not required; Yiddish texts will be provided by request and students can arrange to meet with me in office hours to discuss the originals.
Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): JWSC 25127