

*Draft syllabus—course schedule may change before the first class meeting, but the reading for the first class will not change. **Please do the reading for the first class before arriving on the first day.***

**OREGON SCHOOL OF JUDAIC STUDIES
at PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY**

Raphael Dagold

Monday/Wednesday June 23—July 16

11:45 am—2:05 pm, 387 Neuberger Hall

Office Hours: by appointment, 503-239-7860/hermosa1@mindspring.com

**Reading/Writing American Jewish Poetry
English 099/410/510
Two Credits**

Texts: *Jewish American Poetry: Poems, Commentary, and Reflections*, ed. Jonathan Barron and Eric Murphy Selinger, Brandeis/New England, 2000 (Available in campus bookstore)

Course packet (Available at Smart Copy, 6th and Hall)

On reserve in library: *Telling and Remembering: A Century of American Jewish Poetry*, ed. Steven J. Rubin, Beacon Press, 1997

Course Description: While individual Jews have figured prominently in American poetry for some time, only recently has American Jewish Poetry been identified as a distinct genre. In this course, we will read the work of contemporary American Jewish poets, and essays on their poetry, to explore the variety of the genre and what it means to place a particular poet or poem in the genre. Discussions will address how to determine essential qualities of American Jewish Poetry. We also will write our own poems as a means of exploring these issues.

This course will be largely discussion-based; students are expected to participate actively in class. There will be weekly in-class writing exercises leading to poems. The first two weeks will be weighted towards literature study; the second two weeks will be weighted towards the writing of poems.

Assignments: All students will be expected to do the in-class writing exercises and to write poems from them; all students also will hand in 1-2 revised, best poems at the end of the course. For-credit undergraduate and graduate students also will write 2-3 page papers providing commentary on one or more of their poems. These papers will be modeled on the commentaries in *Jewish American Poetry*.

Schedule (subject to change after the first class meeting)

Class #1, M. 6/23

- Introductions: What is American Jewish Poetry?
- Read the Introduction to *Telling and Remembering* (in coursepack and on reserve)
- Read Gerald Stern poem and commentary in *Jewish American Poetry*
- Read Gerald Stern's "Behaving Like a Jew" and all other Stern poems in coursepack
- In-class writing exercise #1

Class #2, W. 6/25

- Read Introduction to *Jewish American Poetry*
- Read Emma Lazarus and Karl Shapiro in the coursepack
- Read Neusner's "What's Jewish about Jewish American Poetry?" (review of *Telling and Remembering*) in coursepack
- Read excerpts from Gerald Stern interview in coursepack
- Read Philip Levine and Edward Hirsch poems and commentary in *Jewish American Poetry*
- In-class writing exercise #2

Class #3, M. 6/30

- Read Bleich, "Learning, Learning, Learning" in *J. Am. Poetry*
- Read Barron, "New Jerusalems: Contemporary Jewish American Poets and the Puritan Tradition" in coursepack
- Read Ginsberg, "Yiddishe Kopf" in coursepack
- Read Kamenetz in *J. Am. Poetry*
- In-class exercise #3; Writing workshop #1

Class #4, W. 7/2

- Guest poet—Judith Arcana
- Read Barron, "Commentary in Jewish American Poetry" in *J. Am. Poetry*
- Read Shapiro, "Mezzuzah" in coursepack
- Exercise #4; Workshop #2

Class #5, M. 7/7

- Read Kaufman, "Life, Freedom, and Memory: The Poetry of Jewish American Women" in *J. Am. Poetry*
- Read Hacker and Ostriker poems and commentary in *J. Am. Poetry*
- Read Rich, "Split at the Root: an Essay on Jewish Identity" and "Eastern War Time" in coursepack
- Read Becker and Osherow in coursepack
- Exercise #5; Workshop #3

Class #6, W. 7/9

- Read Klepfisz, "*Di feder fun harts/ The Pen of the Heart: Tseyshprakhikayt/ Bilingualism and American Jewish Poetry*" in *J. Am. Poetry*

- Read Klepfisz, “Forging a Woman’s Link *in di goldene keyt*: Some possibilities for Jewish American Poetry” in coursepack
- Read Falk poem and commentary in *J. Am. Poetry*
- Read Tikkun article “Language as Homeland: A Reappraisal of Modern Jewish Literature” in coursepack
- Read Hecht, “More Light! More Light!” and fire parable in coursepack
- Exercise #6; Workshop #4

Class #7, M. 7/14

- Read C. K. Williams and Alan Shapiro poems and commentary in *J. Am. Poetry*
- Exercise #7; Workshop #5

Class #8, W. 7/16

- Read Albert Goldbarth and Jerome Rothenberg poems and commentary in *J. Am. Poetry*
- Workshop #6
- Reflections

Monday 7/19: All work (1-2 revised poems; 2-3 p. commentary essays) due on or before this date