Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology

YIDC06, Yiddish: Jewish and Christian Bible Translations, 7.5 credits

Jiddisch: Judiska och kristna bibelöversättningar , 7,5 högskolepoäng

First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by The Pro Dean of First and Second Cycle Studies at The Joint Faculties of Humanities and Theology on 2024-06-07 (U 2024/460) and was last revised on 2026-08-17 (U 2026/437). The revised syllabus comes into effect 2026-09-01 and is valid from the spring semester 2027.

General information

The course is offered as a freestanding course. It can be included in a first or second cycle degree.

Language of instruction: Swedish and English
The course is normally taught in English, but can also be taught in Swedish, provided there is a special agreement between the lecturer/s and the students. Such an agreement requires that all lecturers and all students are proficient in Swedish.

Main field of study	*Specialisation*
Yiddish	G1N, First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements

Learning outcomes

On completion of the course, the students shall be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- account for the ideology and principles leading to different definitions of the biblical corpus in Judaism and in Christianity (in western Europe) during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era,

- compare and distinguish the different roles that the Bible plays in the liturgy and culture of both religious tradtions during the Middle Ages and Early Modern Era,
- identify, both in form and in content, the differences between Jewish and Christian Bible translations, and understand the reasons for them,
- recognize the typical style and texture of significant biblical translations in Yiddish and Germanic languages such as German, English, and Swedish,

Competence and skills

- distinguish, through empirical and theoretical study, between a translation and a retelling of the Bible,
- identify the divergences from, and additions to the source text, typical to Christian and Jewish translations, through comparison to the Hebrew original (via a modern translation),
- analyse Jewish and Christian ideological and stylistic elements within biblical translations, and attribute them with their cultural significance and implications,
- recognize the level of accuracy in each translation, and attribute it to the manner of translation in which it was created,

Judgement and approach

- critically assess poetical and ideological factors within translations and retellings of the Bible.

Course content

This course focuses on the bridges built between Hebrew and Yiddish in order to make the biblical text as well as its traditional commentary accessible to European Jews, both through full translations and retellings, of the entire corpus or chosen passages. The Hebrew Bible (Tanach) is written in Hebrew (and some Aramaic) – a language that European Jews hardly understood, as they spoke Yiddish in their daily lives. Yiddish texts composed since the Middle Ages and up to the twenty-first century will be studied, encompassing full and literal translations, didactic literature, retellings in prose and in poetry, and dramatic and cinematic adaptations of biblical scenes.

In order to allow a broader understanding of the Yiddish corpus, also texts in German, English, and Swedish – Germanic languages related to Yiddish – will be considered. These often differ significantly from the Jewish translations and shed light on the Christian stance regarding the definition of the biblical corpus, its interpretation, its use in liturgy, and the history of its translation and retelling.

The course pays attention to cultural-historical contexts and processes that influenced the translation of the Bible, such as diglossia and multilingualism, text criticism, the history of reading and literacy, the advent of print, Humanism and the Reformation.

Course design

Teaching consists of 11 lecture/seminar meetings, usually with a reading assignment beforehand. Attendance in 9 meetings is mandatory. A visit to a synagogue and a church will take place as one of the classes. If a synagogue is not accessible, a virtual alternative will be offered.

The opportunity to compensate for compulsory components will be offered to students who have been unable to participate due to circumstances beyond their control such as accidents, illness or similar. This also applies to students who have missed teaching because of duties as a student representative.

Assessment

The assessment is based on two smaller written assignments and a written on-campus exam. When the course is offered online, the written exam is monitored by a camera with the support of real time streaming.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: Fail, Pass, Pass with distinction
For a grade of Pass on the whole course, the student must have been awarded this grade for all assessed components. For a grade of Pass with Distinction on the whole course, the student must have been awarded this grade on the take home exam.

Entry requirements

General requirements

Further information

- The course is offered at the Centre for Languages and Literature, Lund University.
- The credits allocated for course content that in whole or in part is commensurate with another course can only be credited once for a degree.
- For further details, see the current registration information and other relevant documentation.