Jewish Language in the 21st Century
GESM 130g: 35443R
4 units
Fall 2023, Tuesday and Thursday, 11-12:20pm
Classroom: KAP 141
Professor Sarah Bunin Benor
E-mail: benor@usc.edu
Office Hours: by appointment (don't be shy!)
I am available to help you with your research and comprehension of the course material. You can e-mail me or talk to me after class. I encourage each student to meet with me at least once during the semester.

Course Description
What happens when ethnic and religious groups immigrate to new lands and pick up new languages? This class explores language contact using the case study of the Jewish Diaspora. Hebrew and Yiddish are widely associated with Judaism, but most people are not aware of the many languages Jews have spoken throughout history, including Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), Judeo-Italian, Judeo-Arabic, Jewish Malayalam (India), and Judeo-Shirazi (Iran). This class offers an introduction to this linguistic diversity, focusing on 21st-century language endangerment and "postvernacular" engagement. Phenomena covered include Yemenite Judeo-Arabic and Iranian Jewish Neo-Aramaic music in Israel, Hebrew and Ladino word of the day at American Jewish summer camps, Black Lives Matter in Yiddish, and gendered language patterns in Hasidic communities. The assignment theme this year is children's literature: how do children's authors present and mix languages as they tell Jewish stories? Through this Jewish case study, students will gain an understanding of the hybrid language practices of immigrant and religious groups.

How the Course Fulfills the Social Analysis Requirement
This course applies methods from sociolinguistics and linguistic anthropology to the analysis of Jewish languages. Students will become familiar with the use of empirical evidence – mostly qualitative but also some quantitative – to understand how Jewish languages differ from surrounding non-Jewish languages and how contemporary Jews engage with elements of Jewish linguistic repertoires as they express their affiliations with various communities. They will gain skills in qualitative analysis and interviewing. This class intends to broaden student perspectives on the role of language in the interaction of minority groups with the broader society.

Learning Objectives
Students who complete this course will be able to:

A. Explain and apply relevant concepts regarding language contact, including loanwords, postvernacularity, ethnolinguistic infusion, and translanguaging;
B. Explain why Jews around the world have spoken so many languages and why most longstanding Jewish languages are now endangered;
C. Analyze cultural artifacts that engage with Jewish languages;
D. Conduct and analyze qualitative interviews.

Required Readings

Available in the bookstore or online:
1. Rubin, Aaron D., and Lily Kahn. 2021. *Jewish Languages from A to Z.* London: Routledge. ISBN: 9781138487307.
2. Lowenstein, Steven M. 2000. *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry: International Jewish Folk Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195158007.
3. Hary, Benjamin, and Sarah Bunin Benor, eds. 2018. *Languages in Jewish Communities, Past and Present*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. Available for free download: https://www.jewishlanguages.org/hary-benor-book.
4. Other readings are available on Ares, indicated here by (A), or other websites.

Assignments

Assignments are detailed below. Quiz and exam will be explained a week in advance.

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance and participation are essential for the creation of a stable, stimulating learning environment. Each absence over two will result in a reduction of a half point off your participation grade (barring extended illness or other extenuating circumstances). You will be held responsible for all material presented in class, as well as all reading assignments. I suggest that you exchange contact information with a classmate to arrange to get detailed notes if you are absent. The participation grade is calculated as follows:
1. Engagement: attentive presence, not distracted, no inappropriate use of electronics
2. Quantity: regular (but not overbearing) participation in full-class conversations and small group conversations and activities
3. Quality: comments show understanding and deep thinking about the material
4. Preparation: comments show that student completed the assigned readings

Grading Breakdown

Assessment Tool	Points	% of Grade	Learning Objectives
Glossary of terms	0	0	A
Participation	100	10	A, B, C, D
25 reading responses, due 2 hours before each class	4 each	15	A, B, C
Assignment #1: Children's book analysis	100	15	A, C
Assignment #2: Interview and writeup	100	10	B, D
Assignment #3: Writing children's book	100	15	A, B, C, D
Midterm quiz (Multiple choice and short essays)	100	15	A, B
Final exam: Essays (5-6 pages)	100	20	A, B, C
TOTAL		100	

Grading Scale
93-100: A
90-92: A-
88-89: B+
83-87: B
80-82: B-
78-79: C+
73-77: C
70-72: C-
68-69: D+
63-67: D
60-62: D-
59 or below: F

Assignment Submission Policy
Assignments are submitted on Blackboard.

Grading Timeline
Students can expect grading and feedback two weeks after submission.

Course Specific Policies: Electronic Devices
Students must bring an electronic device (laptop, tablet, or phone) to class, but they may only use it when the instructor requests that, such as to visit specific websites or collaborate on an online document. Otherwise, **students should take notes on paper or using a smart pen/notebook**. Exceptions are made for students with documented accommodations that call for electronic device use in class (see below).

This policy is based on years of teaching experience and academic research. Electronic devices have the potential to serve as a significant distraction for you, for those around you, and for the instructor. When presenting ideas in class, I often gauge students' comprehension and responses by watching their facial expressions. If students were reacting to a website or a friend's message, rather than to the classroom conversation, this would be confusing. In an experiment simulating a classroom experience, Sana,

Weston, and Cepeda ([2012](#)) found that "participants who multitasked on a laptop during a lecture [did just as well on note taking] but scored lower on a test compared to those who did not multitask, and **participants who were in direct view of a multitasking peer scored lower on a test compared to those who were not**."

During the few moments of class when devices are in use, you may not use any communication services (e.g., calls, text messages, email, games, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitch, Threads, TikTok, Google Hangouts, Facebook, Twitter), and you may not visit websites beyond those required by class activities. If you think of something you must look up or convey to a friend, write yourself a reminder to do so after class. All notifications must be turned off. If you find that others are using their devices in a way that is distracting to you, please let them know. If the problem persists, please let me know. Distraction by your electronic devices will lead to a reduction in your participation grade.

Academic Integrity
The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Other violations of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

AI Generators
ChatGPT and other AI generators that use large language models can be powerful tools for researching and writing papers. However, you should be aware of their limitations:

1. Errors: AI generators make mistakes. Assume the output is incorrect unless you check the claims with reliable sources.
2. Bias: Their output may reflect bias because the data they are trained on may reflect bias or may not include sufficient data from certain groups.
3. Citation: These tools use existing sources without citation. Therefore using their outputs puts you at risk of plagiarism.
4. Environmental impact: Each ChatGPT search uses non-trivial amounts of electricity and water.

With these concerns in mind, you are welcome to use AI generators to brainstorm and refine ideas, find sources (that you subsequently read), draft outlines, check grammar, refine wording, and format bibliographies. Beyond bibliographic references, you are not allowed to copy and paste material generated by AI and use it in your assignments. At the end of your bibliography, add a note indicating which AI tool you used and how you used it, including the prompt(s) you used and the date(s).

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies
USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment:

- Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation. Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).
- Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media (Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook, page 13).

Course Evaluations
Course evaluation occurs at the end of the semester. It is an important review of students' experience in the class and helps the instructor improve the class for the future.

Course Schedule

Readings and video viewings are to be completed **before** the class session under which they are listed. Don't forget to complete the reading response by 9am each class day.

Introduction to the class
Tuesday, August 22
> No reading.
> In class: 2018 San Francisco Jewish Film Festival's trailer; browse the Jewish Language Website, which will be useful for the assignments: https://www.jewishlanguages.org/.

Thursday, August 24
> Hary and Benor 2018 (see Required Books above). Chapter on Jewish English in the United States (Benor, 414-427).
> Video lecture by Dr. Benor: Introduction to Jewish Languages: https://youtu.be/KPFjCEuULPo. 0-13:24.
> Video lecture by Dr. Benor: Yiddish, Ladino, and Jewish English: https://youtu.be/isJYtcJSczU (13:17).
> In class: Excerpt from The Hebrew Hammer 2.
> Reading response 1 due, 9am. Questions: What features does Jewish English share with other Jewish languages? How does it differ?

Language contact
Tuesday, August 29
> Matras, Yaron. 2009. *Language Contact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Section 5.1.3 (110-114). (A) (that means ARES)
> Vogel, Sara, & Ofelia García. 2017. "Translanguaging." In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. New York: Oxford University Press. https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264093-e-181?print=pdf. 1-12.
> Benor, Sarah Bunin. 2022. "Pastrami, Verklempt, and Tshootspa: Non-Jews' Use of Jewish Language in the United States." *American Jewish Year Book 2020*. Ed., Arnold Dashefsky and Ira M. Sheskin. Cham, Switzerland: Springer. 3-69. **Read only pp. 36-43.** (A)
> In class: Yeshivish baseball parody.
> Reading response 2 due, 9am. Questions: What is the difference between loanwords and translanguaging? Which of these terms would you use to describe the Yiddish words used by non-Jews?

Children's literature
Thursday, August 31
> Hintz, Carrie, and Eric L. Tribunella. 2019. *Reading Children's Literature: A Critical Introduction*, Second Edition. "Introduction for Students," 27-39; "Race, Ethnicity, and Culture," 391-425. (A – 2 separate readings)

Fox, John Matthew. n.d. "How to Write a Children's Book in 12 Steps (From an Editor)." Blog post. https://thejohnfox.com/2019/02/how-to-write-a-childrens-book/.

In class: Guest speaker: Brianna Caplan Sayres, Bestselling Author, Editor, and Publisher, Intergalactic Afikoman. Analysis of *Bubbe and Bart's Matzoh Ball Mayhem*, by Bonnie Grubman

Reading response 3 due, 9am. Question: What distinguishes children's books from adults' books? What is one aspect of children's literature that you're looking forward to analyzing?

The diverse Jewish English ethnolinguistic repertoire

Tuesday, September 5

Video lecture by Dr. Benor: "Mensch, Bentsh, and Balagan: Language as a Marker of Jewish Identity." https://vimeo.com/411026199. 1:00-22:39.

Benor, Sarah Bunin. 2016. "Jews of Color: Performing Black Jewishness through the Creative Use of Two Ethnolinguistic Repertoires." In *Raciolinguistics: How Language Shapes Our Ideas About Race*. H. Samy Alim, John R. Rickford, and Arnetha F. Ball, eds. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 171-184. (A)

In class: Kali Hawk and Katerina Graham, Black and Jewish.

Reading response 4 due, 9am. Question: What are some features that comprise the Jewish English ethnolinguistic repertoire?

(Non-Hasidic) Yiddish in North America

Thursday, September 7

Shandler, Jeffrey. 2005. Part of "Introduction" and "Absolut Tchotchke." In *Adventures in Yiddishland: Postvernacular Language and Culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1-4; 155-176. (A)

Kafrissen, Rokhl. 2019. "Queer Yiddishkeit: Finding a Home in Yiddishland while Challenging the Status Quo." *Tablet Magazine*, June 18, 2019. https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/community/articles/golden-city-queer-yiddishkeit.

In class: Excerpts from YidLife Crisis.

Reading response 5 due, 9am. Questions: What is postvernacularity? What are some examples from material culture?

Friday, Sept 8, noon: Proposal for Assignment #1 due

Hebrew in the English-speaking world

Tuesday, September 12

Glinert, Lewis. 1993. "Language as Quasilect: Hebrew in Contemporary Anglo-Jewry." In Glinert, Lewis, ed. *Hebrew in Ashkenaz: A Language in Exile*. Oxford University Press. 249-264. (A)

Benor, Sarah Bunin. 2018. "Hebrew Infusion in American Jewish Life: Tensions and the Role of Israeli Hebrew." In Sokoloff, Naomi B., and Nancy E. Berg, eds., *What We*

Talk About When We Talk About Hebrew (And What It Means to Americans).
University of Washington Press. 124-138. (A)

Reading response 6 due, 9am. Question: What are quasilect and ethnolinguistic
infusion, and how are they similar to and different from each other?

Thursday, September 14
Benor, Sarah Bunin, Jonathan Krasner, and Sharon Avni. 2020. *Hebrew Infusion:
Language and Community at American Jewish Summer Camps*. Rutgers University
Press. "The Building Blocks of Infusion" (142-171) and "'Sign' Language: Visual
Displays of Hebrew and Jewish Space" (172-197). [Note that CHE is Camp
Hebraized English – English with loanwords from Hebrew as used at Jewish
summer camps.] (A)

In class: Benjie Lovitt video.

Reading response 7 due, 9am. Question: How does Hebrew infusion at Jewish
summer camps compare to other instances of language mixing?

Jewish cultural diversity
Tuesday, September 19
Lowenstein 2002. Folk Traditions (1-9), Regional Cultures (11-48), and Names (69-84).
Reading response 8 due, 9am. Question: What are the Great Tradition and the Little
Tradition, and what are some examples from religious observance and names?

Thursday, September 21
Lowenstein 2002. Cuisine (119-147) and Music (175-195).
Reading response 9 due, 9am. Question: How do Jewish food and music compare to
Jewish language?

Language endangerment
Tuesday, September 26
Woodbury, Anthony C. n.d. "Endangered Languages." Linguistic Society of America.
https://www.linguisticsociety.org/content/endangered-languages
Avineri, Netta. 2014. "Yiddish Endangerment as Phenomenological Reality and
Discursive Strategy: Crossing into the Past and Crossing out the Present."
Language & Communication 38: 18-32. (A)
Reading response 10 due, 9am. Questions: What factors lead to the endangerment of
languages? Is Yiddish endangered?

Longstanding Jewish languages
Thursday, September 28
Rubin and Kahn 2021. Short chapters on: Arabic, Medieval; Arabic, Modern; Aramaic,
Ancient and Medieval; Aramaic, Modern; Catalan; French; Greek; Italian; Karaim
(and Krymchak); Ladino (and Spanish).
Bring to class links to audiovisual materials for two of these languages (see Jewish
Language Website, Endangered Language Alliance, Mother Tongue, and other
websites).

In class: Midterm review

Reading response 11 due, 9am. Question: What are some common linguistic features of Jewish languages? Give examples from at least two of the languages you read about for today.

Friday, Sept 29, noon: Assignment #1 due

Tuesday, October 3

Rubin and Kahn 2021. Short chapters on: Latin; Malayalam; Persian; Portuguese; Provencal; Tajik (Bukhari); Tat (Juhuri); Yiddish, Old and Early Modern; Yiddish, Modern Standard; Yiddish, Modern Hasidic.

In class: Midterm quiz

Reading response 12 due, 9am. Question: What are some common historical developments of Jewish languages? Give examples from at least two of the languages you read about for today.

Thursday, October 5

Pressman, Hannah. 2021. "A Nearly Extinct Language [Ladino] Experiences a Zoom Boom." *Hadassah Magazine*, November 2021. https://www.hadassahmagazine.org/2021/11/15/ladino-nearly-extinct-language-experiences-zoom-boom/.

Russell, Anthony. 2020. "Translating Black Lives Matter into Yiddish." *Jewish Currents*, June 5, 2020. https://jewishcurrents.org/translating-black-lives-matter-into-yiddish/.

In class: select groups for Assignment #2

Reading response 13 due, 9am. Question: How do these contemporary engagements with Ladino and Yiddish compare?

Tuesday, October 10 – no class: time to meet with group (professor out of town)

Thursday, October 12 – no class: Fall recess

Tuesday, October 17

Shalem, Vitaly. "Judeo-Tat / Juhuri." *Jewish Language Website*. https://www.jewishlanguages.org/judeo-tat-juhuri.

Tolmas, Chana. "Judeo-Tajik / Bukharian." *Jewish Language Website*. https://www.jewishlanguages.org/judeo-tajik.

Video lecture by Ruben Shimonov: "Bukharian." https://vimeo.com/547526874, 25:44-53:19.

Reading response 14 due, 9am. Question: How do these languages differ from their non-Jewish correlates?

Thursday, October 19

Sabar, Ariel. 2009. *My Father's Paradise: A Son's Search for His Jewish Past in Kurdish Iraq*. Algonquin Press. "Aramaic" (155-196). (A)

In class: Interviewing instruction

Reading response 15 due, 9am. Question: What are some language ideologies surrounding Jewish Neo-Aramaic?

Language documentation and revitalization

Tuesday, October 24

Hinton, Leanne. 2001. "Language Revitalization: An Overview." In *The Green Book of Language Revitalization in Practice*. Leanne Hinton and Ken Hale, eds. San Diego: Academic Press. 3-18. (A)

Video: "Documenting endangered Jewish languages panel, 11-14-21." https://youtu.be/Zt-zCYVQSpE, 3:45-50:08.

In class: Prepare for interviews

Reading response 16 due, 9am. Questions: What are some steps in revitalizing a language? What are some challenges, according to those working on Jewish languages?

Thursday, October 26

Hary, Benjamin. 2016. "*Il-ʿarabi dyālna* (Our Arabic): The History and Politics of Judeo-Arabic." In Joshua Miller and Anita Norich, eds., *Languages of Modern Jewish Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. 310-316 (rest of article optional). (A)

Elbaz, Vanessa Paloma. 2021. Jewish Saharan Songs. https://yalalla.org.uk/. Make sure to watch the embedded videos.

In class: Practice interviewing

Reading response 17 due, 9am. Question: Are Elbaz's exhibit and the artistic works described in the Hary article examples of language revitalization efforts?

Jewish language theory

Tuesday, October 31

Bunis, David M. 1981. "A Comparative Linguistic Analysis of Judezmo and Yiddish." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 30. 49-70. (A)

Benor, Sarah Bunin. Benor, Sarah Bunin. 2008. "Towards a New Understanding of Jewish Language in the 21st Century." *Religion Compass* 2/6. 1062-1080. (A)

Reading response 18 due, 9am. Question: How do these two approaches to Jewish languages compare?

Thursday, November 2

Hary and Benor 2018. Choose 1: chapter on Jewish Swedish in Sweden (Patric Joshua Klagsbrun Lebenswerd, 431-450) OR chapter on Jewish Spanish in Buenos Aires and Mexico City (Evelyn Dean-Olmsted and Susana Skura, 383-407).

In class: Guest speaker: Shoshana Nambi, author of *The Very Best Sukkah: A Story from Uganda*

Reading response 19 due, 9am. Question: How does Jewish Swedish or Jewish Spanish compare to other languages we have discussed?

Hebrew/Aramaic component

Tuesday, November 7

No class. Time to work on assignments. No reading, but response due:

Response 20 due, 9am. Question: What's one thing you've found interesting in this class so far?

Thursday, November 9

Benor, Sarah Bunin, and Benjamin Hary. 2018. "A Research Agenda for Comparative Jewish Linguistic Studies." In Hary and Benor 2018. 672-690.

Krivoruchko, Julia. 2001. "The Hebrew/Aramaic Component in Romaniote [Judeo-Greek] Dialects." *Lekket: World Congress of Jewish Studies* 13. 1-8. (A)

Sabar, Yona. 1975. "The Impact of Israeli Hebrew on the Neo-Aramaic Dialect of the Kurdish Jews of Zakho: A Case of Language Shift." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46: 489–508. [The author is the Yona described in his son Ariel's book] (A)

Reading response 21 due, 9am. Questions: In what ways has Hebrew influenced Jewish languages?

Friday, November 10, noon: Assignment #2 due

Hasidic Yiddish and English

Tuesday, November 14

Fader, Ayala. 2009. *Mitzvah Girls: Bringing up the Next Generation of Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 4: "Making English Jewish" (87-117). (A)

In class: Share possible storylines

Reading response 22 due, 9am. Question: What is the gendered pattern of language use among Hasidic Jews in the US?

Thursday, November 16

Assouline, Dalit. 2018. "Haredi Yiddish in Israel and the United States." In Hary and Benor 2018. 472-482.

Reading response 23 due, 9am. Question: How do the language situations of Hasidim in the US and Israel compare?

Tuesday, November 21 – no class: bonus working day
Thursday, November 23 – no class: Thanksgiving

Tuesday, November 28

In class: Presentations

Response 24 due, 9am. Question: What is something you learned from doing your assignments?

Wed, November 29, noon: Assignment #3 due

Thursday, November 30

No reading. Review.
Response 25 due, 9am. Question: What questions do you have about class concepts?

Tuesday, December 12, 10am: Final exam due – online, can be taken remotely, asynchronously

Assignments

All assignments should be submitted on Blackboard.

Glossary of terms
    In this class you will learn many new terms from linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and Jewish studies. You should keep a list of these terms, adding definitions as you encounter them in class and in readings. You will not submit this glossary or receive a grade on it, but it will be useful as you prepare for the midterm quiz, the final exam, and the assignments.

Reading responses (4-5 sentences each class day)
    You are expected to complete all of the readings and video viewings before each class. To help you with this preparation, you will submit a brief response that addresses all readings and videos for that day by 9am the day of each class session. You might choose to address each reading individually or synthesize all of the readings for that day. The response should address the question(s) listed and should provide evidence that you have engaged with all readings thoughtfully. Try to limit your responses to 4-5 sentences. You will submit these responses under Assignments in Blackboard. I may share excerpts of your responses in our class discussions. If you do not want a particular entry shared, you can label it "PERSONAL."

Assignments #1-3
The three main assignments for this class revolve around a service learning project: students will write children's books that engage with endangered Jewish languages in postvernacular ways. Some assignments may be made available online for free as part of a broader effort to promote awareness about and engagement with endangered Jewish languages. To prepare to write these books, students will analyze existing Jewish children's books and interview speakers of endangered languages and their descendants.

Assignment #1: Children's book analysis (4-5 pages double spaced or 7-9-minute podcast or video)
    Analyze a children's book on a Jewish topic that is written in English but also engages with another language. Your analysis can take the form of a traditional paper, a podcast, or a video and should address all of the following questions:

1. Summarize the book briefly. Which Jewish group(s), location(s), and time period(s) are represented? What ages are the characters? What problem fuels the story?

What are the themes? What moral lessons are presented or implied? What pedagogical goals do you think the author had?

2. What prior knowledge does the book assume or not assume about history, language, cultural and religious practices? How is this reflected in glossing, glossary, and metalinguistic comments?
3. How does the book reflect historical patterns of migration and language shift, contemporary language practices, and language ideologies associated with a particular group(s) of Jews (e.g., Persian Jews, North African Sephardic Jews, Orthodox Jews, women)? What historical events fueled those shifts?
4. How does the book reflect language contact? Apply relevant class concepts like postvernacular engagement, loanwords, code switching, translanguaging, and ethnolinguistic repertoires. Analyze multiple levels of language, if relevant: lexicon (including names), phonology, morphology, syntax, and orthography.
5. Offer additional analysis, including literary techniques common in children's literature, such as alliteration, repetition, and rhyme.

Full reference to the book should be in the bibliography. In addition, you should cite at least five articles, books, or lecture videos, at least three of which must be from the syllabus. You might have to read ahead on the syllabus if a relevant language or topic hasn't been covered yet. In a traditional paper, references should be cited using parenthetical references with a bibliography (any format: MLA, APA, etc.; just be consistent). In a podcast, references should be briefly mentioned throughout, but you don't need to give full bibliographic information. In a video, you should mention references briefly throughout and include a bibliography on the screen for a few seconds at the end. There is no set format for the paper; just make sure all questions are addressed.

How to select your book: You can select just one book if it incorporates sufficient language contact for your analysis. If not, you should select two books and analyze them comparatively. Here is a list of more than 30 books you might choose among, which should be on reserve at Leavey Library for a 3-day loan (the maximum they allow). Please sign up on that spreadsheet so two students don't work on the same book. If you know of an appropriate book that is not on that list, feel free to add it and find it to analyze.

Steps:
1. Select a book to analyze and sign up on the spreadsheet.
2. Borrow the book from Leavey Library (or purchase it online or elsewhere). Read the book carefully, taking notes on the distinctive linguistic features and other aspects. If you feel there's not enough to analyze in line with the assignment, find a different book or analyze two comparatively.
3. Search for five relevant articles. Check the syllabus, the USC library, and then Google.
4. Submit your proposal (1-2 pages): title and author of the book you plan to analyze, brief outline of your analysis, and list of five articles/chapters/videos you plan to cite with full bibliographic information (not just URLs).
5. Dr. Benor will give you feedback on your proposal.

6. Write or record your assignment.
7. Submit it on Blackboard.

Grading:
40 points: Analysis: a thoughtful analysis of the book, thoroughly addressing all questions
40 points: Class concepts: demonstrates understanding of relevant class concepts
10 points: Citation: cites at least five sources, at least three of which are from the syllabus
10 points: Writing/production: writing is clear, concise, well structured, error-free, and engaging; production is fluid and engaging

Note: Your submission for Assignment #1 will be considered for inclusion in an online exhibit of student work on Jewish languages (with your permission). You can also browse that exhibit for samples of assignments from the last few years. Note that the assignments have changed significantly.

Assignment #2: Interview and writeup (transcript plus about 2 pages double spaced)
Each student will interview one person who has a connection to an endangered Jewish language – either a speaker or a descendant of speakers – and write a summary and analysis of the interview, incorporating class concepts. To select the language, students will form groups of three. Each group will select a different language from this list: Judeo-Hamedani, Judeo-Yazdi, Jewish Neo-Aramaic (Urmia), Jewish Neo-Aramaic (Sanandaj), Judeo-Arabic (Baghdad), Bukharian, Juhuri, Haketia (called "language X" below). All group members will do background research on the language, using items from the syllabus and other academic articles and books. Each group should get contact info for one interviewee from Prof. Benor. Someone from the group will contact that interviewee and get names and contact info for two other interviewees. Each interviewer will contact their interviewee to schedule interviews by Zoom (or in person). Each member of the group will conduct one interview individually, and your group will draw content from all three interviews for your children's book assignment.

A sample email to a prospective interviewee:
Dear Y,
I'm a student at the University of Southern California, and I'm taking a class called "Jewish Language in the 21st Century." One of our assignments is to interview someone with a connection to a Jewish language, and I selected language X. Z told me that you have a connection to language X, and I would appreciate if you could spend 30-45 minutes talking to me over Zoom in the next two weeks. I will ask questions about your family's migrations, languages, names, and holiday observance. If you are open to this, please let me know if any of these times would work for you:
[Give a few times you're available.]

Thank you for considering this, and I look forward to talking to you soon.

[Your name]
[Your phone number]

Some questions to ask in the interview:
- Where did you grow up? Where did your parents and grandparents grow up? Tell me about your (or your parents/grandparents…) immigration (why, when, how, how did you/they feel?).
- What languages do you speak? Understand? How would you rate your proficiency in each? When and how did you learn those languages?
- What languages do/did your parents and grandparents speak?
- What is your connection to X language (the language you're focusing on)? How did you learn it?
- [For descendants of speakers]: Which words from X language do you know? [For speakers]: Can you tell me a few words in X language that you have continued to use when speaking English? Please say them and spell them (in English letters) and tell me what they mean and how you learned them. [If they have trouble thinking of words, ask about kinship terms (like grandma, uncle), terms of endearment (like sweetie, dear), evaluations (like nice job, excellent), foods, holidays, and lifecycle events. Note that you will need to use at least five loanwords in Assignment #3, so you should elicit at least seven here.]
- What are your attitudes toward X language? Other languages you have spoken (or engaged with)? How important do you think it is to record people speaking X? To teach it to the younger generations? Why do you think you developed these attitudes? Do you think others share these opinions?
- Can you sing a lullaby in X language? Another song? [Or, if they don't want to sing]: Can you tell me a brief story or joke in X language? And ask for translation. [You will need one excerpt of the language for Assignment #3.]
- What was Shabbat like in your home when you were a child? When you tell me, can you please incorporate some X language words into your English? Same question for Passover. And Simchat Torah.
- My next assignment is to write a children's book that engages with X language. Do you have any ideas for this story? [Or, if YOU have an idea based on the interview, ask them what they think about it. Maybe they can add details to enhance the story.]
- What is your full name? Nicknames? Names you changed from and to (if relevant)? What are the names of some of your relatives? Other names from your community that might be appropriate for a character in the book we'll be writing?

After the interview, you should automatically transcribe the entire interview (using software such as Otter.ai). Then, edit the transcript carefully, asking the interviewee about any words you're not sure about. Write a summary of the interview, highlighting the main points. Write an analysis of the interview, drawing on class concepts and citing at least five sources, three of which are from the syllabus. Submit the interview video, edited transcript, summary, and analysis.

Steps:

1. Form groups, select language.
2. Contact interviewees to schedule interviews.
3. Do library research, read background information about the language.
4. Complete interviews.
5. Write a thank you note to interviewees.
6. Edit interview transcripts.
7. Write summary and analysis.
8. Submit assignment on Blackboard, including interview video.

Grading:
30 points: Interview: skillful interviewing, addresses all questions, and asks follow-ups
25 points: Analysis: an accurate summary and thoughtful analysis of the interview
25 points: Class concepts: analysis demonstrates understanding of relevant class concepts
10 points: Citation: cites at least five sources, at least three of which are from the syllabus
10 points: Writing: writing is clear, concise, well structured, error-free, and engaging

Assignment #3: Writing children's book (in groups of 3)
Write a book for children ages 6-8 that engages with the language you selected (called language X below), inspired by your interviews for Assignment #2. The book should be 500-1000 words and should have the following elements:

- An engaging story appropriate for children
- Tidbits you learned from at least one of the interviews
- Metalinguistic content about language X (e.g., one character telling another about the language or teaching words in the language, how the language differs from English or another language, who speaks/spoke the language, history of the language, why it is endangered, components of the language, someone's attitudes toward the language)
- At least five loanwords from language X, with translation in context, footnote, or glossary at the end
- At least one brief excerpt of the language (a few lines of lullaby, song, joke, etc.), with translation on that page

You will submit the text of the book with notes describing the illustrations (you are not expected to draw or paint!). Append a note to parents for the book flap giving any background information they might appreciate. And you will submit an authors' statement explaining how the book reflects content you discovered in your interviews and concepts you learned in class, including from readings and Assignment #1. Include at least five citations, at least three of which are from the syllabus. You will combine all of this into one document. Format:

- Book title
- Authors' names
- Text of book, 24-28 pages, 500-1000 words, divided by 2-page spread, but presented in list format on 2 pages single spaced:

- o Pages 1-2 (just a few sentences each or total, with description of illustrations in parentheses)
- o Pages 3-4
- o Etc.
- Note to parents: ½ to 1 page double spaced
- Authors' statement: 2-3 pages double spaced
- Bibliography: 1 page

Each partner will also submit a partnership evaluation: a sentence or two describing/evaluating how you and your partners each contributed to the group work for this assignment. If one or two partners clearly did significantly more of the work, the partners may receive different grades.

Your group will make a presentation to the class, highlighting the plot of the book you wrote, tidbits you incorporated from your interviews, and something you learned from the assignment.

Steps:
1. Read through your own and your partners' interview transcripts, summaries, and analyses.
2. As a group, brainstorm possible story topics and elements to include in your book, based on the interviews.
3. Share possible storylines in class, get feedback.
4. As a group of three, write your story and note to parents. Make sure all elements above are included.
5. As a group of three, write your authors' statement.
6. Present about your book in class.
7. Submit the assignment on Blackboard – just one per group.
8. Submit a partnership evaluation on Blackboard – one per person.

Assignment Tips
- ➢ Outline. Make a detailed outline before you write your first draft and another outline after you're done. This will help you create a coherent structure.
- ➢ Avoid extraneous words that don't enhance your writing. Avoid repetition. Avoid repeating yourself!
- ➢ Avoid run-on sentences and fragments. Read each sentence to make sure it's a full, clear sentence.
- ➢ Use commas and semicolons appropriately. If you combine 2 sentences with "and" – and both have subjects and verbs – then they should be separated by a comma. Consider using dashes (–) and colons (:).
- ➢ Choose a tense. Stick with it.
- ➢ Make sure your persons agree. Avoid this: "The two things that are most important to me for the coming year is …"
- ➢ Try to avoid using big words and complicated constructions just to sound more academic.

Checklist to improve clarity and succinctness:
1. Does every word add something?
2. Is every sentence complete and not too rambling?
3. Does every paragraph include just one topic or sub-topic?
4. Does the introductory paragraph explain what you discuss in the rest of the paper? Does it pique the interest of the reader?
5. Does each paragraph follow the previous one in a logical way, starting with an appropriate transition?
6. Does the concluding paragraph sum up the paper in an intriguing way that makes the reader feel a sense of completion but also a desire to read more of your writing?

Formatting: Your paper should include a heading with your name and a title, and each page should be numbered.

Reader's interest: Try your best to keep the reader's interest, incorporating engaging writing, person-centered anecdotes, and sometimes even humor.

Edit! Proofread! Don't rely on spell-check. Plan to finish your paper 2 days before it is due. That gives you time to set it aside for a day and then spend a good chunk of time the next day editing and then another half hour proofreading. It's amazing how many mistakes you miss when you don't read it multiple times.

Students and Disability Accommodations:
USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](#). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](#).

Support Systems:
[*Counseling and Mental Health*](#) *- (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[*988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline*](#) *- 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call*
The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services

(though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) *- (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) *- (213) 740-5086*
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment *- (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) *- (213) 740-0776*
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention *- (213) 740-0411*
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion *- (213) 740-2101*
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency *- UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety *- UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call*
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds *- (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) *- (323) 442-2850 or* otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health-promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.