

First assessed essay questions

For non-finalists, this first assessed essay is a 3,500 word assignment that requires you to make detailed reference to at least two of the texts we cover in Term 1. **This essay is due at midday on the Tuesday of Week 2, Term 2.**

You can modify or adapt one of these essay titles but only in consultation with your seminar tutor.

1. “Nothing is more Jewish than a Jewish demon” (David G. Roskies, *The Bridge of Longing*, p.266). Analyse the representation of evil and/or threat in Yiddish literature.
2. Analyse the representation and function of resistance in Yiddish literature.
3. How does Yiddish literature demonstrate an awareness of regional history and/or politics?
4. “While the shtetl, the archetypal small town in which many Jews lived in Eastern Europe, was in fact woven of diverse and intricate sociocultural threads, we have inherited a simplistic, monolithic view of the Jewish past. This inheritance was created by those who left the shtetl and by those grappling with its demise” (Zohar Weiman-Kelman, “Touching Time”, p.104). What is the relationship between the *shtetl* and nostalgia in Yiddish literature?
5. What is the function of folklore and/or magic in Yiddish literature?
6. How does Yiddish literature express and explore trauma and/or recovery?
7. “If Yiddish is to become a real language for us, then all the old cultural treasures of our great past must become a part of it. If Yiddish is to become a full member in the family of the languages of the world, it must become accessible to the world” (Y. L. Peretz, *Speech at the Czernowitz conference in 1908*). Does the translation of Yiddish literature accurately represent Yiddish culture?

8. "Peretz, Mendele, all the rest, / They're my home – my Yiddishland" (Abraham Reisen, "Yiddish"). How is the concept of "Yiddishland" expressed in any two of the texts you've studied this term?