Education at YIVO-testimonials

“YIVO’s Winter Program classes represent what education is supposed to be all about--love of learning for its own sake, intense discussion and debate, engagement with the greatest works of a civilization.”
- Ross Perlin, January 2014

“No other institution of research or higher learning in the United States does justice to the full range of the 1000-year Ashkenazi experience the way YIVO does.”
- Ross Perlin, January 2014

“When I first came to YIVO, I could barely write a sentence in Yiddish; now I write articles in Yiddish, read novels in Yiddish, and speak Yiddish with my housemates on a daily basis. My time at YIVO was a huge inspiration.”

“The Uriel Weinreich Summer Program gave me a unique chance not only to improve my knowledge of Yiddish, but to experience it as a complex and dynamic phenomenon. Using Yiddish as a scholar and working with it primarily in European archives, it was reassuring and encouraging to see that Yiddish lives both within the classroom and on the streets of New York with my own eyes.”
- Anastasia Felcher, YIVO Summer Program student, 2014

“The whole program was a remarkable experience and will remain in my memory forever. I had an amazing chance to meet extraordinary people, with whom I keep in touch to this day. I got acquainted with the works of my favorite poet Celia Dropkin, and had a unique opportunity to taste real Lower East Side pickles.”
- Magdalena Matloka, YIVO Summer Program student, 2014

“I am a sociolinguist who grew up in a bilingual Croatian-German environment. Through my knowledge of Germanic and Slavic languages, and knowing the Hebrew alphabet, I was always able to understand Yiddish and to discern the meaning of written texts. I decided to study it further at YIVO because the language program was supplemented with courses on literature, culture, history and linguistics. Another important thing for me as a researcher was the opportunity to use YIVO library and archives throughout the course. I attended YIVO summer program in 2013 and 2014. Upon completion of my second program, I started a Yiddish centre in Zagreb, Croatia.”
- Gabi Abramac, Summer Program student 2013 & 2014

“I really enjoyed the access to talented and experienced teachers at YIVO last summer. Since I don't go to a college with Jewish history or Jewish studies classes, it was a tremendous privilege to attend this program.”
- Hannah Reingold, Summer Program student 2014
“For decades now, YIVO’s summer Yiddish program has been one of the great bulwarks of Jewish language and culture education. I can think of no better way of immersing oneself in the language's twists and turns and pleasures.”

- Steven J. Zipperstein, Stanford University; YIVO's Jacob Kronhill Visiting Scholar in East European Jewish History, 2014; YIVO Summer Program student, 1977 & 1978

“[Paula Teitelbaum] is extremely knowledgeable and passionate about [her] subject; I wish to have a course with her again.”

- Beginning Yiddish Student

“Sarah [Ponichtera] is a master. I don’t recall her ever not knowing how to do something.”

- Beginning Yiddish Student

“I’ve gone from next-to-no communication skills [in Yiddish] to adequate/good conversational ability.”

- Intermediate Yiddish Student

“Sheva [Zucker] knows everything…She’s wonderfully patient, but she expects a lot and challenges us, even from the first day. She would explain things in Yiddish, resisting any temptation to allow English in the class. This was a very smart, effective pedagogical strategy.”

- Intermediate Yiddish Student

“Miriam [Trinh] not only knows [Yiddish] literature, but is committed to helping students understand, interpret, and relate to it.”

- Advanced Yiddish Student

“For me, YIVO is a place where we can find the real Yiddish.”

- Zhenya Lopatnik, Summer Program student 2015

“I’m further along the way to truly knowing Yiddish. It's a lifelong gig.”

- David Mikics, Summer Program student 2015

“YIVO’s Uriel Weinreich Summer Program opened the door to the wide world of Yiddish for me. When I was a beginning student in the program in 1982 I did not know what the future would bring. I did not know that I would become a graduate student in Yiddish Studies, a scholar and translator of Yiddish literature, and a teacher of Yiddish culture. I also did not know that I would meet with extraordinary teachers at the Summer Program and also find so many dear friends and colleagues in Yiddishland.”

- Professor Jeffrey Shandler, Summer Program Student 1982

“I am discovering a new world.”

- Jeanne Gagnaux, Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“Going somehow in depth [about] the things we thought we knew.”

- Metin Delevi, Discovering Ashkenaz Student
“Great class, clearing up a lot of vague areas for me.”
- Elissa Raskin, Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“Very informative and the responses shed so much more light on the subject.”
- Meredith Neria, Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“This was among the best courses I have ever taken. My thanks to Yivo and to Prof. Gottesman whose charisma and knowledge made this such an enjoyable experience. I like the breadth of the course and Itzik's delight in his subject matter. More, more! Don't go away. Come back and give some more lectures. I'll make you tea and bring whitefish from Russ & Daughters.”
- Folklore of Ashkenaz Student

“This is a wonderful opportunity to learn online from the YIVO faculty and from an institution with its own remarkable history.”
- Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“I am absolutely enthralled at how Dr. Kassow weaves the threads together of this history in such an engrossing way. He is so easy to listen to...”
- Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“I love this experience (and am neglecting my other tasks for the pleasure of each new segment!”
- Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“This course is stimulating; I had no idea how diverse the Jewish community in Europe was and the plethora of movement – overwhelming!”
- Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“Love the course; great admiration for Professor Kassow’s broad knowledge, deceptively simple lecturing style, covering a great deal of ground and opening my eyes to history. I wish I had learned long ago...being so far from NY it is truly fantastic to have such a wonderful opportunity to learn.”
- Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“This course made me more interested in exploring the Ashkenaz history in greater detail. All of the material served to whet my appetite for more...[Prof. Kassow’s] breadth of knowledge and obvious love of the material were immensely helpful in taking this class remotely.”
- Discovering Ashkenaz Student
“The course greatly deepened my appreciation of Eastern European Jewish history and culture. Professor Kassow seems to have an encyclopedic knowledge of and empathy for this great, if largely lost, culture. Truly a privilege and pleasure to hear him discuss it.”

- Discovering Ashkenaz Student

“This course helps you see Jewish history as part of a continuum. It’s like pearls on a string rather than individual beads. I had a collection of beads; this provided me with the string.”

- Discovering Ashkenaz

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