



M | LSA
VICTORS

Rita Poretzky Fund for Yiddish Challenge Grant

THE POWER:

Interest in the study of Yiddish stems from a variety of sources—a personal connection to the language, its cultural heritage, its role as a window into Eastern European Jewish history and its connection to the Jewish American immigrant experience. Yiddish played and continues to play an important role within the modern Jewish experience. Most importantly, Yiddish is relevant to Jewish identity and its peoplehood.

The U-M Yiddish Program—part of the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies—combines language instruction with cultural immersion. Our courses and study opportunities demonstrate our commitment to engaging students using the latest methods and technologies in language pedagogy.

The University attracts local, national and international scholars and students who want to engage in its vibrant Yiddish program. Whether studying modern Yiddish literature, comparative Jewish literatures, Eastern European or American history, Orthodox Judaism, Jewish politics, the labor movement, ethnicity in America or a host of other topics, the Frankel Center is assuring that Yiddish is spoken, read, written and studied.

Our largest-ever fundraising campaign is ambitious, visionary, purposeful — worthy of the name “Victors.” The \$400 million goal is built upon the cornerstone of the liberal arts: the idea that a powerful, pragmatic education can transform hearts and minds, can solve problems in a changing world, can yield ideas and innovation across every discipline. That’s why we are focused on raising money so that the best and brightest minds can have access to the College through robust scholarship support, no matter their financial circumstances. So too are we committed to helping every student acquire not just knowledge in the classroom, but experiences outside the academy including innovative entrepreneurial efforts and internships. We strive to support our faculty on the front-lines of research, and steward our planet, our community, our campus. To do all this, and so much more, the College needs you — because the world needs Victors.

THE OPPORTUNITIES

The recognition that Yiddish is an essential, irreplaceable Jewish language has become the cornerstone of a vibrant Yiddish studies program at U-M, with faculty and students from several departments (including English, History, Political Science, Slavic Studies, Near Eastern Studies, German Studies and Comparative Literature). Graduate students and other scholars meet regularly in classes and workshops to share their new research and insights. Undergraduates begin their studies with the alphabet and continue on to read Yiddish literature, write Yiddish essays, sing Yiddish songs, and to study Yiddish folklore. Students of Yiddish have the opportunity to progress to a high level of fluency using a variety of texts including Yiddish children's literature, folklore, literary and historical texts, music and films. Yiddish is examined in a broad context of Jewish, European and American history, social and political environments, and the culture it produced.

THE IMPACT

Gifts to the Rita Poretsky Fund for Yiddish Language instruction give students access to U-M's Yiddish language curriculum for undergraduate and graduate programs – programs that stress language acquisition as well as cultural awareness. For the Frankel Center's renowned program to remain a leader in the field, Michigan must remain competitive in its ability to offer Yiddish language instruction to undergraduate and graduate students. Language training is critical to Judaic studies and to the rise of a new generation of scholars and culturally informed people.



THE RITA PORETSKY CHALLENGE GRANT

With the goal of raising additional support for Yiddish language instruction at the University of Michigan's Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, the Rita Poretsky Memorial Fund has committed \$150,000 to create a challenge grant. Gifts of any size will be matched dollar for dollar, until the goal is reached, or by January 31, 2019.

Yiddish is critical for undergraduates and graduate students who intend to pursue study of Jewish languages, history and culture. A gift to the Rita Poretsky Fund for Yiddish will assure essential support for scholars and students at Michigan for many years to come.

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