

**Modern History of the Jews AS/HIST 3860.06
2009-10**

Tuesday and Thursday, 10-11.20

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Office hours, 242 Vanier College, Wednesday 2.30-3.30 or by appointment

Course Description

This course surveys the history of the Jews from the breakdown of traditional society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until the second half of the twentieth century. It will focus on the Jews of Europe, as well as on the major offshoots of Jewish Europe in Israel and North America. The course will highlight significant historical themes in the political, social, religious and intellectual history of the Jewish people.

Required Books

1. Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005.
2. Doris Bergen, *War & Genocide. A Concise History of the Holocaust*. (second edition) Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009
3. Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998
Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*. (second edition) New York: Oxford University Press, 1995
4. Zvi Gitelman, *Century of Ambivalence*. (second edition) Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001
5. Jonathan Sarna (ed.), *The American Jewish Experience* (second edition). New York: Holmes and Meier, 1986, 1987
6. Course reader

All required books are placed on reserve in Scott Library. Unless otherwise indicated, all required readings other than books are in the course kit (CK). Used copies of these books are readily available online and in bookstores.

Recommended

Michael Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew*.

David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews of Europe, 1789-1939*.

Assignments

Analysis and discussion of a document in its historical context, 4-6 pages, 17 November (15%)

In class mid-term examination (25%), 12 January

12 page paper on topic approved by the instructor, due at end of second semester (20%):

topic proposals and preliminary bibliography, 28 January; paper outline, 25 February;

first revision, 23 March; final revision, 1 April

Final examination (30%)

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Please note: Style, structure, grammar, spelling and punctuation count in addition to content in papers. Students are urged to visit the Centre for Academic Writing for help in preparing their essays.

Lateness, Use of Websites, and Academic Honesty

All assignments must be submitted by deadlines announced in class. Submissions will be penalized a full grade (e.g. lowered from A to B) for each week of lateness unless an extension has been granted by the instructor.

Students may **not** use websites as sources for their papers without the express consent of the instructor as websites often contain inappropriate or inaccurate information.

Students are expected to do their own work and to cite sources appropriately. Plagiarism and cheating will be punished in accordance with university policy. For more information about what constitutes plagiarism and university policy concerning academic integrity, please consult the following website:

http://www.yorku.ca/tutorial/academic_integrity/index.html

Courtesy

Students are expected not to conduct private conversations or to pursue private pursuits during class time. Here is not the place to multi-task, i.e. to listen to class discussion while attending to personal affairs. Please close cell phones, Ipods, etc. and refrain from using the internet and other means for private and non-academic purposes, e.g. Facebook, surfing the net and communicating with others (email, instant messaging, text messaging).

Class Schedule

1. Introduction: The Ghetto, Court Jews, and Absolutist Politics
10 September

Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," in *Menorah Treasury*, 50-63 (CK)
Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, ch.1-2, 1-27, "Social Revolution," "Ghetto Times"
F.L. Carsten. "The Court Jews. A Prelude to Emancipation," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook III* (1958), 140-156 (CK)
The Jew in the Modern World (JMW), 18-20

2. The Sephardic Diaspora and the Absorption of the *Conversos*
15 September

Uriel Acosta, "Account of His Own Life," 9-45 (CK)

3. Sabbateanism and Its Aftermath
17 September

Gershom Scholem, "Sabbateanism," *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 287-324 (CK)

Enlightenment and Emancipation

4, 5. Moses Mendelssohn and the Berlin *Haskalah*
22, 24 September

Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, ch.3-5, 28-79, “Portents of Change,” “Semi-neutral Society,”
“The Image of the Future”
JMW, 28-42, 44-47, 61-64, 70-74, 87-99
Recommended: Michael Meyer, *Origins of the Modern Jew*, 11-56

6. Texts and Discussion #1
29 September

7, 8. The French Revolution and the Emancipation of the Jews
1, 6 October

Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, ch.10-11, 161-190, “Legal Stepping Stones,” “The Futile Flight
from Jewish Professions.”
Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, 328-368 (CK)
JMW, 112-121, 125-133, 137-143, 304-308

Responses to Emancipation

9. Social and Economic Transformations
8 October

Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*, ch.6-7, 80-123, “Gentile Objections,” “The Defecting Fringe”
JMW, 105-111, 256-261
Steven M. Lowenstein, “The Pace of Modernization of German Jewry in the Nineteenth
Century,” 41-54 (CK)

Reading Week **10-16 October**

10. Texts and Discussion #2
20 October

11, 12. Radical Assimilation and Reform Judaism
22, 27 October

Katz, 124-160, ch.8-9, 124-160, “A Blow for Reform,” “Conservatives in a Quandry”
JMW, 161-187
Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity*, 131-142 (CK)
Recommended: Meyer, *Origins of the Modern Jew*, 85-114

13. Modern Orthodoxy
29 October

Samson Raphael Hirsch, *Nineteen Letters on Judaism*, 23-29, 54-56, 62-65, 106-116
(CK)
JMW, 169-173, 197-202, 205-206

14. Positive-historical Judaism and *Wissenschaft des Judenthums*
3 November

Ismar Schorsch, "The Emergence of Historical Consciousness in Modern Judaism," 177-204 (CK)
Ismar Schorsch, "Zecharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism," 255-265 (CK)
JMW, 188-197, 213-214, 219-233

15. Texts and Discussion #3
5 November

16, 17. The Emergence of Modern Anti-Semitism
10, 12 November

Katz, ch.12, "Profile of Emancipated Jewry," 191-219
Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, 119-128, 195-202, 260-272, 292-300 (CK)
JMW, 321-334, 343-346

Transformation of Eastern European Jewry

18. Background and Hasidism
17 November

Document analysis due

Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, ch.1-5, 15-69 (introduction also recommended)
Excerpt from *Shivhei habesht* from Joachim Neugroschel, *No Star Too Bright*, 100-105
(CK)
Lucy Dawidowicz (ed.). *The Golden Tradition*, 93-110 (CK)
JMW, 387-390

19, 20. The *Haskalah* in Eastern Europe
19, 24 November

Dawidowicz, *Golden Tradition*, 120-133, 147-153 (CK)
JMW, 375-379
Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe*, ch.6-9, 70-111
Baron, *The Russian Jew Under Tsars and Soviets*, 124-136 (CK)

Excerpt of *Revealer of Secrets* from Joachim Neugroschel, *No Star Too Bright*, 142-152 (CK)

Excerpt of *The Headband* from Joachim Neugroschel, *The Shtetl*, 61-67 (CK)

21. Impoverishment, Persecution, and Jewish Radicalization
26 November

Bartal, ch.10-13, 112-156 (conclusion recommended, 157-168)

Baron, *Russian Jew*, 43-62 (CK)

JMW, 380, 261-266, 408-413

recommended: Zvi Gitelman, *Century of Ambivalence*, chapter 1

22. Texts and Discussion #4
1 December

23. Autonomism, the Bund, and the Radical Jewish Intelligentsia
3 December

Dawidowicz, *The Golden Tradition*, 232-241, 411-435 (CK)

Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale*, ch. 6, "On the Cultural Front," 116-126 (CK)

JMW, 417-425, 428-432

Zvi Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics*, 17-66 (CK)

Y L. Peretz, "Bontshe the Silent," 223-230 (CK)

Zionism

24. Zionism
8 December

Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 15-80 (to be distributed)

Herzl, "The Jewish State"

Ahad Ha'am, "The Wrong Way"

<http://www.geocities.com/Vienna/6640/zion/essential.html>

JMW, 532-533, 547-548

Second Semester

25. Texts and Discussion #5
5 January

26. Midterm Review
7 January

United States

27. Midterm

12 January

28. American Jewry

14 January

American Jewish Experience, 44-81, 120-135, 138-150, 185-193

JMW, 468-469, 489-490, 502-504

Glazer, *American Judaism*, 60-78 (CK)

L.P. Gartner, "Jewish Migrants en Route from Europe to North America," 49-63 (CK)

29, 30. North Africa and the Ottoman Empire

19, 21 January

Stillman, *Jews of the Arab Lands in Modern Times*, 3-47 (CK)

Aron Rodrigue and Esther Benbassa, *The Jews of the Balkans*, 65-116 (CK)

World War I and the Maturing of the Yishuv

31. War I, the Russian Revolution, and the political aftermath (Balfour Declaration, the Treaty of Versailles)

26 January

Gitelman, *Century of Ambivalence*, ch.1

JMW, 582-584

Recommended: Salo Baron, *Russian Jew*, 156-186

32. Maturing of the *Yishuv*

28 January

Paper topic proposal and preliminary bibliography due

Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, 441-473, 308-337 (CK)

JMW, 589-597, 603-616

33. Texts and Discussion #6

2 February

The Interwar Period

34, 35. Poland and East Central Europe

4, 9 February

JMW, 437-438, 440-446

Lucy Dawidowicz, *From That Place and Time*, 51-119 (to be distributed)

36. The Soviet Jewish Experiment (a)

11 February

16, 18 February, Reading Week, No class

37. The Soviet Jewish Experiment (b)
23 February

Zvi Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence*, ch.2, 3
JMW, 433-436, 439-440, 446-448

38. Central European Jewry
25 February

Paper outline due

JMW, 254-5, 272-274, 278-279
Bergen, *War & Genocide*, ch.1-4

39. United States
2 March

40. Texts and Discussion #7
4 March

American Jewish Experience, 245-267.

The Holocaust

41, 42. Destruction of European Jewry
9, 11 March

Bergen, *War & Genocide*, ch.5-end
JMW, 662-678, 684-689
Selected Poems of Jacob Glatstein, 101-103, 119, 121-123, 125 (CK)
American Jewish Experience, 274-292.

43. Film: *Europa, Europa*
16 March

The Aftermath of the Holocaust

44, 45. Post-WW II and the State of Israel
18, 23 March

First paper revision due

American Jewish Experience, 294-311, 328-347
Laqueur, *History of Zionism*, 564-586 (CK)

JMW, 631-635, Tables XVI and XVII

46. Texts and Discussion #8

25 March

30 March

No class – Passover

47. Review

1 April