

History 009-305

Fall 2007  
Tuesday 1:30-4:30

### **THE INVENTION OF MODERN JUDAISM**

INSTRUCTOR: Beth S. Wenger  
OFFICE HOURS: Monday 12:00-1:30  
and by appointment

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#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The varieties of Judaism that exist today reflect a two-hundred-year evolution that began in Europe with the dawn of the modern era. Judaism's distinct movements (Reform, Orthodox etc.) grew out of the first Jewish encounters with political emancipation, the embrace of Enlightenment ideals, and the desire of Jews to create new religious identities suited to the modern world. This course explores the invention of modern Judaism in its social, political and cultural contexts. Utilizing both primary and secondary sources, we will trace the historical development of Judaism as a reflection of the ways that Jews have interacted with the cultures in which they lived. Throughout the semester, students will be required to complete many different types of writing assignments, to revise their work, and to work cooperatively with others in class to improve communication and writing skills.

#### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

This course focuses on developing writing skills and we will often conduct the class as a workshop. You are expected to participate actively in all aspects of the course, both inside and outside the classroom. In order for the class to function properly, you must prepare reading and writing assignments on time. We will create a writing community, so it is essential that you get to know your fellow students and work collaboratively toward the common goal of becoming better writers.

You will be writing and revising your work throughout the semester. The course requires three formal writing assignments, three informal writing assignments, and several in class writing exercises. (The formal writing assignments are detailed on the last page of this syllabus.) With the exception of in class exercises, all writing assignments should be completed and submitted at the class meeting indicated on the syllabus. I will often ask you to bring more than one copy of your paper for the purpose of peer review. At other times, I will ask that you circulate your paper to a small group of fellow students before class so that you can meet in groups to discuss each other's work. Sharing and critiquing writing will be a regular feature of the course.

#### **REQUIRED READINGS AVAILABLE AT PENN BOOK CENTER (130 S. 34th St.):**

Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. Second Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Elaine P. Maimon and Janice H. Peritz. *A Writer's Resource: A Handbook for Writing and Research*. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2003.

Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. Seventh Edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

**\* A packet of all other required readings is available at Wharton Reprographics located in the basement of Steinberg-Deitrich Hall.**

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Sept. 11 Introduction**

What is modern about modern Judaism?

Introduction to the process of writing and revision

#### IN CLASS WRITING EXERCISE

### **Sept. 18 The Emergence of Modern Judaism**

Lois Dubin, "Enlightenment and Emancipation," in Nicholas De Lange and Miri Freud-Kandel eds., Modern Judaism: An Oxford Guide, pp. 29-37.

Michael Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew*, pp. 11-56.

Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 68-69 (document #7 only), 70-74, 96-99.

#### INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: IMAGINATIVE JOURNAL OF MOSES MENDELSSOHN (1-2 PAGES)

### **Sept. 25 Emancipation and the Remaking of Judaism**

Lois Dubin, "Enlightenment and Emancipation," in De Lange and Freud-Kandel, Modern Judaism, pp. 37-41.

David Sorkin, "Into the Modern World," in Nicholas De Lange, ed., *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People*, pp. 210-16.

Mendes-Flohr and Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 114-21, 125-36.

#### IN CLASS WRITING EXERCISE

**Oct. 2                      Religious Reform and the Emergence of Orthodoxy**

Sorkin, "Into the Modern World," in De Lange, *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People*, pp. 216-224.

Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 161-73, 178-85, 197-202.

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: FIRST DRAFT OF PRESS ANALYSIS DUE

**Oct. 9                      Hasidism: Origins and Contemporary Expressions**

Sylvia Barack Fishman, *The Way Into Varieties of Judaism*, pp. 71-75.

Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 387-93

Sue Fishkoff, *The Rebbe's Army: Inside the World of Chabad-Lubavitch*, pp. 9-32, 66-87.

View website: <http://www.chabad.org/>

INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: 1-2 page reaction to Chabad movement

**Oct. 23                      Reform Judaism in America**

Fishman, *The Way Into Varieties of Judaism*, pp. 105-26.

Isaac M. Wise, *Reminiscences*, translated and edited by David Philipson, pp. 331-333.

Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 468-69, 517-18.

The San Francisco Platform (1976) and Pittsburgh Platform (1999).

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: REVISION OF PRESS ANALYSIS DUE

IN CLASS WRITING EXERCISE

**Oct. 30                      Varieties of American Orthodoxy**

Fishman, *The Way Into Varieties of Judaism*, pp. 127-52.

Jonathan Sarna ed., *People Walk on Their Heads: Moses Weinberger's Jews and Judaism in New York* [1887], pp. 40-45, 57-60.

Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 469-70, 504-507.

Samuel C. Heilman, *Sliding to the Right: The Contest for the Future of American Jewish Orthodoxy*, pp. 296-305.

### REVISION OF CHABAD ESSAY DUE

#### **Nov. 6                      Homosexuality and Jewish Tradition**

Film: *Trembling Before God* (screened in class)

Sue Levi Elwell, "The Lesbian and Gay Movement: Jewish Community Responses," in Christie Balka and Andy Rose eds., *Twice Blessed: On Being Lesbian, Gay, and Jewish*, pp. 228-235.

Bernard Lazerwitz, J. Alan Winter, Arnold Dashefsky, and Ephraim Tabory, *Jewish Choices: American Jewish Denominationalism*, (Excerpts from opinions expressed in *Hartford Jewish Ledger*, January 20, 1995), pp. 26-27

Laurie Goodstein, "Conservative Jews Allow Gay Rabbis and Unions," *New York Times* December 7, 2006.

### IN CLASS WRITING EXERCISE

#### **Nov. 13                      Conservative Judaism: European Precedents and the American Movement**

Ismar Schorsch, "Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism," *Judaism* (Summer 1981), pp. 344-54.

Fishman, *The Way Into Varieties of Judaism*, pp. 153-72.

Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 194-97, 497-99.

Ben Harris, "Chancellor Energizes Conservative Rabbis," *JTA*, May 29, 2007.

### FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: FIRST DRAFT OF FILM REVIEW

#### **Nov. 20                      Reconstructionist Judaism: An American Movement**

Eugene Borowitz, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought Second Edition*, pp. 99-121.

Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 499-502.

Excerpts from the Diaries of Mordecai M. Kaplan.

Jewish Reconstructionist Federation, "Is Reconstructionist Judaism For You?"

INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: IMAGINATIVE JOURNAL OF MORDECAI KAPLAN

**Nov. 27                      Women and Judaism: From Traditional Practice to Modern Feminism**

Chava Weissler, "Prayers in Yiddish and the Religious World of Ashkenazic Women," in Judith Baskin, ed., *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, pp. 159-81.

\* Karla Goldman, "Women in Reform Judaism: Between Rhetoric and Reality," in Riv- Ellen Prell, ed., *Women Remaking American Judaism*, pp. 109-33.

\* Shuly Rubin Schwartz, "The Tension that Merit Our Attention," Women in Conservative Judaism," in Prell, ed., *Women Remaking American Judaism*, pp. 153-79.

\* Norma Baumel Joseph, "Women in Orthodoxy: Conventional and Contentious," in Prell, ed., *Women Remaking American Judaism*, pp. 181-209.

Ezrat Nashim, "Jewish Women Call for Change."

\* These essays will be made available later in the semester; not in initial bulkpack.

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: REVISION OF FILM REVIEW

**Dec. 4                      Judaism: Future Directions?**

Debra Renee Kaufman, "The Place of Judaism in American Jewish Identity," in Dana Evan Kaplan, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to American Judaism*, pp. 169-185.

David Ellenson, "Judaism Resurgent?: American Jews and the Evolving Expression of Jewish Values and Jewish Identity," in *After Emancipation: Jewish Religious Responses to Modernity*, pp. 27-50.

FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENT: FIRST DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER DUE

IN CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENT

## FORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

### Formal Paper #1: Press Analysis (3-5 pages)

Select any issue/event in modern Judaism, past or present, and follow it in the press. Analyze the ways that the issue is presented, the rhetoric and tenor of the coverage, and the various interpretations offered about the event or issue that you choose. You may use Jewish newspapers and magazines and/or the national press (New York Times etc.) Since this is a short paper, you should choose a focused topic. Please consult with me about your topic.

**FIRST DRAFT: DUE OCT. 2**

**REVISION: DUE OCT. 23**

### Formal Paper #2: Film Review (3-5 pages)

On November 6, we will view the film Trembling Before God. Write a review of the film, considering the approach of the filmmaker to the subject and the various themes raised in the documentary. A successful review does not summarize the film, but rather offers critical perspectives and insights.

**FIRST DRAFT: DUE NOV. 13**

**REVISION: DUE NOV. 27**

### Formal Paper #3: Research Paper (4-6 pages)

At the conclusion of the semester, you will be able to write a research paper on the topic of your choice. You may revisit any of the issues we have covered in the course or choose to pursue one of the many topics that we did not have time to examine during the semester. You should rely on primary and secondary sources to enrich your analysis. Please consult with me about as you select your topic.

**FIRST DRAFT: DUE DEC. 4**

**REVISION: DUE DEC. 13 (AT NOON IN MY HISTORY DEPT. MAILBOX)**