The place is specially intended for Jews. When the Gentiles had greatly oppressed the exiled Jews and the Divine Presence [Shekhinah] saw that there was no limit and no end to the oppression and that the handful of Jews might, God forbid, go under, the Presence came before the Lord of the Universe to lay the grievance before Him, and said to Him as follows:

How long is this going to last? When You sent the dove out of the ark at the time of the flood, You gave it an olive branch so that it might have a support for its feet on the water, and yet it was unable to bear the water of the flood and returned to the ark; whereas my children You have sent out of the ark into a flood, and have provided nothing for a support where they may rest their feet in exile.'

Thereupon God took a piece of Erets Yisroel [the Land of Israel], which He had hidden away in the heavens at the time when the Temple was destroyed, and sent it down upon the earth and said: 'Be My resting place for My children in their exile.' That is why it is called Poland (Polin), from the Hebrew "poh lin," which means: 'Here shalt thou lodge' in the exile. That is why Satan has no power over us here, and the Torah is broadcast over the whole county. There are synagogues and schools and yeshivas, God be thanked.

And what will happen in the great future when the Messiah will come? What are we going to do with the synagogues and the settlements which we shall have built up in Poland, asked Mendel...
How can you ask? In the great future, when the Messiah will come, God will certainly transport Poland with all its settlements, synagogues and yeshivas to Erets Yisroel. How else could it be?

-- Sholem Asch, Kiddush ha-Shem

We have on the one hand 5,000,000 Jews, Russian subjects, clamoring to be freed from all special restraints, and we have on the other, 85,000,000 Russian subjects clamoring to have the 5,000,000 expelled from the Empire.

What is to be done is such a case?

-- Count Nikolai Ignatev, Minister of the Interior
Israeli Hebrew, which abound in Yiddish-isms (shlep, shmuck, mazl tov, shlemielh, mayven, meshuga, khutspa). Yiddish, a "murdered language," enjoys a revival, as does klezmer, the music of Jewish eastern Europe.

This course will feature a klezmer presentation, as well as forays into east European Jewish religious, secular, and political cultures; languages; literatures; food; and cinema (yes, there was Yiddish cinema). We will study the social change, including in family structure and gender relations, which occurred in modernity. The Jews were a distinct, mostly detested, minority in the multi-ethnic Russian Empire and in the nationalistic Polish state after World War I. We will study government (Tsarist; Soviet; interwar Polish) policies to the Jewish minority and Jewish responses, including an array of cultural and political ideologies, parties, and movements.

Topics include: religion: Hasidism, Mitnagdism, and the Musar movement, women’s ritual and spirituality; gender and modernization; secular culture: Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment); modern Yiddish and Hebrew literatures; varieties of Zionist thought and activism; non-Zionist, Diaspora nationalism; Jewish socialism; Jew-hatred and Jewish responses; Jews under the early Soviet regime and in the interwar Polish Republic, as Jews faced escalating antisemitism and the Nazi threat.

REQUIREMENTS:

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is expected and will be noted; absence may affect your final grade. Please tell me if illness or emergency prevents your attendance.

Please mark your calendars: three class sessions are cancelled for holidays, for which there are two required makeups, scheduled on the syllabus. I am open to other options that suit all; otherwise, please mark these dates.

INFORMED PARTICIPATION: All reading (ca. 60 pages per class, not including Notes), is to be done for the session for which it is assigned. This class combines lecture and discussion that assume student preparation of readings. Informed, active participation counts toward your final grade (see breakdown, below,) and affects everyone’s learning, and is therefore, a responsibility. You are responsible for obtaining notes and explanation of notes, any handouts, assignments, and announcements for any class you miss, from other students. Once this is done, I am happy to touch base with you about a missed class.

If you have trouble entering discussions, please see me. If a situation affects your ability to fulfill any course requirement in an ongoing way, please speak to me sooner than later. I will do my best to work with you but can do this only if you alert me to the need promptly.

There will be a klezmer presentation, day and time TBA, attendance at which is required.

PRESENTATION:

Each student will lead off 1-2 sessions (depending on class size) with a short (5-7 minute, enforced), focused presentation on main issues in the reading and themes and questions for class discussion. Think of this as a partial spoken version of your OPs (see below), meant to launch discussion. Do not report on the readings, or simply state reactions.
Comment; interpret; analyze; compare. I will solicit sign up but it is each student’s responsibility to make sure you have one. Rehearse your presentation and time yourself: 5 minutes goes very fast. Choose 1-3 main points. Submit an outline of your Presentation at the end of class, in lieu of an OP that day. I am happy to meet with you before your Presentation, as well as after, for feedback including about your grade.

In a session with no presenter, class will begin with each student contributing a point from OPs. In a session with more than one presenter, do NOT divvy up the reading between you; BOTH students do the assignment as described, above, but touch base with each other before class to avoid repetition. If two students wish to switch presentation sessions, fine with me, but you must let me know in advance.

READING:

All assigned reading, (except encyclopedia articles), including that on eres, is on SHELF RESERVE in Mudd. This is the default option for doing the reading. Leave plenty of time for doing any reading using shelf reserve. Titles may be on reserve for other courses.

ERES: readings NOT on “Required Titles” list (below), except Encyclopedia articles, which must be read in the source, have been ordered on eres (password: JWST 235). Search for shelf reserve and eres material in several ways: title, author, editor. For help locating any reserve material, including eres, ASK RESERVE ROOM STAFF, PREFERABLY THE SUPERVISOR, MICHAEL PALAZZOLO, IMMEDIATELY. Emailing me is not an effective way to get assistance and will not excuse you from doing readings. Do tell me about any problem your efforts do not resolve (same with the Bookstore). Do not leave obtaining or doing reading for the last minute—access glitches do occur and require lead time to handle--or expect Reserve Room staff to be available 24/7.

Ohio Link is another option but be sure to order sufficiently in advance to receive and do the readings.

However you do it, it is each student's responsibility to obtain readings for the session they are assigned and to come to class prepared. There are no excused failures to OBTAIN readings. If illness or other extraordinary circumstance prevents you from doing them, come to class anyway, if you are able, and speak with me.

Whenever primary sources (MF/R; Dawidowicz; any fiction, memoirs), are assigned, please bring these to class.

The REQUIRED J. Benjamin book has short, practical tips on how to read and take notes effectively, and write essays and papers. Read it sooner than later, even if you’ve taken history courses previously, but especially if you haven’t or are a First Year student.

We use the following, “Required Titles,” heavily and I expect you to have your own copies. Readings in these titles are NOT on eres. They have been ordered in the Bookstore, which holds them for a limited time. If purchase poses an untenable burden, consider pairing with 1-2 others to buy and share the list, and/or use Ohio Link; see above.

REQUIRED TITLES:


Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*

Lucy Dawidowicz, ed., *The Golden Tradition*

Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*

Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs*

**WRITTEN:**

**One-page observation papers (OPs):**

For each class, prepare ONE page (typed, double-spaced—do not exceed this limit) of informed observations, giving a few reflections on the readings, identifying main issues or questions. To do this: after you’ve read, ask yourself what struck you in the readings—and why: what you learned. Note and comment—-that is all this assignment asks. OPs need not be polished, outline is fine, as long as I understand your points and, if handwritten, can read them. OPs help make reading effective, and are an essential part of your learning process. As your knowledge expands, comment comparatively. Use your OPs in class discussion; submit them at the end of each class; no late submissions. I will not grade OPs individually but their overall quality and your consistency in submitting them count toward the participation element of the grade. Save your OPs; you may wish to elaborate on points for essay assignments; your final paper.

**Essays:** There are two essay assignments (5-6 page, double-spaced), based on assigned readings and discussions, from a choice of topics I will announce at least a week before any due date. Submission dates, at roughly one-month intervals, marked on the syllabus.

**Research Paper:** Students will write a 12-15 page (typed, double-spaced) paper on a topic of your choice in lieu of a final exam. You MAY (indeed, I encourage you to) expand on a topic on the syllabus; you must in addition, use 4-5 new books (or equivalent in articles; ca. 10 articles= 1 book). You must use primary sources in the paper; these may include fiction or visual art. You must meet with me and get approval for your topic and bibliography by Fall break, and present a preliminary Topic Statement and Bibliography upon our return from Break.

All students are required to participate in one Research Methods session of approximately one hour, before Fall Break. Two options, probably on two days, at 4:30 PM, should be available, TBA with Research Librarians. Submit a note confirming participation.

**WRITING REQUIREMENTS:** All writing must be clear, coherent, substantive, analytical, grammatical, and use correct spelling. Your imagined audience is intelligent and
interested but uninformed: they will understand only what you have made clear. Avoid passive tense, jargon, verbosity, complicated sentence structure: write simply and directly. "Impact" is a noun, not a verb; unless you mean "collision," say "affect," or "influence." "It's" is a contraction for "it is;" "its" is the possessive. “Time period” is redundant. Drafts are essential, which means treating research and writing as a process, requiring time.

WRITING HELP: use writing tutors available in Mudd. I will read drafts submitted at least two weekdays before a deadline IF you have worked with a writing tutor.

The paper is due on or before the date set by the Registrar for a final exam for this course; instructors have no say in this deadline, any extension to which must be processed through the Registrar. There are no exams in this course.

In Essays, use abbreviated citation in the body of the text; do not write separate End or Foot Notes, or a Bibliography. The research paper requires both, using citation conventions, as presented in Benjamin.

DEADLINES: Except in case of documented significant illness or emergency, there is 1/3 of a grade reduction per day of lateness in submission of written work (an A becomes an A-, etc.). It is your responsibility to handle technicalities (printers, paper, etc.), in advance of deadlines. Remember to save your work frequently!

SUBMISSION OF ALL WRITTEN WORK IN HARD COPY ONLY. To be graded, all work must: have your name, date, be paginated, state essay being addressed, be stapled in one submission, and have a signed Honor Code declaration.

HONOR CODE: This course, as all at Oberlin, operates under the Honor Code, which students are responsible for understanding and upholding: see the College website. For questions about citation, including oral and electronic sources, see Benjamin; Mudd Library staff; members of the Honor Code Committee; me.

GRADING:
- Participation (overall; Presentation; OPs): 30%
- First essay: 15%
- Second essay: 25%
- Research Paper: 30%

You are responsible for the information on this syllabus. If you lose your hard copy, it is available on the JWST, HIST, and course bb sites.

Welcome to the course! I look forward to studying with you.
Shulamit S. Magnus Oberlin College Fall, 2011

INSIDE THE PALE: EAST EUROPEAN JEWRY, 1772-1939

1. Introductory 9/6

Document/ map/ image study
Parts of film, “Image Before My Eyes”

2. Jewish Eastern Europe: Jewish Social, Economic, and Communal Structure; the Partitions of Poland and Beginning of Tsarist Rule 9/8

No individual presenter today. We will open with points from your OPs; see tips about this, above. Note several points you take from the readings; were surprised by; informed something you had previously heard about east European Jewry. Note new vocabulary (e.g., kehilla; autonomy; parnassim)—continue to do this in future readings.

Mendes-Flohr (henceforth, MF/R), pp.375-377; study the map on unnumbered page between pp.379-380; refer to it as needed during the course to situate regions, towns and cities. N.B.: the Notes to the documents in this book are incredibly good. Always read them!

Lucy Dawidowicz, Golden Tradition: study the maps at the front of the book and her Key to Maps; refer to them, too, as needed.

** Remember to bring both the above books to class whenever assigned.


Look over the syllabus; select several sessions for Presenting, we’ll assign next time.

3. Traditional Jewish Community: Jews and Jews; Jews and Others 9/13

PRESENTER:

Visual: peruse photos in Image Before My Eyes, A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, pp. 42-69. What strikes you? What do you learn from these images about Jewish economic life, standard of living, social life, relations with “non-Jews”? (think about this term). How do Jews and non-Jews know who’s who, visually? What accounts for the very different types of synagogue structures we see?

Jacob Katz, Tradition and Crisis, part 1, chps. 2-8, pp. 11-75

4. Traditional Jewish Community, continued 9/15

PRESENTER:


5. Hasidism: Ideas, Personalities; Practices; Movement 9/20
PRESENTER:

Find major locations on maps: see session 2, above

Simon Dubnow, "The Beginnings: The Baal Shem Tov (Besht) and the Center in Podolia," "The Maggid of Miedzrycez," in Essential Papers on Hasidism, ed. Gershon Hundert, pp.25-85 (N.B.: 11 of these pages are notes)

Lucy Dawidowicz, ed., The Golden Tradition (pagination as in 1967 ed.), Early Hasidism, segments 1-4, pp.93-107  BRING TO CLASS

PRESENTER:

6. Hasidism, continued  9/22

PRESENTER:

Music and Hasidic/ mystical communion with/ through the tsaddik to God: tape, in class

Ada Rapoport-Albert, “God and the Zaddik as the Two Focal Points of Hasidic Worship, “Louis Jacobs, "Hasidic Prayer;" in Hundert, ed., Essential Papers, pp. 299-362 (N.B.: 12 of these pages are notes)

Arthur Green, “Teachings of the Hasidic Masters,” in Back to the Sources, ed. Barry Holtz, pp.361-399 only

Image Before My Eyes, A Photographic History of Jewish Life in Poland, pp.70-79 (photos)

7. Forces of Disintegration: Jewish "Enlightenment"; Hasidism; Tsarist Manipulation  9/27

PRESENTER:

Bartal, chps. 4, 8, pp. 47-57, 90-101

Katz, Tradition, part 3, chps. 20-22, pp. 213-244

Michael Stanislawski, Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews, chps.1-3 (selections), pp.13-59

Thurs. 9/29  NO CLASS  Rosh Hashana  Required makeup class: Sun. Oct. 2

8. Haskalah, continued: Culture Wars, Maskilic Self-Appraisals * 10/2  11-12:15 AM  Required makeup class

PRESENTER:

** First Essay choices to be distributed. Assignment due Sun. 10/16.
Make an appointment to see me during office hours about your paper topic selection; sign up for Research Methods session. Preliminary topic statement and bibliography due right after Fall Break.

Stanislawski, Tsar Nicholas, chps.3 (selection)-4, pp.59-85, 97-122

MF/R, pp.375-379, 381-385 (incl.), 400-403


9. Mithnaggdism: Organized Religious Opposition to Hasidism and Haskalah 10/4

PRESENTER:

Stanislawski, Tsar Nicholas, chp. 5, pp.123-154

Immanuel Etkes, Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement, chps. 2-3, pp.17-56

MF/R, pp.390-395

10. Rabbi Israel Salanter and the Mussar Movement 10/6

PRESENTER:

First essay due in class today.

Etkes, Rabbi Israel Salanter, chps. 7-8, 10, pp.91-114, 135-152

Dawidowicz, pp.171-185

MF/R, pp.396-397

11. Yeshiva, Mussar, continued: Personal and Family Repercussions 10/11

PRESENTER:

Immanuel Etkes, "Marriage and Torah Study Among the Lomdim in Lithuania in the Nineteenth Century," in David Kraemer, ed. The Jewish Family, pp.153-178

"Chaim Grade," EJ, 7:843-844

Chaim Grade, The Yeshiva, Curt Leviant, trans., vol. 1, part 1, chps. 1-8, pp.3-94 only (epic novel by one of the greatest 20th century Yiddish writers and mussar yeshiva drop out)

Thurs. 10/13 NO CLASS Required makeup class: Sun. 11/6

FIRST ESSAY/ID ASSIGNMENT DUE SUN. 10/16 Hard copies under my office door by 3PM, by email to establish submission by the deadline
Sign up for REQUIRED Research Methods session with Reference Librarian required by 10/20. You must have participated in such a session BY Fall Break.

12. Women's Spirituality and Ritual  10/18

PRESENTER:

Chava Weissler, Voices of the Matriarchs, chps. 1-2, 4, pp.3-50, 66-75

The Merit of Our Mothers, A Bilingual Anthology of Jewish Women's Prayers, trans. Tracy Guren Klirs, pp.12-45, 84-88, 100-102, 108-110, 116, 114 (N.B.: half these pages are in Yiddish; required reading: English only...)

Photos in: Pauline Wengeroff, Memoirs of a Grandmother: Scenes from the Cultural history of the Jews in Russia in the Nineteenth Century, trans. and ed. Shulamit S. Magnus

Thurs. 10/20    NO CLASS

FALL BREAK 10/22-30  PAPER TOPIC STATEMENT AND PRELIMINARY BIBLIOGRAPHY, USING CITATION CONVENTIONS AS IN BENJAMIN, DUE NEXT SESSION


Paper Topic Statement and Preliminary Bibliography due in class

PRESENTER:


Shulamit Magnus, "Kol Ishah: Women and Pauline Wengeroff’s Writing of an Age," Nashim, 7 (Spring, 2004): 28-64


14. Women’s Experience    11/3

PRESENTER:

Paula Hyman, Gender and Assimilation, pp.50-92

Dawidowicz, Golden, 160-168, 206-209, 388-393

15. Stable Jewish Family? 11/6 * 11-12:15 AM Required makeup class

PRESENTER:

ChaeRan Freeze, Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia, chp. 3, pp.131-200 there is much detail here; get the gist and note important particulars that back it up

16. Era of Reforms; Reaction; Pogroms; Flight 11/8

Distribution of second essay /ID choices; essay due 11/20.

PRESENTER:


Bartal, chps. 9-10, 12, 13, pp. 102-123, 134-156

Zvi Gitelman, A Century of Ambivalence, photos, pp.24-25

MF/R, pp.408-411, 472-3, 705 study these figures and maps. What story do they tell, what conclusions do you draw?

17. Rejecting Russia for Zion: East European Zionisms and Zionists 11/10

The bulk of the reading for today is primary material. What are the ideas and proposals that Smolenskin, Lilienblum, and Pinsker put forth? What are their “diagnoses” of the “Jewish problem” and their solutions? In what ways is Zionism an outgrowth of traditional Judaism? In what ways is it a break with it-- modern? How does the east European context inform east European Zionism?

PRESENTER:

Shlomo Avineri, The Making of Modern Zionism, Introduction, chp. 7, pp.3-13, 73-82


18. “Love/ Lovers of Zion;” Cultural Zionism: Ahad Ha-Am 11/15

PRESENTER:
Avineri, chp. 11, pp. 112-124

Vital, chp. 7, pp.187-200

Arthur Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea, pp. 262-269

Ahad HaAm, “Slavery in Freedom,” in Selected Essays of Ahad Ha’am, tr. Leon Simon, pp.171-194

MF/R, pp.532, 541-546, 548-549

19. Modern Yiddish Literature: Sholem Aleichem; Esther Kreitman; Rokhl Brokhes

11/17

SECOND ESSAY ASSIGNMENT DUE 11/20 by 4 PM. Submit hard copy under my office door, and by email to establish submission by the deadline.

PRESENTER:


MF/R, pp.400, 404


20. Yiddish, continued; Modern Hebrew Language and Literature 11/22

PRESENTER:

Hertzberg, Zionist Idea, pp.159-165

MF/R, pp.403


NO CLASS  11/24   Thanksgiving


PRESENTER:

Image Before My Eyes, photos, pp. 160-169

The Samurai of Vishogrod: The Notebooks of Jacob Maratek, chps.7-9, pp.51-78 (great memoir, fun read—what do we learn from it; how is it a source for Jewish history, about the Jewish proletariat and the emergence of Jewish socialist activism?

Zvi Gitelman, A Century of Ambivalence, The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881-Present, chp. 1, selections, pp.10-17

MF/R, pp.405-406, 419-423, 428-432

Dawidowicz, pp.426-434 (recommended: 405-422)

FILM: “Image Before My Eyes“ on reserve. We will discuss viewing arrangements in class. Take notes while viewing; the film relates to much of the material we study for the rest of the semester.

22. Simon Dubnow and Diaspora Nationalism  12/1

PRESENTER:

The readings for today are largely essays by Dubnow. After reading his essays, compare him to Ahad Ha’Am. How are they similar; where do they differ? How do Dubnow’s ideas emerge from a peculiarly east European Jewish context?


23. World War I; Communist Revolution and Civil War Era Pogroms; Under Soviet Union  12/6

PRESENTER:

Zvi Gitelman, A Century of Ambivalence, chp. 1 (selection), chp.2, pp.55-114 (many of these pages are photographs; do note these, better seen in the book than on eres).

MF/R, pp.428-436, 439-440, 446-448

24. After World War I: Jews and Minority Rights in Reborn Poland  12/8

PRESENTER:
Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars*, pp.11-83

MF/R, 437-438, 440-446

Dawidowicz, *Golden*, pp.482-492

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**25. Polish Jewish Culture Between the Wars; Course Conclusions** 12/13

**PRESENTER:**
Requirements for this class are: view one full length, and one short film, and several photo and painting collections:

View film: "The Dybbuk" on reserve; group viewing arrangements TBA. May also be available from the Public Library system; or [http://ssjfa.huji.ac.il](http://ssjfa.huji.ac.il).

“Five Cities” film: viewable online at [http://www.spielbergfilmarchive.org.il](http://www.spielbergfilmarchive.org.il)

View the photos in the following books:

Roman Vichniac, *Polish Jews, A Pictorial Record*

Eugene Avrutin, et. al., *Photographing the Jewish Nation: Pictures from S. An-Sky’s Ethnographic Expeditions*

Toby Knobel Flueck, *Memories of My Life in a Polish Village, 1930-1949*

OPs today on the above but also: review your OPs from the entire semester. Reflect on what you have learned, how your thinking has changed from where you were in September. What are you taking from this course?

Optional: Memoirs and memories of interwar eastern Europe—rich insights into real lives, easy read: