

Shulamit Magnus

Oberlin College

Spring, 2012

Jewish Studies/ History 306

Seminar: Germans and Jews

Mon. 2:30-4:20



Office: 310 Rice Hours: Tues. Thurs.
11-12:30 and by appointment
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This Seminar studies topics in modern German Jewish experience from the late eighteenth century up to (not including) the Holocaust, in social, economic, religious, cultural, and political history, including myths,

stereotypes, and counter-myths in this emotionally charged subject. Its chief focus will be on the construction and nature of the modern, dual identity, "German" and "Jew" against the backdrop of various Jewish and non-Jewish understandings of self and Other as German and Jew.

The title of the seminar is a deliberate double-entendre: we will certainly study the relationship of Jews and non-Jews ("Germans") in modern Germany, but the primary focus will be on how Jews also became Germans: the meaning of that internal relationship, and the problematics of asserting it in Germany.

No Jewish community exemplifies as does German Jewry the promise and hope of modernity – an almost messianic hope for integration and acceptance, with an equal degree of calamity. We will begin with some retrospective views on German Jewish history, foregrounding "the elephant at the table"-- our awareness that catastrophe destroyed this community. We do this so that we can be conscious of how knowledge of the Shoah affects, and can even impede, study of German Jewish history.

Topics include: Jewish adoption of Enlightenment ideals as a strategy for creating

German-Jewishness; the struggle against discrimination, for equal rights and social acceptance --"emancipation;" the Jewish rise from predominant poverty to the middle class, and the particular relationship of Jews to middle class culture in the creation of German Jewishness; the central role of women, gender and family life in this transformation; the move from traditionalism to acculturation and



assimilation; major religious and intellectual movements – variations of Reform, including Neo-Orthodoxy, and the creation of secular, academic "Jewish Studies" – all of which were inventions of German Jews; German Jew-hatred and Jewish responses; the German-Jewish relationship to "Ost-Juden" (east European Jews); cultural resurgence and crisis during Weimar.

What you can expect to get from this course, aside from delving into modern German Jewish history, is greater understanding of the dynamics of minority group identity and minority-majority relations; greater mastery of analytical thinking, research, and writing, and experience in collegial learning.

This syllabus contains much information, for which you are responsible. Read carefully, ask any questions. If you lose your hard copy, it is on the JWST, HIST, and course bb sites.

REQUIREMENTS:

1. Attendance and presence: Seminars are the highest level of courses and differ from other courses in the degree of ownership and leadership required of participants. Study is primarily student-driven discussion, under my direction. This means that you must not just do the readings, but prepare and contribute substantiated points for discussion, see yourself as responsible for the intellectual success of the group, and become colleagues of other participants, helping all to build skills of critical analysis in discussion, and for our main project, a major research paper, give constructive peer critique.

The Seminar meets once a week for two hours. Attendance and participation at every session are required and factor heavily in your course grade. Should illness or emergency prevent either or both, please contact me as soon as you are able. Absence will affect your final grade.

2. Reading and participation: Students must complete all required readings for the Seminar session for which they are assigned and contribute informed, analytical points for discussion (see below). 50% of the grade is based on participation. If you have trouble entering discussion, see me.

OBSERVATION PAPERS (OPs): students will write 1-2 page, double-spaced, observations about main issues in each week's readings and submit this to me at the end of each session. Do not exceed this limit; no late submissions. I will not grade these statements individually but their overall quality will factor in your final grade. OPs are not reports on the readings (do not submit your notes on readings), nor simply reactions to them, but informed, working observations. How to do this? After completing readings, sit back, away from the books or screen, and ask yourself what you have learned; what struck you – and why-- and comment about this – about significance. As we proceed, draw comparisons, contrasts, connections between readings; note how further study has modified your thinking. Note authors' themes, methods, sources, biases. Use, "I think..."

statements, supporting/ illustrating assertions or conjectures (informed conjecture is fine) with specifics. If you say something is "interesting," or "confusing," say WHY. You MAY use OPs to think on paper; neither the writing nor the substance of OPs need be polished. I will not correct for spelling, grammar – or substance – of OPs. OPs are a device to help produce efficient READING and foster LEARNING. Think of them as a kind of intellectual journaling.

Use your OPs during Seminar discussion. Submitting even fine written observations will not substitute for participating in Seminar discussion.

* Please note that there are readings and some research FOR THE SEMINAR'S FIRST SESSION. Since we have only 11 classes (2 sessions are for research and presentations on your research), the first class is substantive, as well as introductory.

In the unlikely even that the classes are cancelled because of weather or other reason, PREPARE READINGS as usual: stay current with the syllabus. We will arrange a make up session.

READINGS:

All required reading, including that on eres, has been ordered on shelf reserve in Mudd. This is the default option for doing assigned readings. You are expected to obtain your own copies of reading on "Required Titles" list; see below. Reading NOT in "Required Titles" (see list, below) has been ordered on ERES (pword: JWST306). There is relatively little of this, however. Check for any reserve material in several ways (title; author; editor). If you cannot locate a reading, ask Reserve Room staff, preferably the Supervisor, Michael Palazzolo immediately. Emailing me is not an effective way to get help (all I can do is email Mr. Palazzolo), and will not excuse you from obtaining readings. Do tell me about any problem your efforts do not resolve.

However you do it, each student is responsible for obtaining and doing assigned readings by the session in which they are discussed. Except for documented significant illness/emergency, there are no excused failures to obtain and do readings. I strongly urge you to obtain readings several weeks before you need to do them and to distribute the reading over several days. DO NOT attempt to do the readings (130-160 pages or their equivalent per week – (these totals do NOT include illustrations, blank pages, or Notes)-- in one sitting. Even if technically, you do it, you will not absorb well, and you will feel pressure inimical to learning. Break the reading into 2-3 sessions over the week; yes, this takes discipline but the intellectual and psychological rewards will be substantial.

3. Leadoff and Comment presentations: Each student will lead off 1-2 discussions of the readings in a presentation of not more or much less than ten minutes (enforced; this time passes more quickly than you think. Practice before class; edit.)

Think of this presentation as an expanded, spoken version of your OPs. It is to be substantive, analytical, organized, and clear, focusing on 2-3 MAIN issues, making comparative observations and evaluations-- see and use guidelines for OPs.

Each presenter will pair with a colleague who will COMMENT on the presenter's main points for no more than FIVE minutes (enforced) at the end of the leadoff. PRESENTER and COMMENTER MUST meet WITH EACH OTHER at least one day before the session (i.e., on or by Sunday), for the Presenter to lay out main points. This is so the Presenter organizes and clarifies the Presentation and so the Commenter can prepare the response. This meeting, and the Presentation/ Comment during Seminar, are meant to be collegial. The commenter MAY amplify or disagree with points in the presentation. Both presenter and commenter will be graded (see grading breakdown, below). Presenter and Commenter should think of themselves as teaching the Seminar.

Every student will have at least one opportunity to play both these roles. Students should pair with each other only ONCE for these respective assignments. On the day of the lead-off presentation and comment, each student will submit 1-2 pages on her/ his presentation in lieu of OP.

Presentation/s count 20% of the participation element of the final grade; Comment/s, 15%.

In the event we have no Presenter/ Commenter for a session, Seminar participants will contribute discussion points in a round table at the beginning of class, using OPs.

3. Written

Students will choose an approved topic for a 20-25 page research paper and will present drafts of your work in the Seminar for peer and instructor discussion. You may expand on a topic on the syllabus, or choose another, related area.

You must meet with me BEFORE SPRING BREAK to choose an approved topic, and must submit a preliminary statement of your topic (not to exceed two pages), and a preliminary bibliography (1-2 pages), prepared according to proper conventions, as in the required Rampolla book, by then. Everyone will present briefly (2-3 minutes) on your topics and give and receive comments from others on them. You must have circulated your statement and bibliography electronically to everyone by noon or earlier on Sunday, 3/18. IN ADDITION, YOU MUST SUBMIT A HARD COPY TO ME BY THAT TIME-- put under my office door.

ALL submissions to me are to be in hard copy, even if you have also done so electronically.

Your paper proposal and your comments on those of other students, your OPs and overall participation in the Seminar to this point, will be the basis for your mid-semester grade. There is no mid-term exam or assignment and no final.

* All students must look through the volumes of the Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook (LBIYB), before choosing a topic; I expect to see citations from these volumes in your Preliminary Bibliography. The two volumes of Michael Meyer, ed., German Jewish History are a basic reference whose relevant sections everyone should read in preparation for choosing a paper topic, and in the paper itself. The Encyclopaedia Judaica, available in book (older) and cd rom (more recent) edition is another basic reference. For access to the latter, see reference librarian.

The Seminar paper must: have a thesis or central question; use primary sources (in translation) in a significant way; be clear and explicit about methodology; be organized, argued, and written effectively, using grammatical English and correct spelling. It must have a Bibliography and Notes composed using proper citation conventions, as laid out in Rampolla (see Required Titles, below). REQUIRED: use writing tips in Rampolla (and one of two other other writing guides), below, and College Writing Tutors.

The paper is due on the day/ time set for the final exam in this course by the Registrar. Instructors have no discretion with this date. You must process any Incomplete request with the Registrar. Please speak with me promptly about any circumstances that affects your ability to do work during or at the end of the semester. I can only help when I am aware of the need.

The Seminar paper counts 50% of the grade.

4. In the class session after Spring Break, you must submit a 4-6 page revised description/ discussion of your topic, with a more extensive bibliography (2-4 pages). You must circulate this to all Seminar participants electronically and to me, in hard copy as well, BY NOON ON SUNDAY 4/1. There should be significantly greater clarity and substance in this statement than the first one about your topic, methods and sources. Effectively, this is the first draft of your paper. Writing need not be polished but must be comprehensible.

HONOR CODE: This course, as all at Oberlin, operates under the College Honor Code. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the Code. Ask me, Mudd staff, HC Committee members any questions. To be graded, all written work MUST have a signed HC declaration.

Required Titles: We will read heavily in the following titles, of which you must have your own copies, through individual or shared purchase, or Ohio Link. Titles in print have been ordered in the Bookstore. Reading on this list is NOT on eres.

The Jew in the Modern World (3d ed.), eds. Paul Mendes-Flohr and J. Reinharz *all pagination is per this edition

David Sorkin, The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840

Marion Kaplan, The Making of the Jewish Middle Class

Paul Mendes-Flohr, German Jews

Michael Brenner, The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany

Donald Niewyk, The Jews in Weimar Germany

Mary Lynn Rampola, A Pocket Guide to Writing in History latest ed. REQUIRED for the final paper

Recommended writing guides:

Jules R. Benjamin, A Student's Guide to History (also gives tips on how to read, take notes)

Diana Hacker, A Pocket Style Manual

*Howard Becker, Writing for Social Scientists (a very readable, funny, useful text)

*William Zinsser, On Writing Well

*Reading one of these is required over Spring Break.

Welcome to the course! I look forward to studying with you.

Shulamit Magnus

Oberlin College

Spring, 2012

Jewish Studies/ History 306

Seminar: Germans and Jews

1. Introductory: Who Were Germany's Jews? Assessing German Jewish History 2/6

Introductions: Our interest in this material and course; our desires and expectations for the course; how to succeed in this course (and others).

N.B.: There is reading and a research assignment for this first session:

The work for this first session is divided into several quite different, but related, tasks: digging into statistics that tell a big story, and reading assessments that assert a big story (all this will make more sense as you – and the class session--proceed, I promise!)

REQUIRED READING for today:

Jewish Life in Germany: Memoirs from Three Centuries, ed. Monika Richarz, Introduction (selection), pp.1-29 only. This reading, which you'll also use for its charts and statistics (see, below), is an overview of the period ("modernity") we will study in the Seminar, of major political, legal, economic, religious and cultural developments.

Gershom Scholem, On Jews and Judaism in Crisis, pp.61-92

Gerson Cohen, "German Jewry as Mirror of Modernity," Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook 20:xiii-xxxi (skim pp.ix-xii)

Michael Meyer, "The German Jews, Some Perspectives on their History," The B.G. Rudolph Lectures on Judaic Studies, Syracuse University (Jan. 1991)

Questions to these readings: What claims do these authors make about the meaning and implications of modern German Jewish history? Can you imagine a conversation among Scholem, Cohen, and Meyer? What would they say? Why is this subject so fraught?

Finally, read/ skim the Introduction to:

Deborah Hertz, How Jews Became Germans – a study of Jewish conversion in 19th century Berlin (pp.1-16). Questions: what do you think of conversion as way of becoming German? – of Hertz's title? Keep it in mind as the extreme end of the continuum of what will be our main focus: Jews who became Germans while remaining Jews, and relations between them and other Germans.

Other tasks for the first Seminar:

1. Locate the Leo Baeck Institute Yearbooks (henceforth: LBIYB) and Michael Meyer, ed. German-Jewish History, vols. 1-2. Skim the Tables of Contents to familiarize yourself with the range of topics in the major journal on German-speaking Jewry, and a major synthetic history of German Jewry. Meyer vols. are on course shelf reserve; LBIYB, in the stacks.

2. Using (meaning, skim is fine):

Ismar Schorsch, Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870-1914, Introduction, pp.1-21;

Marion Kaplan, The Making of the Jewish Middle Class, chp.6, pp.153-191;

Donald Niewyk, The Jews in Weimar Germany, Introduction, Chp.1 and Conclusion, pp. 1-42, 195-200

And the Richarz, ed., reading, assigned above:

-- answer the following question: "WHO WERE GERMAN JEWS?":

a) get population statistics about German Jewry from ca. 1750-1939: how many Jews were there in German states/ Germany/ Austria in these years? What percentage were Jews of the total population? What were the trends in Jewish population growth and geographic distribution over time?

b) Where did Jews live (cities; towns; rural areas)? Get and bring a map showing the German states anytime after 1818. Locate major cities: Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Breslau, Cologne.

c) Demographics: what was the age distribution of the German Jewish population (what percentage were under 20, above 50, etc.) What was the gender ratio? What implications do these statistics have (what do you think they mean?)

d) Education and occupation: what percentage of Jews in Germany were educated in Jewish schools? Got secondary education? University degrees? Were in the professions? Self-employed? How did gender affect all this? What is the significance of these statistics?

e) What was German Jewish religious affiliation: hat percentage were "traditional"; "Reform"? Neither? How did this change over time?

Get some comparable statistics about the rest of the German population; minimally, overall population statistics at several points for the period our course studies; urban/rural distribution; basic economic profile.

You MAY work with another student/s on this statistical/ quantitative assignment; do NOT break it up (divvy up parts of it). Come to class prepared to discuss the question and its sub-questions, using your prep.

Of course, we have no Presenter/ Commenter team for this first discussion. Each Seminar participant should bring to class: 1) your statistical findings and conclusions about them in answering the question, "Who were German Jews?"; 2) one page of observations about the readings and responses to the questions posed about them, above; 3) three preferred sessions for you to present, and to comment on.

2. German Aufklärung, Jewish Haskalah; Mendelssohn 2/13

German-Jewish History in Modern Times, ed. Michael Meyer, v.1, Part 2, chps.9, 10, 12 (by Michael Graetz), selections, pp.261-312, 355-380

Alexander Altmann, "Moses Mendelssohn and the Archetypal German Jew," in The Jewish Response to German Culture, J. Reinharz and W. Schatzberg, eds., pp.17-31

Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz eds., The Jew in the Modern World, (3d. ed.), henceforth: MF/R (N.B.: the NOTES to these primary sources are crucial), pp. 65-77, 84-120. Please bring this book to class whenever we have readings in it.

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

3. Re-Writing the Rules of Jewish-German Relationship: Emancipation 2/20

Werner Mosse, "From 'Schutzjuden' to 'Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens': The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany," in Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, eds., Paths of Emancipation, pp. 59-93

MF/R, pp.21-25, 27-36, 40-41, 163-167, 173, 175-176 (if anyone would like to read the full Dohm essay, I have copies in my office).

Shulamit S. Magnus, Jewish Emancipation in a German City: Cologne, 1798-1871, Introduction, chps. 4-5, Conclusion, pp.1-11, 64-143, 218-226 (do see the photo section in the book; chp. 7 recommended.)

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

4. Jewish Routes to Germanness: Jews and *Bildung* 2/27

David Sorkin, The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840, Introduction, chps. 1, 4-5, 7, Conclusion, pp.3-40, 79-104, 107-123, 140-171, 173-178.

Voices of the principals: from the memoirs of German Jews from this period: Jewish Life in Germany, M. Richarz, ed., get the book from shelf reserve, read any 30 pp. you choose, from pp. 41-162. See how, or if, these memoirs relate to themes in the Sorkin reading.

Begin reading for selection of your research paper topics. Happy to help you select; sign up for 0 hour time. Bring a preliminary statement of your topic and main sources to the next Seminar session (see syllabus front matter for further details).

5. Expressions of Jewish Germanness: Reformed Religion; "Science of Judaism" 3/5

Schedule 0 hour meeting with me re: your research paper topic; see deadline, below. See requirements for choosing topic and writing drafts, above.

Meyer, ed., German-Jewish History, vol. 2, chps.3-5, pp.90-198

MF/R, pp. 177-189, 192-195, 201-211, 217-224, 230-231, 233-261

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

6. Gender, Family, and Class as Crucible of German Jewishness 3/12

Marion Kaplan, The Making of the Jewish Middle Class, Preface, Introduction, chps. 1, 2, 4, 5,7, pp.vii-xi, 3-84, 117-152, 192-234 (chp.6, recommended)

M. Richarz, Jewish Life in Germany, Memoirs, pp. 173-180 (recommended: 211-220, 246-252, 266-270)

MF/R, pp.841-843

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

Preliminary STATEMENT OF PAPER TOPIC, METHODOLOGY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY to be circulated to all electronically by noon on 3/18, and to me in hard copy then, as well (under my office door). Read and prepare comments on everyone's.

7. German "anti-Semitism" 3/19

Each student will present briefly (2-3 minutes) about your topic, sources, methodology, and give comments to everyone else's.

Jacob Katz, From Prejudice to Destruction, chps. 4-7, 12-15, 20-21, pp.51-104, 147-202, 245-272

MF/R, pp.283-286, 302-308, 317-325, 327, 333-336

COMMENTER:

PRESENTER:

3/24- 41 SPRING BREAK

Revised statement of paper topic and Bibliography due upon our return.

Over Break, read either: Howard Becker, Writing for Social Scientists or William Zinsser, On Writing Well (both, on recommended writing guides, above). Note 5-10 practical things you take about your writing; hand in, next class.

8. German Jewish Responses to Jew-hatred 4/2

REVISED STATEMENT OF PAPER TOPIC AND BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE TODAY IN CLASS. Each student will present briefly about her/ his topic and how this has changed. Hand in your list of practical points you took from Zinsser or Becker.

Ismar Schorsch, Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870-1914, chps. 1, 2 (selection), 4, 5, pp.23-71, 103-148

MF/R, 287-288, 803-809, 813-822

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

9. German Jews and East European Jews: Threat/ Spur to German Jewish Identity 4/9

Steven Aschheim, Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800-1923, chps. 1-3, 5, 7-8, pp.3-79, 100-120, 139-214 (some of these pages are illustrations; note these, as well)

MF/R, pp.839-841

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

10. Weimar: Cultural Resurgence 4/16

Michael Brenner, The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany, Introduction, chps. 2-5, 7, pp. 36-152, 185-211

Paul Mendes-Flohr, German Jews: A Dual Identity, chp. 4, pp.66-88

MF/R, pp.837-838, 845-846

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

11. Weimar: Crisis; Course Conclusions 4/23

In preparing your observations for today, think back to our opening readings and discussion and about how your perceptions have changed – what you have learned, what you are taking from this course; how it is informing your Seminar paper topic.

Donald Niewyk, The Jews in Weimar Germany, chps.3-5, 7-8, Conclusion, pp.43-124, 165-200

Mendes-Flohr, German Jews, chps. 1-2, Epilogue, pp. 1-44 (chp. 3, recommended)

George Mosse, German Jews Beyond Judaism, chp. 5, pp. 72-82

12- 13. Research Presentations 4/30, 5/7

There is no assigned reading for these sessions. They will be devoted to work on research and writing of your Seminar papers, drafts of which you will present for comments in these sessions. You MUST circulate your draft to all by 5 PM of the FRIDAY preceding each Seminar. You may continue to revise after that but you must give everyone the weekend to read and comment. Give me a hard copy, under my office door. Everyone must prepare substantive comments, questions, suggestions on everyone else's draft. For 4/30, have at least 8 typed, double-spaced pages, and a Bibliography and Notes prepared according to proper citation conventions in Rampolla. For 5/7, have at least 15 pages.

All must show your drafts to a College Writing Tutor and have received those comments by 4/29 and 5/6, respectively.