Jewish History, Spanish Expulsion to the Present

Tu, Th 9:30-10:50 King 123

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Office hours: Tu, Th 2:30-3:30 by self-sign up, and by appointment. Sign up sheets on my office door weekly.
This is an introduction to modern Jewish history. No prior background is assumed or required. This course gives 3 SS credits in JWST, HIST, or both, as well as CD and WR credit.

The course surveys Jewish history from the Spanish expulsion (1492) to the present, covering major developments in Jewish society and culture in eastern and western Europe, England, the Middle East, and the US. Its major themes are the challenges, impact, and meaning of modernity for Jews; how Jews were transformed and re-created themselves in modernity.

Topics include: defining "Jewish modernity" by looking at events historians consider turning points between "medieval" (or "traditional") and "modern" Jewish history; change toward Jews in European societies and the connection between debates about the "Jewish question" and larger political and social questions; modern Jewish attitudes to the non-Jewish world; the end of Jewish autonomy and new Jewish civil status in modernizing states; social and economic change, including changes in family and gender roles; acculturation, assimilation, and modern forms of identification; varieties of Jewish religious expression (Hasidism, Reform, Neo-Orthodoxy, Positive Historical [Conservative] Judaism); political ideologies and movements (Zionism; socialism); Jew-hatred and Jewish responses; the Shoah (Holocaust); creation of the State of Israel.

This syllabus gives information for which students are responsible. It is available on the JWST and HIST websites, from which you can make replacement hard copies, if needed.

Requirements:

**ATTENDANCE:** Attendance, except for illness or emergency, is expected, will be noted, and counts in your final grade. Students are responsible for obtaining notes and any handouts and/or announcements from other students for missed classes. If a situation affects your ability to attend or do course work in an ongoing way, see me as soon as possible. I will do my best to work with you but can only do this if you alert me to the need promptly. In the unlikely event that a session must be cancelled for any reason, continue reading on calendar schedule and stay current with the syllabus; a makeup will be arranged.

PLEASE NOTE: there are 2 dates—4/9, 4/16-- on which class will not be held; see syllabus for alternate work and one REQUIRED makeup.

**READING:** All reading for the session for which it is assigned. Lectures assume and will build on but not recapitulate readings. Written assignments assume integration of reading and lectures. Although this is primarily a lecture course, I encourage and
will solicit informed student participation. I welcome questions and comments at your initiative, don't hesitate!
Expect and budget time for about 60 pages of reading per session (not including notes, illustrations, blank pages). When maps or tables are in assigned pages, do study these.

Guide to doing the readings: Read actively: as you read, ask yourself what is striking you-- and why; how these readings relate to others we have done; anything unclear or confusing; what you are learning. The point is not facts per se-- though these are essential-- but WHAT THEY MEAN. Distill main points for yourself as you read and you will read much more effectively.

See "BOOKS REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE," below. You are expected to have your own copy of titles on this list; all are available in the College bookstore. If purchase poses an untenable financial burden, consider pairing with another student to purchase and share the list.

With the exception of titles on this list, all required reading is on ERES; password: JWST 132. ALL REQUIRED TITLES except encyclopedia articles –but including those on ERES, ARE ON SHELF RESERVE IN MUDD, which is the default option for doing course readings (if reading is an article or chapter in a book, the journal volume/ book will be on shelf reserve). Check more than one way on eres: title, author of the reading; title or editor of anthology it's in. If you cannot locate something on eres or shelf reserve, ASK RESERVE ROOM STAFF, preferably the Supervisor, Michael Palazzolo immediately (same for bookstore—see their staff). Emailing me is not an effective way to get help; all I can do is email. Do however, let me know of any issue your efforts do not resolve. If you are very organized and (like me), hate extensive reading on computer screen, and/ or don't wish to print readings from eres, consider Ohio Link, but be sure to allot time for books to arrive. My office has some copies of required reading; see me.

However you do it, it is each student's responsibility to do all readings for the session for which they are assigned. There are no excused failures to obtain readings. If a serious circumstance prevents you from doing readings, or other requirements, contact me.

**BOOKS REQUIRED FOR PURCHASE:**

Robert Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought* (unusually expensive paperback; sorry!)

Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World* (2nd ed.) (abbreviated on syllabus as MF/R)

Judith Baskin, ed., *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*

Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto*
WRITTEN: There are two essay/ID assignments of 6-8 pages each, at about one month intervals (submission dates on the syllabus), and an in-class, final exam, OR final research paper, due the day and time set by the Registrar. Essays/ final exam will draw on lectures and assigned readings; do not use web or other non-syllabus sources EXCEPT for Paper Option, below. Essay questions will be distributed at least one calendar week in advance of the submission deadline. Do not write footnotes and bibliography with essays; when citing or paraphrasing, use abbreviated citation in parentheses, in the body of your text: (Seltzer, 367). Observe stated length limits. See writing guidelines, below. Written assignments are to be handed in to me, in hard copy only, in class, on the day they are due; no electronic submissions. Late submission except for excused, documented illness or emergency causes grade reduction of 1/3 grade per day (e.g., A- becomes B+, etc.); lateness begins at the end of the class session in which submission is required. Final exam or paper due on Registrar set date for the course final exam, unless you have processed a request for Incomplete with that office.

Paper Option: you may do a 10-12 page paper on a topic on or related to the syllabus in lieu of the final exam; this requires consulting with me and obtaining approval by Spring break. I will be happy to help you select bibliography.

HONOR CODE: All work in this course, as in all at Oberlin, must be produced in accordance with Oberlin's Honor Code. a signed declaration of which, by College rules, must accompany all written work to receive credit. Students are responsible for all provisions of the Honor Code, questions about which you may refer to Mudd Library staff, the Honor Code section on Oberlin's website, members of the Honor Code Committee, me.

To be graded, all written work must ALSO have your name on it; be paginated, dated, and stapled.

Writing tips:

Read essay questions carefully and make sure you understand what they are asking; if you have any questions, speak with me. Your writing must be organized, focused, and coherent; make substantiated points (cite specifics); and use grammatical English and proper spelling.

Write simply and directly. Avoid unnecessarily complicated words and sentence structures, excessive verbiage, passive tense (ALWAYS use ACTIVE tense unless the subject is truly unknown). Do not use "impact" as a verb unless you mean a collision (say: "affect," "influence"). Your writing must be self-sufficient: clear to someone who has not taken this course and has no independent knowledge of your subject. It is always the WRITER'S task to make herself clear and substantiate assertions. This type and level of writing is complex and absolutely requires drafts and revisions—which means gradual work, not left to the last minute. I am happy to read and comment on drafts, or help you organize your thoughts if you give me at
least two days before a due date. Do make use of the College Writing Tutors program, details about which are available in Mudd, or see me.

The following are highly recommended, guides to writing-- some give tips to reading and note taking, research, and class skills, as well; they also cover footnote and bibliography conventions, relevant for the paper option only. They are inexpensive paperbacks, worth owning and using in this and other courses:

Mary Lynn Rampolla, A Pocket Guide to Writing in History
Jules Benjamin, A Student's Guide to History
William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White, The Elements of Style

ORAL:

Each student will give a brief (5-7 minute, enforced!), lead off presentation to one class session and submit a 1 page outline or summary of the presentation on the day it is given; no late submissions. Your presentation should score 3-5 MAJOR ISSUES for that day's class based on the assigned readings: we want to hear your informed thinking about the reading, NOT a report on or summary of it. Use guidelines, above, for "active reading" to help prepare your presentation; I am also happy to consult with you. Draw a few important comparisons, contrasts, conclusions; state a few informed reactions and opinions-- think how you can spark your fellow classmates’ interest and learning; do time yourself, 5-7 minutes goes fast! No makeups for this assignment unless documented illness/ emergency. I will solicit sign ups but each student is responsible to sign up for a presentation and give it when scheduled. If class size requires two students leading off one session, EACH does this assignment-- touch base with one another to avoid repetition. Do NOT "divvy" up the reading between you and report on “your” reading.

The final grade will be assessed on the following, progressive scale:

leadoff presentation and write-up: 15%
first essay assignment: 20%
second essay assignment: 30%
final exam or paper: 35%
JWST/ HIST 132:

JEWISH HISTORY: SPANISH EXPULSION- PRESENT

1. Introductory: Defining Jewish "modernity"  2/3

In class:

Mendes-Flohr, Reinhart (HENCEFORTH: MF/R), Appendix, pp.701-709 and following

2. Marranos, Marranism as Harbinger of Modernity 2/5

Yosef Yerushalmi, From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto, pp.1-50

Seltzer, pp.502-505


MF/R, p.57

Leadoff presenter:

3. Ottoman Jewry; Law and Mysticism: Karo and Lurianic Kabbalah  2/10

Seltzer, pp.454-467


Gershom Scholem, Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism, pp.244-86

Leadoff presenter:

4. Modernity? Jews in Renaissance Italy and Reformation Germany  2/12

Seltzer, pp.496-501, 502-505

Robert Bonfil, Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy, chps. 3, 5, pp.101-124, 145-177

Adelman chapter in Baskin, ed., Jewish Women in Historical Perspective, pp.135-158

Jacob Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World (revised, 1999 ed.), pp.185-189; 220
IN CLASS: The music of Salomone di Rossi

Leadoff presenter:


Seltzer, pp.501-502

MF/R, 10-13, 22-26 ** Please BRING THIS BOOK TO CLASS whenever we have readings from it


Leadoff presenter:

6. False Messiah: Sabbetai Zevi and Sabbatianism 2/19

Seltzer, pp. 467-474

Scholem, Major Trends, pp.287-324

Isaac Bashevis Singer, Satan in Goray a short novel by a master (Nobel winner) Yiddish writer about Sabbatianism in a Polish town; read any 25 pages, and as much more as you wish!

Leadoff presenter:

7. Eastern Europe: Economics, Community, Piety 2/24

Seltzer, pp.474-483

Jacob Katz, Tradition and Crisis, chps.9, 10, 13, pp.79-102, 122-134


Chava Weissler chp. in Baskin ed., pp.159-181

Leadoff presenter:

IN CLASS TAPE: A Hasidic master (Chabad) communes with God (and his disciples)

Leadoff presenter:

9. Western Europe: Mendelssohn, Haskalah 3/3

Seltzer, pp.513-521, 557-566
Katz, Out of the Ghetto, chps.4-5, pp.29-79
MF/R, pp.28-40, 70-74

Leadoff presenter:


Seltzer, pp.521-533
MF/R, pp.114-121, 123-126, 128-136, 141-143, 150-1, 153

Leadoff presenter:

11. Social Emancipation: Acculturation and Mobility 3/10

FIRST ESSAY DUE IN CLASS TODAY

Katz, Ghetto, chps. 11-12, pp.176-219
Marion Kaplan chp. in Baskin, ed., pp.202-221
MF/R, pp.256-261

Leadoff presenter:


Seltzer, pp.580-598, 605-618
MF/R, pp.161, 167-169, 177-202

13. East European Jewry in the Nineteenth Century  3/17

Seltzer, pp.533-541

Lucy Dawidowicz, The Golden Tradition, pp.6-42


MF/R, pp.375-379 and map of Pale of Settlement (following p.379), 381-385

Leadoff presenter:


* Today's reading is all primary sources: memoirs. How would you construct history using such sources? Can memoirs be taken at face value; as representative? If not, how can they be used?

MF/R, pp.394-398, 400-404


Leadoff presenter:

SPRING BREAK 3/21-3/29

* Please see and plan ahead for schedule changes


MF/R, pp.452-454, 456-459, 463-468

Leadoff presenter:

16. Mass Immigration; Cultural, Family, and Gender Dislocation   4/2

The film “Hester Street” must be viewed FOR today’s class, in addition to assigned reading for today; this heavier than usual requirement will be compensated by missed
class session on 4/9; please plan and budget your time accordingly. We will make arrangements for group viewing of the film during 3/31-4/1, in conjunction with Mudd staff. Please accommodate as much as possible.

Diner, chp. 3, pp.71-111

Paula Hyman chp. in Baskin ed., pp.222-242

Leadoff presenter:

17. American Jews and Judaism  4/7

Diner, chp. 4, pp.112-154

MF/R, pp.463-465, 468-472, 486, 490, 492-495

Leadoff presenter:

Please note: NO CLASS SESSIONS on 4/9; 4/16.

Our next class session is 4/14.


SECOND ESSAY DUE IN CLASS

Seltzer, pp.626-634

Jacob Katz, From Prejudice to Destruction, chps. 8, 15, 24, pp.107-118, 195-202, 292-300


Leadoff presenter:

No Class: 4/16. PLEASE NOTE THAT on 4/21, WE WILL HAVE TWO SESSIONS, our regular, and required makeup at 4:30: SEE BELOW. Use 4/16 to prepare the makeup class’ reading.

19. Jewish Reactions to Antisemitism: France, Germany  4/21

TWO SESSIONS today: regular time and required makeup, at 4:30: session #20.

Ismar Schorsch, *Jewish Reactions to German Anti-Semitism, 1870-1914*, chp. 5, pp.117-148


Leadoff presenter:

**20. Rejecting Exile: Zionist Ideas and Movement  4/21  *REQUIRED**  
**MAKEUP 4:30-5:45, room TBA**  
munchies welcome

Seltzer, pp.684-700, 634-638, 640(bottom)-642


MF/R, pp.540-543, 547-549, 552-555

Leadoff presenter:

**21. Jewish Socialism  4/28**

Seltzer, pp.638-640

Nora Levin, *While Messiah Tarried*, pp.219-249, 261-279 (recommended: 280-320)

MF/R, pp.419-423, 425-432

Leadoff presenter:

**22. Modernity and Middle Eastern Jewry  4/30**

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, pp.3-64

Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands, A History and Source Book*, pp.328, 354-361, 393-398, 401-402 (if you read this on ERES, do take the book off the shelf and see the photo section).

Leadoff presenter:

**23. Shoah: First Phases and Beginning of World War II  5/5**

In class: film clip: "Jud Suss" (1940)


Leadoff presenter:
24. The War Against the Jews: Perpetrators, Bystanders, Victims  5/7

Bauer, pp.168-226


Leadoff presenter:

25. Creation of a Jewish State: Israel; Post War Jews and Realities  5/10

Lloyd Gartner, History of the Jews in Modern Times, pp.376-437

MF/R, pp.582-584, 589-592, 603-617, 626-630

Leadoff presenter: