

Shulamit Magnus

Oberlin College

Spring, 2014

Jewish Studies/ History 306
Seminar: Germans and Jews
 Mon. 2:30-4:20



Office: 310 Rice Hours: Tues. Thurs.
 2:30-4 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 – varieties 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 insight into the dynamics of minority group identity and minority-majority relations; experience in analytical thinking, research, oral, and writing skills, and in collegial learning in which you, the students, take the lead, under my guidance.

This syllabus contains much information, for which you are responsible. Read carefully, ask any questions, and consult, as needed. It is on the JWST, HIST, and course bb sites.

This course gives CD, writing, JWST, HIST and German Literature credit.

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 as a whole; 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 – a total of 13 sessions. 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/ lack of informed, active participation will affect your grade.

2. Reading and participation: Students must complete the required reading 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.

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 grade.

OPs are not reports on the readings (do not submit your notes on readings), nor simply reactions to them, but informed, working observations.

Use OPs as an opportunity to own the material by asking yourself what YOU are making of it, taking from it, and think the Seminar should take from it, and why.

How to do OPs: After completing readings, sit back, away from the texts, and ask yourself what you have learned; what struck you – and why-- and comment about this. 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 writing nor substance need be polished.

Use your OPs during Seminar discussion. Submitting even fine OPs will not substitute for participating in Seminar discussion. SAVE YOUR OPs; we will use them in the final Seminar (see syllabus).

* Please note that there are readings 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 event that class is cancelled (weather or other reason), PREPARE READINGS as usual: stay current with the syllabus. We will arrange a makeup.

PLEASE NOTE that we will not hold class on two Mondays (Passover), noted on the syllabus, and will make alternate arrangements for those sessions, which will be REQUIRED; details on the syllabus. We'll do this scheduling at the start of the semester; I will expect all to note the alternate sessions on your calendars and to make any needed arrangements (work, practice, etc.) in advance to accommodate them. Finding an alternate day/time is always challenging; we'll need everyone's flexibility and cooperation.

READINGS:

All required reading, including that on bb, has been ordered on shelf reserve in Mudd. You are expected to obtain your own copies of reading on "Required Titles" list; see below. Reading NOT in "Required Titles" has been ordered on bb. There is relatively little of this, however. For any issues obtaining shelf or electronic reading, the contact Reserve Room Supervisor, Michael Palazzolo, immediately. Emailing me is not an effective way to get help (all I can do is email Mr. Palazzolo) though do tell me of problem your efforts do not resolve.

Obtain readings well in advance of needing to do them. I suggest you be two-weeks out at all times, in case of glitches. Help one another; share materials.

Spread out your reading over several days. DO NOT try to do the readings (130-160 pages per week—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. Block out days and times devoted to the reading; 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 an OP. It is to be substantive, analytical, organized, and clear, focusing on a few MAIN issues, making comparative observations and evaluations-- 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, for the Presenter to lay out her/ his main points. This is so the Presenter organizes and clarifies the Presentation and so the Commenter can prepare a response. This meeting, and the Presentation/ Comment during Seminar, are meant to be collegial. To that end, JWST is happy to pick up cost of tea, juice, or similar, while you enjoy this interaction! Just give me dated receipt, with your names on it.

The Commenter may amplify, disagree with points in the Presentation, or raise other ones. Both Presenter and Commenter will be graded. 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 the Presentation instead of OP.

Should we have no Presenter/ Commenter for a session, each Seminar participant will contribute discussion points in a round table at the beginning of class, from OPs.

3. Written

Students will choose an approved topic for a 20- 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 (1-2pp.), and a Preliminary Bibliography (1-2 pp.), 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 on Sunday, 3/16/14. In addition, submit a hard copy to me by that time, under my office door.

ALL submissions 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 skim the volumes of the *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* (LBIYB), and Michael Meyer, ed. *German-Jewish History*, vols. 1-2, before choosing a topic; I expect to see citations from these volumes in your Preliminary Bibliography (and in your final paper). 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 related to the Seminar's focus; 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 in Rampolla (see Required Titles, below). 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 circumstance that affects your ability to do any requirement.

4. In the class session after Spring Break, you must submit a 3-5 page revised description/ discussion of your topic, with a more extensive bibliography (2-3 pages). You must circulate this to all Seminar participants electronically and to me, in hard copy as well, BY NOON ON SUNDAY 3/31/14. There should be 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.

GRADING: % of the final grade:

Presentation/s: 15%; Comment/s, 10%.

Seminar participation (including OPs): 25% of the grade.

Seminar paper: 50%

HONOR CODE: This course, as all at Oberlin, operates under the College Honor Code, with which it is the student's responsibility to be familiar. Ask me, Mudd staff, HC

Committee members any questions. 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 scanned/ on bb.

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* (10th ed. or later)

Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual*

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

William Zinsser, *On Writing Well*

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

1. Introductory: Who Were Germany's Jews? Assessing German Jewish History 2/3

Introductions: to the Course and one another

*Setting date/ hour for two alternate day/ time sessions, numbers 11 and 12; see below. Once set, please note these dates and make all needed arrangements (work, practice), around them

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

The work for this first session is divided into several different, related, tasks: digging into statistics that tell a big story, and some readings that assert a big story (all this will make sense as you – and the class session-- proceed). The questions for you are: what are the respective big stories, and what do you make of them?

REQUIRED READING for today:

First, study the illustrations on this syllabus, above, and bring some comments about your reading of them.

Jewish Life in Germany: Memoirs from Three Centuries, ed. Monika Richarz, Introduction (selection), pp.1-29 only;

Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*, Introduction, selections, pp. 3-15 only.

--These two readings give an overview of the period ("modernity") we will study in the Seminar, and its major political, legal, social, 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, 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 this book's title? Keep conversion in mind as the extreme end of the continuum that is 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:

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

THE TABLES in Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*, chp.6, pp. 158, 159, 161-162, 165, 188-191;

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

and the Richarz, ed., reading, above:

-- with a partner from the Seminar (see below), 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 Germany; in Austria in these years? What percentage of the total population was Jewish? 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 or maps showing the German states anytime after 1818. Locate major cities: Berlin, Frankfurt am Main, Hamburg, Breslau, Cologne, and these two states: Prussia; Bavaria.

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 say about German Jewish society?)

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: what percentage were "traditional"; "Reform"? Neither? How did this change over time?

Note comparable statistics about the rest of the German population in these readings: overall population statistics; urban/rural distribution; economic profile.

PARTNER WORK: I will get you the contact info for other students in the Seminar and will ask you to pair up (group of three, also ok), to work on this assignment. Do NOT divide the reading among you. You MAY meet and locate readings and work on them together; all are to do them. When you're done, get together with your partner/s and discuss findings a day or so before the first Seminar session.

Each student should bring to the first Seminar:

- 1) your statistical findings and answers to 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 2/10

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

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--always read the Notes), pp. 65-77, 84-120. Please bring this book to class whenever it's assigned.

3. Re-Writing the Rules of Jewish-German Relationship: Emancipation 2/17

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

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.

Shulamit S. Magnus, *Jewish Emancipation in a German City: Cologne, 1798-1871*, Introduction, chps. 4-5, Conclusion, pp.1-11, 64-143, 218-226; see book's photo section.

4. Jewish Routes to Germanness: Jews and *Bildung* 2/24

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

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.

Jewish Life in Germany, M. Richarz, ed., get this book from shelf reserve, read any 30 pp. that you choose of the memoirs in it, 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. I am happy to help you select; sign up for o 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" 3/3

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

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

6. Gender, Family, and Class as Crucible of German Jewishness 3/10

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

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

Preliminary Statement of Paper Topic, Methodology and Bibliography to be circulated to all electronically by noon on 3/13 and to me in hard copy, as well. Everyone read and prepare comments on everyone's for next Seminar.

7. German "anti-Semitism" 3/17

COMMENTER:

PRESENTER:

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

3/22-30 SPRING BREAK

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

Over Break, read either: Jules Benjamin, *A Student's Guide to History*, or Howard Becker, *Writing for Social Scientists*. Note 5-10 practical points you learned; hand in, next class.

8. German Jewish Responses to Jew-hatred 3/31

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

Revised Statement of Paper Topic and Bibliography, using proper citation conventions, due in class today. All will present briefly on the topic and how this has changed. Submit your list of practical points you took from Benjamin 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

9. German Jews and East European Jews: Threat/ Spur to German Jewish Identity 4/7

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

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

NO CLASS MON. 4/14; 4/21

These two weeks are research weeks, in which there will be no assigned readings and you will work on your Final Paper topics, we will read one another's drafts, prepare comments and suggestions on them, and meet to discuss this.

We will meet at the alternate day/ time that we set at the beginning of the semester.

Your drafts **MUST** be circulated to all Seminar participants by noon two days before these Seminar sessions. Send your drafts to me electronically AND in hard copy by this deadline. You may continue to revise after this submission.

For the first of these sessions, have 5-8 typed, double-spaced pages, and a Bibliography and Notes prepared according to proper citation conventions, in Rampolla or Benjamin (see list of recommended writing guides, above).

For the second, have 9-12 pages. Show them to College Writing tutors BEFORE you submit them to Seminar participants.

10. Working session: research and writing Date/ time:

11. Working session: research and writing Date/time:

12. Weimar: Cultural Resurgence 4/28

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

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

13. Weimar: Crisis; Course Conclusions 5/5

PRESENTER:

COMMENTER:

In preparing your observations for today, look at your OPs from the beginning of the course. Think back to our opening readings. Note how your perceptions have changed – what you have learned, what you are taking from this course – and 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

