AS.100.180
Themes and Concepts in Jewish History
Wednesdays, Fridays 3:00-4:15

Classroom:
Prof. Pawel Maciejko
Classroom: Gilman 55
Office Hours: Tues 4-5
Email: pmaciej1@jhu.edu

Course Description:
This course will introduce the student to the main themes and debates in Jewish historiography. The class follows a chronological sequence, surveying the main personalities and schools in Jewish historical writing from the 19th century till the present. We shall examine how Jewish historiography appropriated and redefined such concepts as race, religion, nation, modernity, gender, social, political, and cultural power. We shall discuss the extent to which traditional dichotomies of secular/religious, nation/faith, belief/practice are applicable to research of Jewish history. We shall end with an appraisal of the trends and positions dominating in the current research.

Learning Goals:

The main goal of the class is to acquaint the student with the main personalities, schools, and approaches in Jewish history. At the completion of the course, students will be familiar with the most programmatic and heatedly debated texts and topic in the field. Ultimately, students will enhance their own research by being able to consciously place their approach within larger debates in the field of Jewish Studies.

Required Texts:


Course Requirements:
This seminar puts heavy emphasis on close reading and careful analysis of the reading assignments. The reading assignments listed below a given session should be completed by the date under which they appear.
The final decision on any grade derives from my global assessment of your work and cannot be quantified exactly. Roughly speaking, however, the breakdown is as follows:

- Participation: 40%
- First assignment (3-pages): 20%
- One 10-page final paper: 40%

No extensions will be granted without my prior permission, and late papers will be graded lower at the rate of one grade-step per day (A to A-, A- to B+, etc). Needless to say, complete honesty and probity in your work is a must. For information, see http://ethics.jhu.edu

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Dr. Richard Sanders, in Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

01/30: Introduction

Reading:


02/01 The science of Judaism I

Readings:


02/06: The science of Judaism II

Readings:


02/08 The science of Judaism: a critical perspective

Readings:

Gershom Scholem, “Reflection on Modern Jewish Studies”, in: On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in Our Time, 51-71
Assignment: analyze a chapter from Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*.

02/13: Jewish history as a national history: Dubnow

Readings:


02/15: Marxist perspective

Readings:

Rafael Mahler, “The Modern Era in Marxist-Zionist Perspective”, 302-316.

02/20 and 02/22 no class

02/27: Jerusalem school: the foundations

Reading:

Assignment due

03/01: Jerusalem school: Scholem

Reading:


03/06: Jerusalem school: Baer

Reading:


03/08: Jewish history as a national history: Israeli perspective
Readings:


**03/13: Jacob Katz**

Readings:


**03/15: Salo Baron and his school**

Readings:


**03/15: Salo Baron and his school II**

Reading:


**03/27: Yerushalmi’s Zakhor**

Reading:


**03/29: History and Memory**

Readings:

04/03: Postzionism

Readings:


04/05: Gender and power

Reading:


04/10: Religious History vs Cultural History

Readings:

Eli Yassif, "The 'Other' Israel", in: David Biale (ed.), *Cultures of the Jews*, 1063-1096.

04/12: Bloody Jews

Readings:


04/17: Non-Jewish Jews

Readings:


04/19: Passover – no class
04/24 Hybridity

Readings:


04/26: “Jewishness”: Jew as a paradigm

Reading:


05/01: Myths and mythbusting:

Readings:


05/03: The Postmodern Period in Jewish History

Readings: