

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

Classroom:

Prof. Pawel Maciejko
Classrom: Gilman 55
Office Hours: Tues 4-5
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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:

Michael A. Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, New York: Behrman House, 1974; reprint Wayne State University Press, 1988.

Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish is Jewish History?*, Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982; reprint 1996.

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:

Moshe Rosman, "Some a priori Issues in Jewish Historiography", in: *How Jewish is Jewish History?*, Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007, 19-55.

02/01 The science of Judaism I

Readings:

Isaac Marcus Jost, "The Rigors of Jewish Historiography", in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, 175-186.

Heinrich Graetz, "Judaism Can Be Understood Only Through its History", in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas*, 219-233, 241-244.

02/06: The science of Judaism II

Readings:

Leopold Zunz, "The suffering of the Jews", in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, 158-160.

Abraham Geiger, "The Developing Idea of Judaism", in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, 163-172.

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

Gershom Scholem, "The Science of Judaism – Then and Now" in: *The Messianic Idea in Judaism and other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*, New York: Schocken, 1971, 304-313.

Assignment: analyze a chapter from Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*.

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

Readings:

Simon Dubnow, “The Sociological View of Jewish History”, in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, 259-269.

Simon Dubnow, “An Essay in the Philosophy of History”, in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, 250-259.

02/15: Marxist perspective

Readings:

Rafael Mahler, *A History of Modern Jewry*, New York: Schocken, 1971, xi-xxiii.

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:

Gershom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem*, New York: Schocken, 1980, 116-174.

Assignment due

03/01: Jerusalem school: Scholem

Reading:

Gershom Scholem, “With Gershom Scholem: An Interview” in: *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*, New York: Schocken, 1995; reprint 2012, 1-48.

03/06: Jerusalem school: Baer

Reading:

Yitzhak Baer, *Galut*, New York: Schocken, 1947, 9-13, 27-39, 60-68, 109-122.

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

Readings:

Ben-Zion Dinur, "Israel in the Diaspora", in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, 286-298.

03/13: Jacob Katz

Readings:

Dina Porat, "One Historian, Two Histories: Jacob Katz and the Formation of a National Israeli Identity", *Jewish Social Studies* 9,3 (2003), 56-75.

Jacob Katz, *With My Own Eyes: The Autobiography of an Historian*, Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1995, 49-62, 138-155.

03/15: Salo Baron and his school

Readings:

Salo W. Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?" in: Leo W. Schwarz (ed.), *The Menorah Treasury: Harvest of Half a Century*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973, 50-63.

Salo W. Baron, "Emancipation from State and Territory", in: Meyer (ed.), *Ideas of Jewish History*, 319-329.

03/15: Salo Baron and his school II

Reading:

David Engel, "Crisis and Lachrymosity: On Salo Baron, Neobaronianism, and the Study of Modern European Jewish History", *Jewish History* 20, 3-4 (2006), 243-264.

03/27: Yerushalmi's Zakhor

Reading:

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1982; reprint 1996.

03/29: History and Memory

Readings:

Ivan G. Marcus, "History, Story, and Collective Memory: Narrativity in Early Ashkenazic Culture", *Prooftexts* 10,3 (1990), 365-388.

David Biale, *Cultures of the Jews: a new history*, New York: Schocken, 2002, xvii-xxxiii.

04/03: Postzionism

Readings:

Benny Morris, "The New Historiography: Israel Confronts Its Past," *Tikkun* 3,3 (Nov.-Dec.1988), 19-23, 99-102; reprinted in: Morris (ed.), *Making Israel*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007, 11-28.

Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, New York: Picador, 2000, 3-34, 421-445.

04/05: Gender and power

Reading:

Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, 151-162.

04/10: Religious History vs Cultural History

Readings:

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

Moshe Rosman, "Prolegomenon to the Study of Jewish Cultural History", in: *How Jewish is Jewish History?*, Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007, 131-153.

04/12: Bloody Jews

Readings:

Elliott S. Horowitz, *Reckless Rites: Purim and the Legacy of Jewish Violence* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008, 149-186.

Hillel Halkin, "Bloody Jews?", *Commentary* 123, 5 (2007), 40-48.

04/17: Non-Jewish Jews

Readings:

Jonathan Frankel, "The 'Non-Jewish Jews' Revisited: Solzhenitsyn and the Issue of National Guilt", in: Richard I. Cohen et al. (eds.), *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry*, Oxford: The Littman Library, 2010, 166-187.

04/19: Passover – no class

04/24 Hybridity

Readings:

Moshe Rosman, “Hybrid with What? The Relationship between Jewish Culture and Other People's Cultures” and “Methodological Hybridity: The Art of Jewish Historiography and the Methods of Folklore” in: *How Jewish is Jewish History?*, Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007, 82-110, 154-167.

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (3rd imp., London: Verso, 1996), 205-217.

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

Reading:

Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004, 1-104.

05/01: Myths and mythbusting:

Readings:

Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, 1-27.

Shlomo Zand, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, London: Verso, 2009, 64-128.

05/03: The Postmodern Period in Jewish History

Readings:

Moshe Rosman, “The Postmodern Period in Jewish History”, in: *How Jewish is Jewish History?*, Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007, 56-81.

Moshe Rosman, “Conclusion”, in: *How Jewish is Jewish History?*, Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007, 182-186.