

Jewish History in the 20th Century

Professor Kenneth B. Moss

M 01:30 PM - 03:50 PM | Gilman 308

Jewish history, politics, and culture across a century of enormous transformations and transformative enormities in Europe, the US, and the Middle East. Topics include: impacts on Jewish life of World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the post-imperial reordering of the Eastern Europe and the Middle East; Zionism and other modes of Jewish contestatory politics; the consolidation of American Jewry; Nazism and the Holocaust in Europe; formation and development of the State of Israel; the global reordering of Jewish life amid cross-currents of the Cold War, conflict in the Middle East, and success in the US. Substantial attention to recent and contemporary history including the dramatic changes in Israeli society and polity over the past forty years and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Each week, class will end with a detailed background lecture setting up the discussion for next time, so that students can devote their attention to in-depth discussion of key primary texts and historical monographs that capture Jewish responses to 20th century processes and events.

Required Texts:

Most of our readings are scanned and online as e-reserves (via Sheridan Libraries webpage: Reserves). These are marked with a * on the syllabus. Please *print* these to bring to class whenever possible.

Required texts:

David Engel, *The Holocaust: The Third Reich and the Jews*
Ethan Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood: Jews and Muslims from North Africa to France*,
Alfred Kazin, *Walker in the City*
Eli Lederhendler, *American Jewry: A New History*
Anita Shapira, *Israel: A History*
Sasson Somekh, *Baghdad, Yesterday* [buy used online]

Optional text: Ian Black, *Enemies and Neighbors*

Course Requirements:

This seminar puts heavy emphasis on discussion and participation based on careful analysis of the reading assignments. Confident that each of us has much to contribute to the class, I will begin each class by calling on each student to present a substantial commentary on some of the key reading for the week. The reading assignments listed below a given session should be completed by the date under which they appear. I strive to assign no more than about 120 pages per week, all of it pretty fascinating.

In order for us to have the intense give-and-take that a class like this allows and deserves, we need to talk to each other and pay attention to our shared texts. I will ask that there be no screens during discussion; this means it is imperative to bring hard copies of all texts.

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: 30%

One 5-page paper, topic to be announced: 20%

One book presentation (3-page book review and in-class presentation): 20%

One 12-15-page final paper: 30%

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 Student Disability Services, 385 Garland, (410) 516-4720, studentdisabilityservices@jhu.edu.

Wk 1: Introduction: the Jewish situation on the eve of the 20th century

Wk 2: Between the Question of Judaism and the Jewish Question

*Rabbi Yehudah Leib Alter of Ger, *The Language of Truth*, ed. Arthur Green, 219-223, 283-287

- *Leon Pinsker, "Autoemancipation," in *Zionist Idea (= ZI)*, 178-98
- *Y. L. Peretz, "In the Mail Coach"
- **France and the Dreyfus Affair*, ed. Burns, 1-20
- *1902 Declaration by the Vilna rabbis
- *"Proclamation of the Jewish Labor Bund"
- *"Proclamation of the Hebrew Writers' Union"
- *Esther Azhari Moyal, "Address at the American College for Girls in Beirut"

Wk 3: In Transit: Capitalism, Mass Migration, and the Remaking of the Jewish World

- Eli Lederhendler, *American Jewry*, preface and ch. 2
- Shapira, *Israel*, ch *
- *Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, ch. 4
- American Yiddish poetry (handouts)
- *Brenner, "Nerves"

Wk 4: World War, Revolution, the Soviet Experiment, and the New Nation-States

- *Sholem Aleichem, "Tales of 1001 Nights"
- *Isaac Babel, "A Letter", "Gedali", "My First Goose", "Evening"
- *Bergelson, "Among Refugees"
- *Jacqueline Kahanoff, "Europe from Afar"
- *Moss, "Negotiating the Nation in Interwar Warsaw"
- *Moss, introduction to *Unchosen People*
- Handouts on Polish Jewry in the 1930s

Wk 5: At Home in America, England, France, Germany? Integration and Extrusion 1918-1933/39

- Eli Lederhendler, *American Jewry*, pp. **
- Alfred Kazin, *Walker in the City*
- Katz, *Burdens of Brotherhood*, ch. 1-2
- Engel, *Holocaust*, materials up to 1939

Select and start reading for book presentation on history of Israel

Wk 6: Zionist Visions, National Conflict, and Jewish Life in Palestine, 1900-1939

- Shapira, *Israel*, ch. 2-6
- Optional: Black, *Enemies and Neighbors*, relevant dates
- *Kaplan and Penslar, eds. *The Origins of Israel, 1882-1948*: 85-109, 126-134, 180-184, 235-238
- Handout, Hebrew poetry in the Yishuv

Wk 7: War, Holocaust, and the Post-War Jewish World

- Engel, *Holocaust*, rest
- *Selections from Emmanuel Ringelblum (et al), *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*, tba
- *Itamar Rabinovich and Jehuda Reinharz, *Israel in the Middle East*, pp. 72-83
- Handout, poetry of Avrom Sutzkever
- *Adorno, *The Authoritarian Personality*, ch. 16-17

Wk 8: From Palestine and Yishuv to the State of Israel, 1939-1967/73

- Shapira, *Israel*, ch. 7-12
- Optional: Black, *Enemies and Neighbors*, relevant dates
- Presentation on a monograph on some aspect of early Israeli history

Wk 9: Making It: American Jewish Life, 1940s-1980s

- Eli Lederhendler, *American Jewry*, rest of ch. 3, ch. 4-5.
- *Sarna, *American Judaism* ch. 6
- Deborah Dash Moore and Nurit Gertz, *Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, v. 10: 1973-2005: 685-6, 709, 711-13, 744-46, 750-51, 765-73, 789-91, 794-96, 827-29

Wk 10: Middle Eastern Jews, Soviet Jews, French Jews between the End of Empire and the Cold War

Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood*, ch 4-6

*Sasson Somekh, *Baghdad, Yesterday* [buy used online]

*Jacqueline Kahanoff, "Israel: Ambivalent Levantine"

*Joseph Brodsky, "In a Room and a Half"

Wk 11: Israel, 1967-1991

Shapira, *Israel*, ch. 13-18

Optional: Black, *Enemies and Neighbors*, relevant dates

Deborah Dash Moore and Nurit Gertz, *Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, v. 10: 1973-2005: 246-255, 259-60, 262-63, 265-68, 272-74, 277-79, 283-86, 288-91, 293-94, 327-29, 365-67, 375-76, 388-392, 416-19, 608-611, 634-36, 648-50, 662-66, 676-80, 723-24, 761-63, 849-51

Film: *Seven Tapes of Yona Wallach*

Wk 12: Israel to the Present Day

Shapira, *Israel*, ch. 19

Optional: Black, *Enemies and Neighbors*, relevant dates

*Deborah Dash Moore and Nurit Gertz, *Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, v. 10: 1973-2005: 859-61, 865-869, 915-20, 922-25, 931-33, 935-39, 959-61, 965-66, 968-70

*Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli*, ch 8-11

Wk 13 Jewish Life in the 21st Century -- Looking Forward, Looking Back

*Pew Reports on American Jewry and on Israel, selections

Katz, *The Burdens of Brotherhood*, ch 7

*Deborah Dash Moore and Nurit Gertz, *Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization*, v. 10: 1973-2005: 832-34, 838-40, 851-56, 877-79

*Essays by Ghanim, Sharon, Khamaisi, and Yiftachel in Ehrenberg and Peled, eds. *Israel and Palestine*