History 891/History 901: Modern Jewish History in Comparative Perspective: Russian and the United States

University of Wisconsin, Madison
Fall 2011
Humanities 5245
Tuesdays: 11:00-1:00

Prof. Tony Michels
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Requirements
Active participation is crucial. I urge you to take risks, test ideas, and raise questions regardless of whether you're convinced you are “right.” A successful seminar is one with lively, probing, freewheeling conversation. Thoughtfulness is welcome; circumspection is not.

Each student is expected to present the reading(s) for a given week once during the semester. Your presentations should succinctly summarize the authors’ arguments and identify what you believe to be the most important issue that we should discuss. Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes in length.

Finally, you are required to write three papers during the semester. The first two papers should be 6-page analyses of a given week’s readings and will be due two weeks after their discussion date. (For instance, if you want to write on week four’s readings, your paper will be due in week six.) Your third paper is due a week after the final day of class, on December 20. That paper should be 15 pages in length and address a particular historiographic issue, question, or problem. I encourage you to speak with me outside of class about your final paper topic.

Grading
First paper: 30%
Second paper: 30%
Third paper: 40%

Outside Lectures
The Center for Jewish Studies is sponsoring two lectures this semester, which may be of interest to you. Prof. Jonathan Sarna (Brandeis University) will lecture on Sept. 26 @ 4:00 in Union South on “That Obnoxious Order: Ulysses S. Grant and the Jews.” On Oct. 24 @ 4:00 in Union South, Prof. Nathaniel Deutsch (University of California, Santa
Cruz) will give a lecture entitled, “Exploring the Jewish Dark Continent: Life, Death, and Ethnography in the Pale of Settlement.” Both lectures are free and open to the public.

**Readings**

The following books are available for purchase from Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative (426 W. Gilman):

- Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora* (Indiana Univ. Press, 2010).
- Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia* (Univ. of California Press, 2002).

**Readings**

**Sept. 6: Introduction**

**Sept. 13: Simon Dubnov and the Beginning of Russian Jewish Historiography**


**Sept. 20: Post-Nationalist Historiography**


**Sept. 27: Politics and Trans-national Historiography**


**Oct. 4: Emancipation and Integration Reconsidered**

Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*, entire book.

**Oct. 11: Culture and Revolution**


**Oct. 18: The Transformation of Soviet Jewry**


**Oct. 25: Immigration and Diaspora**

Rebecca Kobrin, *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora*, entire book.


**Nov. 1: Integration and Ethnicity in New York**


Responses:
*Paula Hyman, “We Are All Post-Jewish Historians Now: What American Jewish History Brings to the Table,”* pp. 53-60.
Rejoinder:

Nov. 8: American Jews Between White and Black


Nov. 15: Liberalism in Post-War America


Nov. 22: class cancelled for Thanksgiving

Nov. 29: Cultural Pluralism


Dec. 6: Nationalism and Post-Ethnicity


Dec. 13: The Question of Silence


Dec. 20: Papers Due