

University of Wisconsin - Madison
Fall Term, 2006

Edward Breuer
ebreuer@mscc.huji.ac.il

**Topics in Jewish History:
Jews and Judaism in the Modern World**

This course seeks to examine the shaping of the modern Jewish experience in response to the challenges of modernity. We will focus primarily on one hundred and fifty years of European Jewish history, from the mid-eighteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century, in order to study the foundations of religious, intellectual, and social trends characteristic of modern Judaism. Through careful reading of primary sources in translation, students will be introduced to seminal thinkers and writings of this period. Seminar discussion will aim at providing the conceptual framework by which to address the continuities and discontinuities of Jewish life in the modern age.

Students are required to purchase the following:

A coursepack [bound photocopy of selected sources]
P. Mendes-Flohr and J. Reinharz, eds. The Jew in the Modern World
Michael Meyer, The Origins of the Modern Jew
Jacob Katz, Out of the Ghetto
David Vital, The Origins of Zionism

The following book is recommended, and should be available at the library:

Michael Meyer, Response to Modernity

The instructor will also supply students with a number of handouts to supplement the material used in the coursepack.

Course evaluation will be based on two brief papers of 3-5 pages [20% each], a final take-home examination [30%], and classroom participation [10%]. Students may opt to write a research paper instead of the take-home final; subjects will be chosen in discussion with the instructor.

Course Outline and Reading List

** Note: Primary source readings are mainly taken from The Jew in the Modern World, here abbreviated as JMW. Readings from the coursepack are designated with (C), while readings handed out to students will be designated with (H).

Unit I: Introduction

§ September 11 Introduction to Course; Pre-Modern Jewry; The Breakdown of Traditional Society

Secondary Sources

Katz, Out of the Ghetto, ch. II-III, pp. 9-41

Unit II: German Challenges and Jewish Responses

N.B. A very helpful introduction to the material in this unit can be found in Meyer, Response to Modernity, ch. 1-2, pp. 10-99

§ September 18 Challenges: Social, Intellectual, Religious

Primary Sources

Christian Dohm, Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews, in JMW pp. 28-36

Johann Michaelis, Arguments Against Dohm, in JMW pp. 42-44

Moses Mendelssohn, Response to Dohm, in JMW pp. 44-47

Mendelssohn, Remarks Concerning Michaelis, in JMW pp. 48-49

Gotthold Lessing, A Parable of Toleration [from Nathan The Wise], in JMW pp. 64-67

Secondary Sources

Katz, Out of the Ghetto, chs. IV-VI, pp. 42-103

§ September 25 Mendelssohn

Primary Sources

Mendelssohn, On Jewish Juridical Autonomy, in JMW pp. 87-90

Search for Light and Right and Postscript, in JMW pp. 91-95

Mendelssohn, Judaism as Revealed Legislation, in JMW pp. 97-99

Secondary Sources

Michael Meyer, Origins of the Modern Jew, ch. 1-2

§ **October 2** **NO CLASS – YOM KIPPUR**

§ **October 9** **Haskalah, Ambivalence, and Conversion**

Primary Sources

- Joseph II, Edict of Tolerance, in JMW pp. 36-40
Naphtali Wessely, Words of Peace and Truth, in JMW pp. 70-74
Rabbi David of Lissa, Sermon Contra Wessely, in JMW pp. 74-76
Saul Ascher, Leviathan, in JMW pp. 99-103
Solomon Maimon, Autobiography, in JMW pp. 250-53
David Friedlander, Letter to Probst Teller, in JMW pp. 105-111
Letters of Arnsteiner, Mendelssohn, and Heine On Conversion, in JMW pp. 256-260

Secondary Sources

- Katz, Out of the Ghetto, chs. VII-VIII, pp. 104-141
Michael Meyer, Origins of the Modern Jew, chs. 3-4, pp. 57-114

§ **October 16** **Historicism and the Historical Study of Judaism**

Primary Sources

- Edward Gans, Address to the Society, in JMW pp. 215-19
I. Wolf, Concept of a Science of Judaism, in JMW pp. 219-21
(C) Abraham Geiger, A General Introduction to the Science of Judaism

Secondary Sources

- Meyer, Origins of the Modern Jew, ch. 6, pp. 144-182
(C) I. Schorsch, "Ideology and History in the Age of Emancipation" [read only sections I-IV (p. 31 of the article)]

§ **October 23** **Religious Uses of History: Reform and Historical-Positive Judaism**

Primary Sources

- Constitution of the Hamburg Temple, in JMW pp. 161
Eliezer Liebermann, The Light of Splendor, in JMW pp. 162-66
Reform Rabbinical Conferences 1844-1845, in JMW pp. 177-85
(C) Abraham Geiger, Preface to the Prayerbook
(C) Reform-minded Thinkers on the Authority of Tradition
(C) Samuel Holdheim, On the Sabbath
Zacharias Fraenkel, On Changes in Judaism, in JMW pp. 194-97

Secondary Sources [see next page]

§ **October 23** **Religious Uses of History: Reform and Historical-Positive Judaism** (continued)

Secondary Sources

- Meyer, Response to Modernity, pp. 100-42, and skim pp. 143-224
- (C) I. Schorsch, "Ideology and History in the Age of Emancipation" [read section V to the end]
 - (C) Michael Meyer, "Abraham Geiger's Historical Judaism"
 - (C) I. Schorsch, "Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism"

§ **October 30** **Traditionalist Responses**

Primary Sources

- Hamburg Rabbinical Court, in JMW pp. 167-69
- Moses Sofer, Reply Concerning the Question of Reform, in JMW pp. 169-173
- (H) Nahman Krochmal, Guide of the Perplexed of the Time
 - (H) Samson Raphael Hirsch, Nineteen Letters
- Hirsch, Religion Allied to Progress, in JMW pp. 197-202
- Solomon Rappoport, Open Rebuke, in JMW pp. 188-94

Secondary Sources

- Katz, Out of the Ghetto, ch. IX, pp. 142-160
- (C) Mordecai Kaplan, "Orthodox Judaism"

Unit III: Judaism in Eastern Europe

§ **November 6** **Introduction to Eastern European Jewry; Hasidism**

Primary Sources

- (H) Selections from the Baal Shem Tov, Dov Baer of Meseritch, Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev, Zadok Ha-Kohen of Lublin
- (H) Rav Nahman of Bratslav, The Loss of the Princess
- (H) Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, Upright Practices

Secondary Sources

- (C) S. Ettinger, "The Hasidic Movement - Reality and Ideals"
- (H) Arthur Green, "Teachings of the Hasidic Masters"

§ November 13 Mitnaggedim, Haskalah, and Mussar: Eastern European Responses to Hasidism and Modernity

Primary Sources

- Excommunication of the Hasidim, in JMW pp. 390-91
- (C) Rabbi Hayyim Volozhiner, Monument for the Living
Rabbi David Krynki, The Volozhin Yeshivah, in JMW pp. 394-95
S.J. Fuenn, The Need for Enlightenment, in JMW pp. 381-383
A Jewish Program for Russification, in JMW pp. 385
Society for the Promotion of Culture Among Jews, in JMW 401-02
Judah Leib Gordon, Poems, in JMW pp. 384, 386
- (H) Jacob Mark, Truth and Legend About Israel Salanter
Hirsch Leib Gordon, The Musar Yeshivah, in JMW pp. 396-97

Secondary Sources

- David Vital, Origins of Zionism, ch. 2, pp. 23-48
- (H) Norman Lamm, "Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin"
(H) Immanuel Etkes, "R. Israel Salanter and his Psychology of Mussar"

§ November 20 The Emergence of Religious and Secular Modes of Nationalism

Primary Sources

- (C) Rabbi Zvi Hirsch Kalischer, Seeking Zion
(C) Moses Hess, Rome and Jerusalem
(C) Peretz Smolenskin, It is Time to Plant
(C) Smolenskin, The Haskalah of Berlin
(C) Leo Pinsker, Auto-Emancipation

Secondary Sources

- Vital, Origins of Zionism, chs. 1, 3-5, pp. 3-20, 49-132

§ November 27 Cultural and Political Zionism

Primary Sources

- (C) Theodor Herzl, The Jewish State
Herzl, A Solution of the Jewish Question, in JMW pp. 533-38
- (C) Ahad Ha-Am (Asher Ginsberg), People of the Book
(C) Ahad Ha-Am, The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem
Simon Dubnow, Autonomism, in JMW pp. 417-19

Secondary Sources

- Vital, Origins of Zionism, chs. 6-7, 9-10, pp. 135-200, 233-266

§ December 4 Religious Reactions to Zionism

Primary Sources

- (C) Rabbi Samuel Mohilever, Message to the First Zionist Congress
- (C) Yehiel Michael Pines, Selections
Protest Against Zionism, in JMW pp. 538-40
- (C) Theodor Herzl, Protest Rabbis
Zadok Ha-Cohen Rabinowitz, Zionists are not Our Saviors,
in JMW pp. 544-45
Mizrachi Manifesto, in JMW pp. 546
- (C) Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan, What Kind of a Life Should We Create in
Eretz Israel
Agudat Israel Founding Program, in JMW pp. 565-66

Secondary Sources

- (C) Jacob Katz, "Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective" [students may wish to skip to page 8]

§ December 11 Course Summation: The Modern Jewish Experience in Historical Perspective