

History / Jewish Studies 220

Modern Jewish History: From 1492 to the Present Day

Fall 2017

Prof. Amos Bitzan

TuTh 2:30-3:45 PM in Humanities 1217

This course surveys the history of the Jews beginning with the aftermath of the mass conversion and expulsion of Spanish Jewry in 1492 and concluding in the present. Our goal will be to explain the causes of major changes in Jewish history over the early and late modern periods. We will examine both the lives of Jewish individuals and changing conceptions of Jews as a religious, ethnic, or national group, against a backdrop of unprecedented opportunities as well as dangers in this tumultuous era.

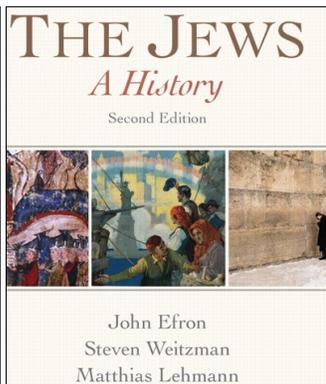
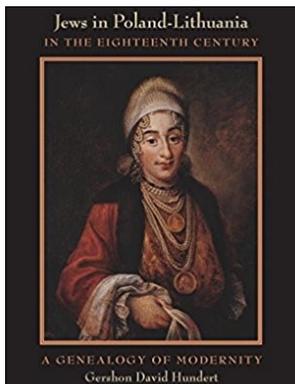


IMAGE: Bibliothèque nationale de France on [Gallica](#)

The drawing above, which appeared in *Le Petit Journal* with the caption, "The Traitor," depicts the public demotion of Captain Alfred Dreyfus after having been

falsely convicted of treason. One of the questions we will ask is whether Dreyfus's fate should be seen as symbolic of the Jewish predicament in the modern nation-state.

Books to Purchase



Please purchase/rent Efron *et al.*, *The Jews: A History* (2nd ed.). ISBN: [978-0205858262](#).

You can read the [digital edition](#) of Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania* for free via [library.wisc.edu](#) or purchase it used.

ISBN: [978-0520249943](#).

Requirements

Paper 1 due Oct 8 (3-4 pages)	15%
Paper 2 due Nov 10 (4-5 pages)	20%
Paper 3 due Dec 13 (6-8 pages)	25%
Quizzes	20%
Take-home final due Dec 18	20%

Office Hours

Tu 4-5 PM in 4134 Humanities

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Schedule of Readings

Read the assigned selections before each class. Note key terms and concepts from the reading as well as from the previous day's lecture; you may be tested on them in a quiz at the beginning of class.

	Date	Lecture Topic	Reading
1	Th 9/7	What is modern Jewish history?	
2	Tu 9/12	Expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Aftermath	Efron: 209-224 Hundert: 1-4
3	Th 9/14	The Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation	Efron: 224-233 Hundert: 5-7
4	Tu 9/19	Growth of a New Center: Poland-Lithuania	Efron: 234-244 Hundert: 8-10
5	Th 9/21	NO CLASS	
6	Tu 9/26	Court Jews, Port Jews, and a False Messiah	Efron: 244-258 Hundert: 11-14
7	Th 9/28	The Religious Revolution of Hasidism	Efron: 287-298 Hundert: 15-20
8	Tu 10/3	The European Enlightenment	Efron: 259-272, 298-304
9	Th 10/5	NO CLASS	
	Su 10/8	PAPER 1 DUE (3-4 pages=1050-1400 words): In your own words, explain the major claim Hundert makes in his introduction, its significance, and how he intends to prove it. Be sure to refer to specific passages.	
10	Tu 10/10	The French Revolution and Emancipation in France and Germany	Efron: 272-280 Hundert: 161-2
11	Th 10/12	NO CLASS	
12	Tu 10/17	Jews in the Russian and Ottoman Empires	Efron: 280-285 Hundert: 162-72
13	Th 10/19	The Haskalah and the Birth of Jewish Literature	Efron 304-313 Hundert: 172-6

14	Tu 10/24	Reforming Judaism and the Historicist Paradigm	Efron: 313-323 Hundert: 176-9
15	Th 10/26	Civilizing Missions, Russian Pogroms, and Transnational Activism	Efron: 339-345, 358-359, 401-405
16	Tu 10/31	Modern Antisemitism in France, Germany, and Austria	Efron: 325-339 Hundert: 179-85
17	Th 11/2	Socialists, Zionists, and other Jewish Nationalists	Efron: 345-358
18	Tu 11/7	Coming to America: Another New Center	Efron: 358-364
19	Th 11/9	The First World War	Efron: 367-371 S. Ansky (online)
	F 11/10	PAPER 2 DUE (4-5 pages): What argument does Hundert make about Hasidism in chapters 8 and 9 (pp. 160-210)? In your own words, explain that argument and how it supports Hundert's overall claim about the genealogy of modernity.	
20	Tu 11/14	The Russian Revolution and the Making of Soviet Jews	Efron: 374-377 Zelmenyaner (online)
21	Th 11/16	Interwar Eastern and Central Europe	Efron: 377-390
22	Tu 11/21	The Rise of the Nazis	Efron: 406-423
23	Th 11/23	NO CLASS	
24	Th 11/28	The Shoah (Holocaust)	Efron: 423-443
25	Th 11/30	To the Promised Land: The Yishuv in Ottoman and Mandate Palestine	Efron: 390-401
26	Tu 12/5	Founding the State of Israel	Efron: 444-458
27	Th 12/7	Post-WWII Jewish Life in the United States	Efron: 458-468
28	Tu 12/12	Europe's Decline as a Jewish Center and Reflections	Efron: 468-482
	W 12/13	PAPER 3 DUE (6-8 pages): In your own words, summarize Hundert's argument as a whole by explaining how each chapter supports his overall claim. Then argue against Hundert using three historical examples we studied in this course.	
	M 12/18	TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM DUE	

Goals of the History Major

The goal of the [history major](#) is to offer students the knowledge and skills they need to gain a critical perspective on the past. Students will learn to define important historical questions, analyze relevant evidence with rigor and creativity, and present convincing arguments and conclusions based on original research in a manner that contributes to academic and public discussions. In [History](#), as in other humanistic disciplines, students will practice resourceful inquiry and careful reading. They will advance their writing and public speaking skills to engage historical and contemporary issues.

To ensure that students gain exposure to some of the great diversity of topics, methodologies, and philosophical concerns that inform the study of history, the department requires a combination of courses that offers breadth, depth, and variety of exposition. Through those courses, students should develop:

1. Broad acquaintance with several geographic areas of the world and with both the pre-modern and modern eras.
2. Familiarity with the range of sources and modes through which historical information can be found and expressed. Sources may include textual, oral, physical, and visual materials. The data within them may be qualitative or quantitative, and they may be available in printed, digital, or other formats. Modes of expression may include textbooks, monographs, scholarly articles, essays, literary works, or digital presentations.
3. In-depth understanding of a topic of their choice through original or creative research.
4. The ability to identify the skills developed in the history major and to articulate the applicability of those skills to a variety of endeavors and career paths beyond the professional practice of history.

Skills Developed in the History Major

DEFINE IMPORTANT HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

1. Pose a historical question and explain its academic and public implications.
2. Using appropriate research procedures and aids, find the secondary resources in history and other disciplines available to answer a historical question.
3. Evaluate the evidentiary and theoretical bases of pertinent historical conversations in order to highlight opportunities for further investigation.

COLLECT AND ANALYZE EVIDENCE

1. Identify the range and limitations of primary sources available to engage the historical problem under investigation.
2. Examine the context in which sources were created, search for chronological and other relationships among them, and assess the sources in light of that knowledge.
3. Employ and, if necessary, modify appropriate theoretical frameworks to examine sources and develop arguments.

PRESENT ORIGINAL CONCLUSIONS

1. Present original and coherent findings through clearly written, persuasive arguments and narratives.
2. Orally convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.
3. Use appropriate presentation formats and platforms to share information with academic and public audiences.

CONTRIBUTE TO ONGOING DISCUSSIONS

1. Extend insights from research to analysis of other historical problems.
2. Demonstrate the relevance of a historical perspective to contemporary issues.
3. Recognize, challenge, and avoid false analogies, overgeneralizations, anachronisms, and other logical fallacies.