

Introduction to Modern Jewish History

Spring 2019: Tuesdays and Thursdays 1-2:15 PM in 1217 Humanities

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:15-3:15 PM in 4134 Humanities

OVERVIEW

This introductory course surveys the history of the Jews in the modern period (ca. 1750 onward). It begins in the present day, laying out some features of the contemporary existence of the Jews, understood as a religious collective, ethnic group, and nation. We then travel back in time to the eve of modernity in order to understand how contemporary Jewry came to be. In our study of Jewish intellectual, cultural, and religious history we will encounter the many conflicts among Jews about how Jews and Judaism were to function in modernity. For example, we will discuss the emergence of Hasidism, the Reform movement, and Zionism. In our study of the political and social history of the Jews, we will seek to understand the major challenges imposed on Jewish life from without. These will include the rise of political antisemitism and the Holocaust. One of our main guiding themes will be the relationship between tradition and innovation and between continuity and change in modern Jewish life. We will investigate what connects modern Jews to the Jewish people and Judaism of antiquity and the Middle Ages.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through the study of modern Jewish history in this course, you will

1. Study several geographic areas of the world in the modern and pre-modern eras;
2. Practice posing historical questions and explaining their academic and public implications;
3. Experiment with drawing on historical perspectives and knowledge to analyze contemporary issues.

REQUIREMENTS

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| 1. Michael Chabon Response Paper (3-4 pages) | 20% | due Monday, February 11 at 9 AM |
| 2. Paper 1 (3-4 pages) | 25% | due Monday, March 4 at 9 AM |
| 3. Interview (as long as necessary) | 10% | due Monday, March 25 at 9 AM |
| 4. Paper 2 (3-4 pages) | 25% | due Monday, May 6 at 9 AM |
| 5. Participation | 20% | |

BOOKS AND TEXTS

Please see Canvas for access to readings for each week.

Week 1	Unit I: An Overview of Jews and Judaism Today
Tu 1/22	Jews and Judaism: An Introduction
Th 1/24	The Contemporary Scene: Jews in America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEW Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews (2013).
Week 2	
Tu 1/29	The Contemporary Scene: Jews and others in Israel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PEW Research Center Survey of Israelis (2016).
Th 1/31	The Israel-US Schism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AJC Surveys of Jews in Israel and the U.S. (2018). • Daniel Gordis, "Why many American Jews are becoming indifferent or even hostile to Israel," Mosaic Magazine (2017) and responses by Hillel Halkin and Evelyn Gordon. • "The Growing Gap between Israel and American Jews," Moment (2018). • Jonathan Weisman, "American Jews and Israeli Jews Are Headed for a Messy Breakup," New York Times, January 4, 2019.
Week 3	
Tu 2/5	The Post-WWII Era <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sergio DellaPergola, "World Jewish Population, 2016." • Michael Brenner, <i>A Short History of the Jews</i>, 349-387.
Th 2/7	The Future of the Jews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michael Chabon, "Commencement Speech," Los Angeles, May 14, 2018, 16'-46'. https://www.facebook.com/WiseLA/videos/10156534420158814/ • Moshe Koppel, "Judaism without Apologies," (2018), https://moshekoppel.wordpress.com/?order=asc (read first five posts).
Week 4	Unit II: Central and Western Europe (1750-1850)
Mo 2/11	MICHAEL CHABON RESPONSE PAPER DUE ON CANVAS AT 9 AM
Tu 2/12	At the Dawn of the Modern Era <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amos Elon, <i>The Pity of It All: A History of Jews in Germany</i> (2002), 13-33.
Th 2/14	Enlightened Politics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elon, 33-64; Dohm (1781); Michaelis (1782); Grégoire (1789).
Week 5	
Tu 2/19	Religious Enlightenment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elon, 65-91; Moses Mendelssohn's "Judaism as Revealed Legislation" (1783).
Th 2/21	The French Revolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ronald Schechter, <i>Obstinate Hebrews</i> (2003), 150-193.
Week 6	

Tu 2/26	Emancipation in the German Lands <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elon, 101-148.
Th 2/28	The Idea of Reform <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leora Batnitzky, <i>How Judaism Became a Religion</i> (2011), 32-49.
Week 7	Unit III: Eastern Europe (1750-1881)
Mo 3/4	PAPER 1 DUE ON CANVAS AT 9 AM
Tu 3/5	The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Biale ed., <i>Hasidism: A New History</i> (2018), 17-42.
Th 3/7	Hasidim and Mitnagdim <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biale ed., <i>Hasidism</i>, 43-75.
Week 8	
Tu 3/12	The Pale of Settlement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hans Rogger, <i>Jewish Policies and Right-Wing Politics in Imperial Russia</i> (1986), 1-39.
Th 3/14	The Haskalah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dawidowicz, <i>The Golden Tradition</i>, 14-38, 113-137.
Week 9	Spring Break
Week 10	Unit III: Modern Jewish Political Organization (1840-1914)
Mo 3/25	INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT DUE ON CANVAS AT 9 AM
Tu 3/26	The Middle East and North Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • André Chouraqui, <i>Between East and West</i> (1973), 113-140.
Th 3/28	<i>Kol yisrael haverim</i> : The Damascus and Mortara Affairs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jonathan Frankel, <i>The Damascus Affair</i> (1997), 17-30 • David Kertzer, <i>The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara</i> (1997), 1-12.
Week 11	
Tu 4/2	Antisemitism as a Political Force <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steven Beller, <i>Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction</i> (2008): Ebook (free to you).
Th 4/4	The Pogroms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John Klier, <i>Russians, Jews, and the Pogroms of 1881-1882</i> (2011), 58-88. • Chaim Nachman Bialik, "The City of Slaughter" (1903).
Week 12	
Tu 4/9	Jewish Nationalists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Engel, <i>Zionism</i> (2009), 1-50.
Th 4/11	Jewish Socialists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Source Documents from <i>The Jew in the Modern World</i> (2011). • Dawidowicz, <i>The Golden Tradition</i>, 405-447.

Week 13	Unit IV: Destruction and Rebirth (1914-1948)
Tu 4/16	The First World War and the Russian Revolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S. Ansky, <i>The Destruction of Galicia</i>.
Th 4/18	Interwar Challenges and Opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saul Friedländer, <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>, Vol. 1, Chapter 7.
Week 14	
Tu 4/23	The Rise of the Nazis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friedländer, <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>, Vol. 1, Chapter 2.
Th 4/25	The Shoah <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friedländer, <i>Nazi Germany and the Jews</i>, Vol. 2, Chapter 4.
Week 15	
Tu 4/30	British Mandate Palestine/Eretz Yisrael <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engel, 77-104.
Th 5/2	Founding the State of Israel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engel, 105-130.
Mo 5/6	PAPER 2 DUE ON CANVAS AT 9 AM

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

I. Chabon Response Paper (3-4 pp, 20%) due Monday, February 11 at 9 AM

Start working on this assignment on January 24. Listen to Michael Chabon's commencement speech to the Hebrew Union College – Institute of Religion, Los Angeles graduating class:

<https://www.facebook.com/WiseLA/videos/10156534420158814/> (speech begins after the 16-minute mark and ends at 46 minutes).

In a response paper containing three sections:

1. Summarize Chabon's main exhortations to the class and the claims he makes to support them.
2. Drawing on everything we have read in HIS 220 so far, explain how representative Chabon's views are of trends and views among Jews today. Make specific references to the reports and essays we have studied.
3. Explain how you would make an argument against Chabon's views. For this section, draw on texts you have read so far and also describe what kind of data you would want to gather in order to make a strong rebuttal (e.g., "I would want to see statistics on XYZ, which could help me undermine Chabon's claim #1."

II. Paper 1 (3-4 pp, 25%) due Monday, March 4 at 9 AM

This thesis-driven paper is based on your analysis of four historical primary sources: Christian Wilhelm Dohm's "Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews" (1781), Johann David Michaelis's "Argument Against Dohm" (1782), Abbé Grégoire's "Essay on the Physical, Moral and Political Reformation of the Jews" (1789), and Moses Mendelssohn's "Judaism as Revealed Legislation" (1783).

After reading them carefully, extract from the primary sources what you take to be one BROAD underlying concern that Christians in the 1780s had about improving the legal status of Jews in their societies.

Your thesis should identify the broad underlying concern that you extracted and it should preview how your analysis of the sources led you to identifying it. Most of the body of your paper should present in detail your analysis of specific passages from all the primary sources to support your thesis that whatever you have identified was indeed an underlying concern of many Christians in the 1780s about Jews. In the rest of the body of your paper, draw on what you have learned in lecture and from your other readings (secondary literature) about the Enlightenment period to corroborate your analysis.

III. Interview (as long as necessary, 10%) due Monday, March 25 at 9 AM

Conduct an interview with a person who identifies as one of the following: secular, Reform, Reconstructionist, Conservative, or Orthodox Jew (modern Orthodox, ultra-Orthodox, Hasidic, Mitnagdic, yeshivish). In your interview, ask them how they came to identify in this way, what their beliefs are (about any number of subjects), what influence their biographies and parents' biographies had on shaping their identity, what they see as the greatest challenges facing Jews today, and whether they think their identity is at odds with larger social trends operating today. Use the PEW Center and other surveys we read at the beginning of the course for questions about their views. Submit an edited transcript of your interview. You will be graded on how thoroughly you interviewed the person. Your transcript will serve as the basis for Paper 2 (see below).

Let the conversation flow freely but be mindful of your interviewee's time and if other classmates of yours are interviewing the same person, be sure to schedule one slot for everyone to interview the subject together. If you need help finding an interview subject, I will give you some suggestions. If you are interviewing a professor, first try to do so during their office hours.

IV. Paper 2 (3-4 pages, 25%) due Monday, May 6 at 9 AM

With specific references to your interview transcript, explain what you think are the underlying biographical and historical events (short and long-term) that have most significantly shaped the worldview of your interview subject. Draw links to at least three events, processes, or historical figures we have studied in the course. Also explain what connects your interview subject to pre-modern Jews and Judaism.

GRADING SCALE

A	≥93%
AB	87-92%
B	80-86%
BC	75-79%
C	70-74%
D	60-69%
F	≤59

CREDIT HOURS AND WORKLOAD

The credit standard for this 4-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 180 hours of student engagement with the course learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit), which include regularly scheduled instructor-student meeting times [group meetings of 150 minutes per week], dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Phones

Allowed only when we are discussing texts as group and you need to look up passages in PDFs of assigned texts. For some weeks, you will need to print the PDF and bring it to class. I will advise you beforehand.

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.