

HISTORY 1H
THE MODERN JEWISH EXPERIENCE
SPRING 2012

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Office Hours: M 3-4
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By Appointment

As a First-Year Seminar, History 1H focuses on the history of West and East European Jewry (and American Jewry to some extent) from the beginning of Jewish emancipation in the eighteenth century to the aftermath of the Holocaust. Major themes include the process of emancipation, the transformation of collective and individual Jewish identity, and responses to modern antisemitism. Special attention is paid to situating the history of European Jewry in the context of general social, political, intellectual, and economic trends and developments. Readings include documents, novels, short stories, and monographs.

As in all courses taught in the History Department, one goal of writing assignments is the promotion of critical thinking and analysis by developing the student's ability to fashion a thesis that is supported by appropriate documentation presented in a cogent manner. History 1H is designed to help students construct and develop an argument rooted in historical analysis that supports the thesis. The course aims to enhance the ability of students to write and think historically, to recognize the role of contingency and causality in the historical process, and to demonstrate the capacity to distinguish and assess multiple points of view in the historical scholarship. Finally, the course asks students to write research papers in which they pose a historical question and find the appropriate sources and materials to answer it.

Students will work with Charlotte Gaw, a Writing Associate assigned to the course who will work with you on your papers. You will submit first versions of your papers to her and then meet with her on an individual basis to go over her comments and suggestions. You will then revise and submit the final versions to me.

Course Requirements

Attendance and active participation (10 %)
Three five-page papers (15% each)
Five-page, take-home final exam (20 %)
Eight-page research paper (Class Presentation and first version submitted on May 5)
(25%)

The following books are available for purchase and are also on reserve in McCabe:

Lloyd Gartner, *History of the Jews in Modern Times*
Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*
Jan Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz*
Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*
Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*
Gregor von Rezzori, *Memoirs of an Antisemite*
Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher's Tale: Murder and Antisemitism in a German Town*

All students are expected to read the College's policy on academic honesty and integrity that appears in the Swarthmore College Bulletin. The work you submit must be your own, and plagiarism will be penalized. Any work containing plagiarized material will be granted the grade of "no credit" and may subject you to prosecution by the College Judiciary Council. When in doubt, check with me.

In addition, I will not accept late papers and will assign a failing grade for the assignment unless you notify me and receive permission to submit the paper after the due date. Students are required to attend all classes, and unexcused absences will result in a lower grade.

The following reference works may also be useful:

Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present (In Reference)
Norman Roth, ed., *Medieval Jewish Civilization* (In Reference)
The Blackwell Dictionary of Judaica (In Reference)
Encyclopedia Judaica (In Reference)
Evyatar Friesel, *Atlas of Modern Jewish History* (In Reference)
Geoffrey Wigoder, *Dictionary of Jewish Biography*
Martin Goodman, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*

The following websites provide links to dozens of websites devoted to Jewish Studies:

Web Sites for Jewish Studies: <http://www.princeton.edu/~pressman/jewebs.html>
Center for Jewish History: <http://www.cjh.org/> Go to the "Sites of Interest" link
Educational Program on Yiddish Culture: <http://epyc.yivo.org>
Bibliography of Websites: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/bibliowf.html>
Beyond the Pale: The History of the Jews in Russia: <http://www.friends-partners.org/partners/beyond-the-pale/>

January 17: Themes and Terminology

January 19: Jewish Society on the Eve of Emancipation

Lloyd Gartner, chapters 1 and 2
Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation" and "Newer Approaches to Emancipation"
Write one paragraph on the thesis of one of the articles by Baron

January 24: The Emancipation Process in England

Documents

Gartner, starting reading chapters 3-5 for next several classes

January 26: The Emancipation Process in France

Documents

January 31: The Emancipation Process in Central Europe

Documents

February 2: Fits and Starts in the Russian Empire

Gartner, chapter 6

Documents

**February 7: Jewish Responses to Emancipation:
Religious Reform and Counter-Reform and Conversion**

Documents

WA Version of First Paper Due by Noon on February 3

February 9: Life in the Old Country

Isaac Bashevis Singer, “Why the Geese Shrieked,” “A Major Din Torah,” and “The Boy Philosopher”

Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl*, chapter 2

Final Version of First Paper Due by Noon on February 15. Be sure to submit the WA version.

February 14: The Emergence of Modern Antisemitism

Gartner, chapter 7

Documents

Shulamit Volkov, “The Written Matter and the Spoken Word”

February 16: Antisemitism in Russia

Isaac Babel, “The Story of My Dovecot”

Sholem Asch, “Kola Street”

February 21: A Case Study of Antisemitism

Helmut Walser Smith, *A Butcher’s Tale: Murder and Antisemitism in a German Town*

February 23: Jewish Responses to Antisemitism—Marxism and Emigration

Documents

Vladimir Medem, “The Youth of a Bundist”

Leon Trotsky, “A Social Democrat Only”

Watch *The Yidische Gauchos* in Class

February 28: Jewish Responses to Antisemitism--Nationalism

Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai, "The Third Redemption"

Rabbi Zvi Kalischer, "Seeking Zion"

Peretz Smolenskin, "It is Time to Plant" and "Let Us Search Our Ways"

Leo Pinsker, "Auto-Emancipation"

March 1: Jewish Responses to Antisemitism—Nationalism

Theodor Herzl, "The Jewish State"

Ahad Ha-Am, "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem" and "The Negation of the Diaspora"

Yehiel Michael Pines, "Jewish Nationalism Cannot Be Secular" and "Religion is the Source of Jewish Nationalism"

Documents

March 13: Jews and European Culture

Franz Kafka, "A Report to an Academy"

Documents

March 15: Acculturation, Integration, and Assimilation

Marion Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class*

WA Version of Second Paper Due by Noon on March 16**March 20: World War I and the Balfour Declaration**

Gartner, chapter 9

Documents

March 22: The Jewish Question in East European Culture

Gregor von Rezzori, *Memoirs of an Anti-Semite*

March 27: Jews under Communism and in Interwar Europe

Watch *Image before My Eyes* for class (88 minutes) This film is streamed.

Final Version of Second Paper Due by Noon on March 28. Be sure to submit the WA version.

March 29: Jews in the Promised Land: The American Jewish Experience

Gartner, chapter 8

Susan Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*

Watch *Hester Street* for class (90 minutes) This film is streamed.

April 3: European Jewry after the Holocaust: Western Europe and the Soviet Union**April 5: Antisemitism after the Holocaust: Poland**

Jan Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland after Auschwitz*

WA Version of Third Paper Due by Noon on April 6

April 10: Jews in the Promised Land: The American Jewish Experience

Susan Glenn, "In the Blood? Consent, Descent, and the Ironies of Jewish Identity"

Eric Goldstein, "Contesting the Categories: Jews and Government Racial Classification in the United States"

April 12: Who is a Jew? American Jewry after the Holocaust

"Oswald Rufeisen v. Minister of the Interior"

Philip Roth, "Eli, The Fanatic"

Watch *Gentleman's Agreement* (118 minutes) This film is streamed.

Watch: *Yoo-Hoo, Mrs. Goldberg* (92 minutes) This film is streamed.

Final Version of Third Paper Due by Noon on April 16. Be sure to submit WA version.

April 17: Individual Meetings to Discuss Research Papers

April 19: Jews and the Modern World

Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*

April 24: Presentations

April 26: Presentations

WA Version of Research Paper Due by Noon on April 27

Final Version of Research Paper Due by Noon on May 11. Be sure to submit WA version.

Final Take-home Exam Due by Noon on May 12