

HISTORY 1H  
THE MODERN JEWISH EXPERIENCE  
FALL 2015

Bob Weinberg  
Trotter 218  
x8133  
[rweinbe1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:rweinbe1@swarthmore.edu)

Office Hours: W 4:15-5:15  
T/TH 10-12  
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 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, articles, and monographs. We will also watch a few films and documentaries.

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 the students construct and develop an argument rooted in historical analysis. The course aims to enhance the ability of the student 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.

Students will work with a Writing Associate assigned to the course. 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 (20%)

Three five-page papers (20% each)

Five-page, take-home final exam due on December 15 (20%)

The following books are available for purchase and are also on reserve in McCabe; some are also eBooks.

Elissa Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk* (ebook)

Henry Bial, *Acting Jewish: Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage*

Lloyd Gartner, *History of the Jews in Modern Times* (ebook)

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

Other readings are posted on Moodle.

You 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 I will submit suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the College Judiciary Council for adjudication. When in doubt about citing sources, please check with me.

I will not accept late papers and will assign a failing grade for the assignment unless you notify me and receive permission from me to submit the paper after the due date. In addition, you must submit all written work in order to pass the course.

You are required to attend and participate in all class discussions (20 percent). Not surprisingly, it is crucial to your success in the course that you come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading for each session. **Keep in mind that the History Department has a draconian policy on attendance: unexcused absences will be penalized by a lower grade.** If you are unable to attend a class session due to illness or some other issue, you are responsible for contacting me in advance.

You are required to attend all classes, and unexcused absences will result in a lower grade. **Keep in mind that the History Department has a draconian policy on attendance: unexcused absences will be penalized by a lower grade.** Not surprisingly, it is crucial to your success in the course that you come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading for each session. If you are unable to attend a class session due to illness or some other issue, you are responsible for contacting me in advance.

Finally, you must submit all written assignments in order to pass the course.

The following reference works may also be useful:

*Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (In Reference)

*The Blackwell Dictionary of Judaica* (In Reference)

*Encyclopedia Judaica* (In Reference)

Evyatar Friesel, *Atlas of Modern Jewish History* (In Reference)

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/>

**September 1: Themes and Terminology**

**September 3: 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 and submit it to me by 9 AM today.**

### **September 8: The Emancipation Process in England**

Documents: "How Profitable the Nation of the Jews Are"; "Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain and Ireland"; "The Plantation Act"; "The Jew Bill"; "Civil Disabilities of the Jews"; "The Jewish Relief Act"

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

### **September 10: The Emancipation Process in France**

Documents: "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen"; "Debate on the Eligibility of Jews for Citizenship"; "Decree Recognizing the Sephardim as Citizens"; "The Emancipation of the Jews of France"; "Letter of a Citizen to His Fellow Jews"; "Instructions to the Assembly of Jewish Notables"; "Answers to Napoleon"; "Doctrinal Decisions"

### **September 15: The Emancipation Process in Central Europe**

Documents: "Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews"; "Arguments Against Dohm"; "Response to Dohm"; "Remarks Concerning Michaelis's Response to Dohm"; "An Essay on the Physical, Moral and Political Reformation of the Jews"

### **September 17: Life in the Old Country**

Gartner, chapter 6

Jonathan Petrovsky-Shtern, *The Golden Age of the Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe* (Selections)

Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Why the Geese Shrieked"

### **September 22: Religious Reform and Counter-Reform**

Documents: "Constitution of the Hamburg Temple"; "These Are the Words of the Covenant"; "A Reply Concerning the Question of Reform"; "The Question of Patriotism"; "Hebrew as the Language of Jewish Prayer"; "The Question of Messianism"; "This is Our Task"; "On Changes in Judaism"; "Religion Allied to Progress"; "The Manifesto of Ultra-Orthodoxy"

### **September 24: Visual Representations of the Jew**

Gartner, chapter 8

**WA Version of First Paper Due by Noon on September 25**

## **September 29: Antisemitism in the Late Nineteenth Century**

Gartner, chapter 7

Gregor von Rezzori, “*Skushno*”

Documents: “Jews”; “The Victory of Judaism over Germandom”; “What We Deamnd of Modern Jewry”; “The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century”; “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”

Watch *Jud Suss* for class (98 minutes)

## **October 1: Jewish Responses to Antisemitism—Emigration and Marxism**

Watch *The Yidische Gauchos* for class (30 minutes).

## **October 6: Pogroms: Historical and Literary Representations**

Isaac Babel, “The History of My Dovecot”

Robert Weinberg, “Workers, Pogroms, and the 1905 Revolution in Odessa”

## **October 8: The Blood Libel**

**Final Version of First Paper Due by Noon on October 9. Be sure to submit the WA version.**

## **October 20: 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”

## **October 22: 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”

## **October 27: Jews and European Culture: Acculturation, Integration, and Assimilation**

Franz Kafka, “A Report to an Academy”

Marion Kaplan, “Gender and Jewish History in Imperial Germany”

Gartner, chapter 9

## **October 29: The Jewish Question in Eastern Europe after World War I**

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

## **November 3: Jews under Communism**

Elissa Bemporad, *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk*

**WA Version of Second Paper Due by Noon on November 6**

**November 5: Jews on the Communist Screen**

Watch *Seekers of Happiness* for class (84 minutes).

**November 10: TBD**

**November 12: Jews in the Promised Land: The American Jewish Experience**

Henry Bial, *Acting Jewish*

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

**Final Version of Second Paper Due by Noon on November 16. Be sure to submit the WA version.**

**November 17: European Jewry after the Holocaust: Western Europe and the Soviet Union**

Arthur Cohen, "Why I Choose to Be a Jew"

**November 19: Who is a Jew?**

"Oswald Rufeisen v. Minister of the Interior"

Philip Roth, "Eli, The Fanatic"

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

**November 24: Antisemitism after the Holocaust: Poland**

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

**WA Version of Third Paper Due by Noon on November 30**

**December 1: TBD**

**Final Version of Third Paper Due by Noon on December 11**

**Final Take-home Exam Due by Noon on December 15**