



HISTORY 379/JEWISH 379

Introduction to Jewish History

Fall 2020

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In this course, you will be asked to investigate, interpret, and analyze the historical foundations of Jewish civilization against the backdrop of the

different societies in which Jews have lived from antiquity to the present day. Through lectures, readings, class discussions, and films, you will develop skills needed to undertake a comparative analysis of Jews in society and their responses to political, socioeconomic, and cultural challenges in a variety of eras and locations. You will also investigate how the history of Jewish civilization can be paradigmatic for the study of other ethnic and religious groups. You will read important primary and secondary sources (including books, essays, memoirs, letters, and other documents) on the history of Jewish civilization, including both traditional sources and alternative perspectives. You will be introduced to broad concepts such as ethnicity, religion, mysticism, identity, assimilation, and diaspora, as well as more specific elements of Jewish religion and culture such as Kabbalah, Midrash, and Yiddish. You will learn about the complexities of Jewish experiences over time and around the world and consider them along with the majority groups among whom Jews' lived, as well as with other minority groups. You will synthesize information about the history of Jewish civilization from lectures, readings, films, and discussions into written analyses in discussion groups, written assignments, and quizzes. No prior background in Jewish history or religion is expected.

All instruction and evaluation in this course is conducted online through the class website on Canvas. All class announcements will either be posted on the Canvas website or will be sent to you at your UWM e-mail address, so make sure to check your e-mail and Canvas at least once a day. If you know you will not be able to access a computer almost every day of the semester, you should not take this course. Lack of access to a computer will not be accepted as a valid excuse for late or missing work.

GER-Humanities Course criteria:

This course counts for Humanities GER credit. Humanities are the academic disciplines that investigate human constructs and values. The humanistic disciplines are concerned with questions, issues, and concepts basic to the formation of character and the establishment of values in a human context. They also provide literary, aesthetic, and intellectual experiences that enrich and enlighten human life. In these courses, students use humanistic means of inquiry such as the critical use of sources and evaluation of evidence, the exercise of judgment and expression of ideas, and the organization, logical analysis, and creative use of substantial bodies of knowledge in order to approach the subject of study. This course fits with this criteria because it helps students develop the skills necessary for the critical use of primary and secondary historical sources. It also helps students achieve a humanistic means of inquiry to evaluate evidence pertaining to the history of the Jewish people around the world. This course also fosters an appreciation of distinctive cultures and traditions that enrich and enlighten human life by using textual, visual, and other sources to critically examine the experiences of Jews in within a variety of cultural and geographical settings. Students will critically evaluate a number of books, articles, and images concerning the development of global Jewish history from antiquity to the present.

Instead of spoken lectures for this course, I offer written lectures consisting of text and images saved in .pdf format. Occasionally, I include a voiceover component. I use these lectures to explain complex issues presented in the readings and the rest of the unit, to give you questions to think about, and to present my analysis of historical issues based on the most recent available research by experts in the field. Sources for each lecture are listed at the bottom of the first slide. You will be able to access the lectures as they become available for each unit so that I can tailor them to our class discussions and questions.

Our course website is on the **Canvas** system maintained by the University of Wisconsin System. To use **Canvas**, click [here](#) for the login page with the direct address for Canvas. At the login screen you will be asked to provide your e-Panther ID and password. For informational videos and FAQ's on Canvas, click [here](#).

During the semester, if you need assistance with how to use Canvas, you can contact Canvas 24/7 for support by calling them at 1-833-826-8713, emailing them at support@instructure.com or clicking [here](#) to chat with them.

For technical issues with your computer, contact UWM's Campus IT Support by clicking [here](#) or call them at **414-229-4040 (toll-free at 877-381-3459)**. **The personnel of the Help Desk are much more knowledgeable about computers than I am, so always turn to them for technical advice!**

Skills: You will need basic word processing skills, the ability to send and receive email, and a simple understanding of how to access and browse Web sites. You must be able to receive email via your UWM email account. Checking your email and our course Web site regularly is very important for your ability to do well in this course.

Resources: You will need routine access to a computer that has a wifi or broadband connection or a campus network connection to the Web. It is imperative that you have regular access to adequate, reliable technology throughout the term. A computer glitch, lost file, or any other technical problem is never an excuse for late or missing work. Your connection to the Internet must be high-speed and you should have an Internet browser of recent vintage. The computer you use must have a basic word processing package such as Word. You will also have to be able to view Adobe PDF files. These types of files can be viewed using free downloads. If you need help downloading these materials, please contact UWM's Help Desk.

The amount of time you will need to spend on this course varies among students. Do not make the mistake of assuming that an online class is less work or easier than its face-to-face version. **It will be up to you to organize your time effectively to get your work done!** Please also note that this is not a self-paced course. The course is divided up units that everyone will be working on at the same time. In some cases, deadlines fall at the end of the week, while in others they fall mid week. I will send you one e-mail per week to remind you of deadlines, but you should make sure to note the deadlines for each assignment now.

At some point Canvas might go down and be unavailable without any notice. This problem does not occur frequently and usually is fixed quickly. Please be patient if this happens.

Evaluation

The **Grades** section of Canvas is where your grades for each assignment are posted. Your final grade in the class will be calculated according to the following formula:

- 30% **6 Quizzes (5% each)**
- 30% **3 Discussions (10% each, 2 posts per discussion)**
- 10% **1 Essay (3-4pp.) (10%)**
- 30% **1 Research paper (7-10 pp.) (25%) +
Research paper proposal (1-2pp.) (5%)**

Grading Scale:

A	93-100	C	73-76.9
A-	90-92.9	C-	70-72.9
B+	87-89.9	D+	67-69.9
B	83-86.9	D	63-66.9
B-	80-82.9	D-	60-62.9
C+	77-79.9	F	0-59.9

Typically, late work will only be accepted in cases of illness verified by a doctor's note or in cases of a family emergency. Quizzes cannot be taken after the deadline has passed and answers have been released. I do not accept as valid excuses either the lack of synchronization between your clock and that of the Canvas system or the existence of problems with your computer or with your internet connection. If you are in a different time zone than Milwaukee, note now that all deadlines indicated in the syllabus and on Canvas are Central Time (CST). I have made sure to allow ample time for you to submit your required posts and papers and to complete the quizzes. **However, I realize that situations arising from COVID-19 may cause unexpected scheduling changes for many of us. If you need more time to complete an assignment because of an unavoidable situation, please contact me in advance of the deadline.**

If you have a question, would like to receive more detailed feedback on assignments, or discuss anything else please email me at silverld@uwm.edu. I will respond as soon as I can, typically within 24 hours. I will also be happy to set up a time to speak on the phone or video chat, if you prefer. Appeals of assignment grades must be submitted to me within one week after you receive the grade.

Quizzes

In this course you will take six timed quizzes of 30 minutes each, consisting of 10 true/false and multiple choice questions based on the material for that unit. Each quiz is worth 5% of your grade. You must complete the quiz in 30 minutes or you will be booted off. Once you start a quiz, you have to finish it – there is no starting a quiz, exiting, and coming back to it at another time. The dates by which all quizzes must be completed are listed in the syllabus. **DO NOT** begin the quiz until you are caught up with the material. **You are permitted to make only one (1) attempt to complete each quiz, and quizzes cannot be taken after the deadline has passed.** Please make sure that you have saved all your responses (including those you may have altered) before submitting the quiz. You must take the quiz alone and may not take the quiz in the company of another student. You also may not communicate any information about the quiz to any other student. Any violation of

these rules counts as cheating and will result in failure. However, the quizzes are “open book.” This means you may consult the readings, discussions, notes, and lectures as you take the quiz. **Answers to the quiz will be made available only after the quiz deadline has passed.**

Discussions:

In this course you will participate in three online discussions in which you will be graded during the term. Each discussion is worth 10% of your grade. You will be divided into groups and asked to respond both to specific questions and to your classmates’ responses. For each discussion, you are required to make one original post, and also to post one response to another group member’s post. Each post should contain a minimum of 200 words but not more than 400 words. **Do not post an attachment!** You should either type your response directly into Canvas or cut and paste it from a word processing program. You will receive 1-3 points for each post, depending on the thoughtfulness and clarity of your post as well as your ability to integrate class readings, lectures, and film clips into your reflections. Whenever possible, make explicit reference to class materials and cite page numbers. The dates by which these discussion posts must be completed are listed in the syllabus. I will monitor the online discussions but limit my interventions so that you respond to each other and to develop your own skills of analysis. When replying to messages, **please first read all of the posted messages on the topic in question.** That way you can make sure ahead of time that your message will contribute something new to the development of the discussion. **Spelling and grammar count in the evaluation of your posts.**

I expect students in this course to observe the rules of "netiquette" when posting messages: all posts must be written respectfully and be free of bullying, intimidating, vulgar, and offensive language. You are required to engage the posts of your classmates in a constructive manner. Posts that violate this requirement will be deleted and will receive no credit. Express opposing points of view clearly and civilly.

Under the module “**General Information**” you can find this course syllabus and a discussion forum titled “**Current Events related to the Course.**” Here you can post about current issues related to the course that are of interest to the entire class, as I will do from time to time. Please do not use this forum to discuss extraneous matters. Here you will also see a discussion forum titled “**Introduce Yourself!**” where I encourage you to submit a brief introduction.

Essay, Research Paper & Paper proposal:

In this class you will be asked to write one 3-4pp. essay on a selection of assigned primary sources. This assignment will constitute 10% of your grade. You will also write a 7-10pp. research paper based on one of several assigned topics and sources and also submit a 1-2pp. research paper proposal that includes a title, a brief description of your paper topic, and a preliminary bibliography. Your proposal will be graded and you may receive comments that will need to be addressed in your final paper. The final paper is worth 25% of your grade and the proposal is worth 5% of your grade. **I will not accept your final paper unless you have submitted a proposal for it by the deadline listed in the syllabus. Likewise, your proposal grade is provisional: you will not receive credit for it unless you also submit the research paper by the required deadline.** Please upload all written work as a Word file (with a .doc or .docx suffix) as I cannot accept files from other word processing programs.

Your essay, research paper, and research paper proposal will be graded according to the following rubric: (1) Thesis is clear, strong, and appears in the introduction (2) Excellent background, context, and idea development (3) Excellent use of research sources and discussion of detail to reinforce the thesis (4) Impressive depth of insight/analysis (5) Effective conclusion. In terms of style, make sure your papers fulfill these conditions: (1) Correct grammar and spelling; paper has been proofread (2) Clean/legible manuscript that is formatted according to instructions (3) Writing style is smooth and uses precise language. (4) Paper is well-organized; the reader can easily follow the argument of the paper (5) Transitions between paragraphs are smooth. You may lose points if these conditions are not met.

Course Readings:

All required readings have been placed on our course Canvas website under their respective units. You may print these out or read them online as you prefer. Unlike the lectures, they are available to you at any time during the semester.

Important UWM Policies

To succeed at UWM you should be familiar with university policies regarding disabilities, religious observances, military duty, incompletes, discriminatory conduct, academic misconduct, complaint procedures, grade appeal procedures, LGBT+ resources, and other issues. For a full listing of these policies, click [here](#).

If you require any special accommodation according to UWM's policies listed above, please contact me within the first week of the semester. Note that plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. For the definition and consequences of academic misconduct, click [here](#).

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

The following schedule lists the content and assignments for each unit. ****Read the dates and deadlines for each unit carefully and mark them in your calendar now. Make sure to note that the length of each unit can vary!****

More specific instructions for completing the work in each unit will be given on Canvas as the units are made available. You will also receive **ONE** e-mail every week from me reminding you of upcoming assignment deadlines. For each unit there will be some combination of readings, films, lectures, discussions, quizzes, and paper assignments. It is up to you to decide when to allocate your time to work on the class within the parameters of each unit. This online course will take advantage of the flexibility that the virtual classroom provides; at the same time, it is designed with the assumption that you will devote a certain amount of time each day on the course. In order to succeed you must prepare the assigned material and complete related assignments by the dates posted. **Do not get behind!**

****Readings and requirements below may be adjusted at any time ****

Unit 1

2 Sept - 13 Sept

Lecture 1: “Torah, Tanak, and Beyond”

Readings: Michael Satlow, *Creating Judaism*, Introduction, pp. 1-18
Michael Satlow, *Creating Judaism*, Chapter 2, pp. 69-95

Assignment: Discussion #1:
First post due by 11:59pm on **8 September**
Second post due by 11:59pm on **13 September**

Unit 2

14 Sept - 20 Sept

Lecture 2: “Greeks, Romans, and Rabbis”

Readings: John Efron et. al., *The Jews: A History*, Chapter 3, pp. 58-84
John Efron et. al., *The Jews: A History*, Chapter 4, pp. 85-115

Assignment: Take Quiz #1 before 11:59pm on **20 September**

Unit 3

21 Sept - 27 Sept

Lecture 3: “Living in the Islamic World”

Reading: John Efron et. al., *The Jews: A History*, Chapter 6, pp. 149-177

Assignment: Take Quiz #2 before 11:59pm on **27 September**

Unit 4

28 Sept - 11 Oct

Lecture 4: “Jews in Medieval Europe”

Readings: Jacob Rader Marcus, ed., *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Source Book 315-1791*, pp. 121-135

Assignment: Essay (3-4 pp.) due before 11:59pm on **11 October**

Unit 5

12 Oct – 18 Oct

Lecture 5: “The Ottoman Empire and Beyond”

Reading: Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp. 120 - top of 148

Assignment: Take Quiz #3 before 11:59pm on **18 October**

Unit 6

19 Oct - 1 Nov

Lecture 6: “The Jews of Eastern Europe”

Reading: Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, “Russia Discovers its Shtetl” in *The Golden Age Shtetl: A New History of Jewish Life in East Europe*, pp. 29-56

Film: *A Yiddish World Remembered* (57 min., 2002)

Assignments: Discussion #2:
First post due by 11:59pm on **25 October**
Second post due by 11:59pm on **1 November**

1-2pp. Research Paper proposal must be uploaded to Canvas before 11:59pm **1 November**.

Unit 7

2 Nov - 8 Nov

Lecture 7: “Western Europe and Zionism”

Reading: Michael A Meyer, ed. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times, vol 1, Tradition and Enlightenment, 1660-1780*, pp. 144-164

Assignment: Take Quiz #4 before 11:59pm on **8 November**

Unit 8

9 Nov – 15 Nov

Lecture 8: “Antisemitism and the Holocaust”

Reading: Doris Bergen, *War & Genocide*, pp. 1-28

Assignment: Take Quiz #5 before 11:59pm on **15 November**

Unit 9

16 Nov – 24 Nov

Lecture 9: “Jews in Vienna: Before, During, and After the Holocaust”
(Voiceover PowerPoint)

Reading: William Bowman, “Hakoah Vienna and the International Nature of Interwar Austrian Sports,” pp. 642-668

Film: *Watermarks* (77 min., dir. Yaron Zilberman, 2004)

Assignment: Discussion #3
First post due by 11:59pm on **20 November**
Second post due by 11:59pm on **24 November**

Thanksgiving Recess

Unit 10

30 Nov - 13 Dec

Lecture 10: “American Jews and Modern Jews”

Reading: Beth S. Wenger, “Memory as Identity: The Invention of the Lower East Side,” pp. 3-27

Assignment: Take Quiz #6 before 11:59pm on **13 December**

****7-10pp. Research paper must be uploaded to Canvas by 20 December****

Course Bibliography

Sources for readings and lectures include the following:

- Avrutin, Eugene M. *The Velizh Affair: Blood Libel in a Russian Town*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Bartal, Israel. *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.
- Baskin, Judith R., ed. *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991.
- Bell, Dean Phillip. *The Routledge Companion to Jewish History and Historiography*. New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Bergen, Doris. *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. Lanham, MD: Rowman, 2009.
- Ben-Sasson, H. H., ed. *A History of the Jewish People*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Biale, David. *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, vols. I, II, and III. New York: Schocken, 2002.
- Biale, David, ed. *Hasidism: a New History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018.
- Bihler, Lori Gemeiner. *Cities of Refuge: German Jews in London and New York, 1935-1945*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018.
- Bilski, Emily D. and Emily Braun. *Jewish Women and their Salons: the Power of Conversation*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005.
- Bonfil, Robert. *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Chazan, Robert. *From Anti-Judaism to Anti-Semitism: Ancient and Medieval Christian Constructions of Jewish History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Cohen, Julia Phillips. *Becoming Ottomans: Sephardi Jews and Imperial Citizenship in the Modern Era*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Cohen, Shaye D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness. Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Efron, John, Steven Weitzman, and Matthias Lehmann. *The Jews: A History*. Second edition. New York: Pearson, 2014.
- Frankel, Jonathan and Steven Zipperstein, eds. *Assimilation and Community*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.
- Furet, Francois, ed. *Unanswered Questions: Nazi Germany and the Genocide of the Jews*. New York: Schocken, 1989.
- Garland, Libby. *After they Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921-1965*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2014.
- Gerber, Jane S. *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*. New York: Free Press, 1992.
- Gillman, Abigail. *A History of German Jewish Bible Translation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- Gilman Sander L. and Jack Zipes, eds. *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture 1096-1996*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997.
- Gurda, John. *One People, Many Paths: A History of Jewish Milwaukee*. Milwaukee, WI: Milwaukee Jewish Museum, 2009.

- Hallo, William, David Ruderman, and Michael Stanislawski, eds. *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews, Source Reader*. New York: Praeger, 1984.
- Harshav, Benjamin. *The Meaning of Yiddish*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Hertzberg, Arthur. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1997.
- Hyman, Paula E. *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: the Roles and Representation of Women*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.
- Kaplan, Marion A., ed. *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Katz, Jacob. *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*. New York: New York University Press, 1993.
- Lederhendler, Eli. *American Jewry: A New History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Lewis, Bernard. *The Jews of Islam*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Loentz, Elizabeth. *Let Me Continue to Speak the Truth: Bertha Pappenheim as Author and Activist*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2007.
- Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinharz, eds. *The Jew in the Modern World*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Marks, Marlene Adler, ed. *Nice Jewish Girls: Growing up in America*. New York: Plume, 1996.
- Mell, Julie L. *The Myth of the Medieval Jewish Moneylender*, vol. 1 and 2. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017-2018.
- Meyer, Michael A., ed. *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*. Volume 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Nadell, Pamela Susan. *America's Jewish Women: a History from Colonial Times to Today*. New York: Norton, 2019.
- Offenberger, Ilana. *The Jews of Nazi Vienna, 1938-1945: Rescue and Destruction*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
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- Rose, E. M. *The Murder of William of Norwich. The Origins of the Blood Libel in Medieval Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Satlow, Michael. *Creating Judaism. History, Tradition, Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Schwadron, Hannah. *The Case of the Sexy Jewess: Dance, Gender, & Jewish Joke Work in U.S. Pop Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Sharkey, Heather. *A History of Muslims, Christians, and Jews in the Middle East*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- Silverman, Lisa. *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Sisman, Gengiz. *The Burden of Silence: Sabbatei Sevi and the Evolution of Ottoman-Turkish Dönmes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Sorkin, David. *Jewish Emancipation: a History across Five Centuries*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020.
- Stern, David. *The Jewish Bible: A Material History*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017.
- Stow, Kenneth. *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Trivellato, Francesca. *The Promise and Peril of Credit: what a Forgotten Legend about Jews and Finance Tells Us about the Making of Commercial Society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019.

Wisse, Ruth. *The Modern Jewish Canon: A Journey through Language and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2000.