COLLOQUIUM ON EUROPEAN HISTORY:
Jews and Gentiles in Polish and Eastern European History

Meetings: online, W 7:00-9:40 pm, synchronous
Instructor: Professor Neal Pease
Office Hours: Virtual: contact by email, when and as needed
E-mail: pease@uwm.edu
E-mail Classlist: hist850-jewsgentiles@uwm.edu

Theme of Course
To examine the history of Jews in the lands historically associated with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth—roughly, contemporary Poland, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine—that were the heart of Jewish life and civilization for many centuries until the catastrophe of the Second World War. Special focus on the complex and fateful interrelationship of Jews with non-Jews in the region. Students will consider and discuss a series of selected case studies, and research, write, and turn in a semester paper on a topic of their choice. Use of sources in foreign languages is not required, but is encouraged. May be retaken with change in topic to 9 credits maximum. Prereq: grad st.

Requirements
1. Regular participation in class meetings and discussions. See attendance policy below.

2. Brief response papers (2-3 pp.), required but ungraded, on readings assigned for class meetings of Sept 16, Sept 23, Sept 29, and Oct 7. Papers should respond to at least three of the assigned readings per week.

3. Preliminary oral presentation of research/paper topic to class, selecting pertinent readings for other students and leading class discussion.

4. At least one online meeting/consultation with instructor during semester to discuss course paper project. Student must submit (ungraded) abstract of proposed paper of roughly 2-3 pages, defining topic, sketching main lines of essay, and providing partial bibliography. Note: students must obtain instructor’s explicit approval of paper project. No paper will be accepted that has not received his prior approval.

Course grades will be based on a composite of the paper, attendance and quality of participation in class discussion, and the oral report, in roughly descending order of importance. All coursework must be completed to pass the course. Late work will be accepted only at the instructor’s discretion for good reason, such as medical or other emergency.

**Attendance**

The value of a seminar course largely depends on the quality of discussion in class meetings. Your absence not only deprives you of this benefit, but also diminishes the experience of your classmates. For this reason, attendance will be taken at class meetings and will be factored into your grade. Poor or uneven attendance will be considered cause for reducing your course grade. If you know in advance that you cannot attend class for good reason, please notify the instructor in timely fashion to receive an excused absence. In the event of emergency, explain the circumstances to the instructor as soon as possible afterward. “Excused” absences of this sort will not be counted against your attendance record, unless they become excessive, in the judgment of the instructor.

Students with perfect attendance records starting with the Sept 9 meeting (meaning no absences, excused or unexcused) will receive an automatic half step increase in final course grade (for instance, from B to B+), up to a maximum of A.

**E-Mail Classlist**

The classlist allows you to send an e-mail message to all members of the class at once, or to receive one from any member of the class, including the instructor. The instructor will use the classlist to post announcements and messages concerning the course. Students should pay close attention to such posts, and it will be their responsibility to monitor these posts and carry out any instructions they might include. Failure to notice such messages will not be accepted as an excuse. The address is: hist850-jewsgentiles@uwm.edu. Any message intended only for the instructor should be sent to his e-mail: pease@uwm.edu.

**Disabled Students**

Should you have a disability, please do not hesitate to consult with me so that any necessary accommodations can be arranged.

**Departmental Graduate Adviser**

If you have questions about graduate study of History at UWM, please feel free to contact the departmental director of graduate studies, Professor Joe Austin (jaustin@uwm.edu).
The departmental Graduate Student Handbook can be accessed at:


**Academic integrity at UWM**

UWM and I expect each student to be honest in academic performance. Failure to do so may result in discipline under rules published by the Board of Regents (UWS 14). The penalties for academic misconduct such as cheating or plagiarism can include a grade of "F" for the course and expulsion from the University.

http://uwm.edu/graduateschool/academic-misconduct/

**UWM policies on course-related matters**

See the website of the Secretary of the University, at: http://uwm.edu/secu/wp-content/uploads/sites/122/2016/12/Syllabus-Links.pdf

**UWM and Covid-19**

UWM has issued the following statement about its policies for attempting to maintain health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the wider university community. Since this course is conducted online, it is not directly relevant to course procedures, but you are encouraged to read and familiarize yourself with it:

https://uwm.edu/cetl/covid-19-syllabus-statements/

**Readings**

No required textbook has been assigned, or need be purchased. Readings for the introductory weeks of discussion of selected representative case studies will be provided for you in electronic form, either as hot links within this syllabus, or sent out via the classlist.

You are also strongly encouraged to make use of the website *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, which should be your starting point for research of any topic within the scope of this course:

https://yivoencyclopedia.org/default.aspx
Of course, students will be expected to compile their own substantial bibliography for their course paper.

A listing of additional recommended books and websites is appended at the end of the syllabus.

**Meeting Schedule and Procedure**

In the initial weeks of the class students will concentrate on discussion of selected case studies of Jewish history in Poland and East Europe, and the interaction of Jews and non-Jews, and the readings assigned as background.

Within the first few weeks of the semester, students also should select the topic that will form the basis of their semester paper. It should deal with some aspect of the course theme, broadly defined. While the instructor hopes to encourage a broad range of topics, be sure to receive his explicit approval of your topic.

Each student will present an oral report of his/her topic, initiating discussion of the subject and inviting the suggestions and criticisms of classmates. The final paper should represent a polished version of the earlier oral report.

**Course Outline**

**W Sept 2 Getting Started**

We will treat this as an introductory, get acquainted virtual gathering, with the primary goal being to get used to using Teams as a means of holding class meetings/discussions. If you are not familiar with Teams, here is the how-to guide from UWM:

https://uwm.edu/o365/about-teams/

**Reading assignment (no written assignment):** “Find out more” and “How to use this website,” and articles on “Poland,” “Ukraine,” “Lithuania,” and “Russia” from *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*

https://yivoencyclopedia.org/default.aspx

**W Sept 9 Introduction: General Approaches**

Reading:


Written Assignment: 2-3 pp. summary of three or more readings for week

W Sept 16 Poland-Lithuania, the “Paradise of the Jews”?

Reading:


Written Assignment: 2-3 pp. summary of three or more readings for week

W Sept 23 The Encounter with Modernity: 18th century-1914
Reading:


**Written Assignment**: 2-3 pp. summary of three or more readings for week

W Sept 30 The Early 20th Century: The Flowering and the Destruction of East European Jewish Civilization, 1914-1945

Reading:


Szymon Rudnicki, “Jews in Poland Between the Two World Wars,” *Shofar* 29 (2011)

Geoffrey Weisgard, “The Role of Women in the Jewish Community of Krakow from the 16th Century to 1939; An Unwritten History?” *Academia.edu* (2019)

**Written Assignment**: Written Assignment: 2-3 pp. summary of three or more readings for week

W Oct 7 “Life After Life”: Jews in Poland and East Europe After the Shoah

Reading:


**Written Assignment**: 2-3 pp. summary of three or more readings for week

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**Bibliography**
A listing of useful books on Jews in Poland and East Europe available in the collections of the UWM Libraries, divided roughly according to the chronological periodization followed in the opening weeks of the course. Titles with asterisks* are accessible online only.

**General Approaches**

Lucy S. Dawidowicz, ed., *The golden tradition; Jewish life and thought in Eastern Europe* (1967)
Moshe Rosman, *How Jewish is Jewish history?* (2007)*

**Poland-Lithuania, the “Paradise of the Jews”?**

Salo W. Baron, *A social and religious history of the Jews* (1973)
Ber, of Bolechow, *The memoirs of Ber of Bolechow* (1723-1805) (1973)
Immanuel Etkes, *The Besht: Magician, Mystic, and Leader* (2012)*
Jacob Goldberg, *Jewish privileges in the Polish commonwealth: charters of rights granted to Jewish communities in Poland-Lithuania in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries* (1985)
Nathan Nata Hannover, *Abyss of despair (Yeven metzulah) The famous 17th century chronicle depicting Jewish life in Russia and Poland during the Chmielnicki massacres of 1648-49* (1950)
Moses A. Shulvass, Jewish culture in Eastern Europe: the classical period (1975)
Magda Teter, Jews and heretics in Catholic Poland: a beleagured church in the post-Reformation era (2006)
Magda Teter, Sinners on Trial: Jews and Sacrilege after the Reformation (2011)
Bernard D. Weinryb, The Jews of Poland; a social and economic history of the Jewish community in Poland from 1100 to 1800 (1973)
Chava Weissler, Voices of the matriarchs: listening to the prayers of early modern Jewish women (1998)

The Encounter with Modernity: 18th century-1914

Gur Alroey, Bread to eat and clothes to wear: letters from Jewish migrants in the early twentieth century (2011)
Glenn Dynner, Yankel’s tavern: Jews, liquor, & life in the Kingdom of Poland (2014)
John Doyle Klier, Russia gathers her Jews: the origins of the "Jewish question" in Russia, 1772-1825 (1986)
Witold Kula, Nina Assorodobraj-Kula, and Marcin Kula, ed., Writing home--immigrants in Brazil and the United States, 1890-1891 (1986)
Ezra Mendelsohn, Painting a people: Mauryce Gottlieb and Jewish art (2002)
Dan Miron, The image of the shtetl and other studies of modern Jewish literary imagination (2000)
Puah Rakovsky, My life as a radical Jewish woman: memoirs of a Zionist feminist in Poland (2002)
Włodzimierz Stanisław Reymont, The promised land (1927)
Gabriella Safran and Steven J. Zipperstein, ed., The worlds of S. An-sky: a Russian Jewish intellectual at the turn of the century (2006)
Shaul Stampfer, Lithuanian yeshivas of the nineteenth century: creating a tradition of learning (2012)
Yehiel Yeshaia Trunk, Poyln: my life within Jewish life in Poland: sketches and images (2007)

The Early 20th Century: The Flowering and the Destruction of East European Jewish Civilization, 1914-1945

Jan Grabowski, *Hunt for the Jews: betrayal and murder in German-occupied Poland* (2013)
Eva Hoffman, *Shtetl, the Life and Death of a Small Town and the World of Polish Jews* (1997)
Shimon Huberband, *Kiddush Hashem: Jewish religious and cultural life in Poland during the Holocaust* (1987)
Jack Jacobs, *Bundist Counterculture in Interwar Poland* (2009)*
Emanuel Ringelblum, *Notes from the Warsaw ghetto: the journal of Emanuel Ringelblum* (1958)
Emanuel Ringelblum, *Polish-Jewish relations during the second World War* (1974)
Nahma Sandrow, *Vagabond stars: a world history of Yiddish theater* (1977)
Jürgen Stroop, *The Stroop report: the Jewish quarter of Warsaw is no more!* (1979)

"Life After Life"?: Jews in Poland and East Europe After the Shoah


Films
A selection of notable documentary and feature films on Polish/Jewish themes, available from UWM Libraries:

Liev Schreiber, *Everything is Illuminated* (2005)
Mary Skinner, *Irena Sendler, in the name of their mothers* (2011)
Steven Spielberg, *Schindler's list* (2013)

**Additional Recommended Websites**


**Handbooks and Stylebooks**

The University of Chicago Press, *Chicago Manual of Style* is the preferred guide to preparation of papers and theses of the UWM Department of History. Print versions are available in Golda Meir Library. The most recent edition can be accessed online at: