

History 202.303. Secular Judaism and Secular Jews: Lives and Choices 1789 to 2005
Spring Semester 2008
Instructors: Marion Kant and Jonathan Steinberg
Mondays 2 to 5 PM

Course Description: Can Judaism exist without the religion? Are there secular Jews? Is it possible for people to consider themselves to be Jewish without any formal affiliation with either a religious or other specifically Jewish institution? If so, what sort of Jews are they? These questions trouble all those interested in the history, present position and future prospect of the Jews as a people. There have been many answers: Zionist, non-Zionist, cultural, ethnic, sociological, theological (both Christian and Jewish) and others less respectable. We have no answers but we have a different way to put the question, a biographical way, which may help to define the parameters of a possible answer. We ask how have individual Jews defined themselves and how have they chosen to live their lives. Such choices only became possible in the Western world after the Enlightenment, the American and the French Revolutions had created the category of “citizen”, a new, free, universal, abstract person, who had the right to be what he or she chose. Some Jews thought that they could simply shed their old identities and become members of the new community of citizens. In many countries, whatever Jews thought they were, the host populations saw them as Jews. The most violent and terrible of those rejections ended in the Holocaust, which made “Jews” of Catholic priests and nuns, Protestant pastors, communists, socialists, believers and non-believers, rich and poor, assimilated and orthodox. A national home for the Jews arose out of the ashes but it could not agree on a definition of Jewish identity to ground its Law of Return and the “Jewish” identity of many groups of immigrants to Israel remains contested. In the USA and Western Europe, inter-marriage rates have risen. In what sense can mixed couples or their children still be “Jewish”? This course will try to address these questions in a strictly historical way, following a selection of lives of important Jews who at different times and places attempted their own answers to these questions. These lives will be drawn mainly from Western Europe, where until the Second World War, the majority of Jews lived. We shall also consider some American lives since during the Twentieth Century the American Jewish community became the place where choice of identity became an unusually important issue. We shall also look at the lives of some who chose Israel as the “national” answer to the question of Jewish identity and some who chose socialism or communism as the way to “solve the Jewish Question” and find a new identity..

- 1. Response Papers:** Twice during the semester, students will be asked to submit response papers of not more than 1000 words on the readings.
- 2. Presentations:** Students will be asked to present and discuss selected literature.
- 2. Final Short Essay or Oral Exam:** The final essay [ca 1200 words] or the oral exam will give students a chance to come to a conclusion about what the main issues in the course have been and how they assess them now that they have covered the material. The instructors will set the question or questions well before the end of the semester.

Response papers	30%
Presentations	20%
Final Essay/Exam	30%

Class Participation 20%

“Double Marking”/Grades:

Both instructors read all the students’ formal work independently, compare notes and arrive at a comprehensive mark, a system known as “double-marking”. This has two advantages for students. Each reader checks the other’s grades for fairness and students get two opinions instead of one. Both instructors will be happy to help to improve technique, discuss questions and consider where problems have arisen. There is no curve and, if all the work reaches an agreed “A”, the students will all get “A” s. Improvement in thought and/or style over the semester will always be rewarded.

Note on the Readings for each topic:

Since this course is unconventional, we cannot rely on conventional textbooks. The only source book which suits our needs is **Paul Mendes-Flohr, and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World. A Documentary History***, Second Edition, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995. We shall use it to provide English versions of many crucial texts. If students want to buy the book, copies will be available at the Penn Bookstore and Penn Book Centre. The rest of the readings will come in a bulkpack, available as always, through Campus Copy Center (3907 Walnut Street) or at the Rosengarten Reserve in the Van Pelt Library (3420 Walnut Street).

Calendar:

MONDAY JANUARY 21. NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Week 1

January 28, 2008 **Introduction** JS/MK

Readings

Thorstein Veblen, “The Intellectual Preeminence of Jews in Modern Europe (1919) in T. Veblen, *Essay in our Changing Order*” New York, Viking Press, 1934 pp. 219- 231

Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation*, Syracuse University Press, 1998, pp 1-41

Enlightenment: Moses Mendelssohn and Immanuel Kant MK

Readings

Excerpt from G.E. Lessing, Nathan the Wise [Parable of Toleration]. In: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinharz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*, Oxford University Press Oxford and New York 1995. pp.p.62.

Mendelssohn, Moses. On the question: what does “to enlighten” mean? in: *Philosophical Writings*. Ed. by Daniel O. Dahlstrom. CUP Cambridge 1997. pp.313-317.

Immanuel Kant. What is Enlightenment? in: Foundations of the metaphysics of morals, and What is enlightenment? Translated, with an introd., by Lewis White Beck. Publisher: Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill [c1959] Or Modern History source Book online: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kant-what-is.html>

Immanuel Kant. Letter to Markus Herz. In: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*, Oxford University Press Oxford and New York 1995. p.68.

Moses Mendelssohn. The right to be different. In: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*, Oxford University Press Oxford and New York 1995. pp.68-69.

Dohm, Christian Wilhelm von: *Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews*, in: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*. pp.28-36.

Moses Mendelssohn . Response to Dohm/Remarks concerning Michaelis' response to Dohm. In: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*, Oxford University Press Oxford and New York 1995. pp.44-48

Week 2

February 4 , 2008 **French Revolution: Robespierre and the Religion of Virtue**
Edmund Burke and the Critique of the Revolution JS

Readings

The process of Political Emancipation in Western Europe. Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 114-144

Tocqueville, Alexis de: *The State of Society in France Before the Revolution of 1789, and the Causes Which Led to That Event* (third edition, 1888), trans. by Henry Reeve (HTML at GeoCities) Book 1 (URL: <http://www.geocities.com/danielmacryan/ancientregime.pdf>)

Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* And on the Proceeding in Certain Societies in London Relative to That Event in a Letter Intended to Have Been Sent to a Gentleman in Paris. 1790 Harvard Classics, Vol. 24, Part 3 (on-line: <http://www.bartleby.com/24/3/>) Paras. 75-99

Week 3

February 11, 2008 **The Rothschild Family** JS

Readings

Carlo Cattaneo, “*The civil restrictions on the Jews*” (1835). Interdizioni israelitiche / Carlo Cattaneo ; prefazione di Roberto Jarach ; introduzione di Angelo Ara ; a cura di Giovanni Luseroni ; presentazione di Ettore A. Albertoni. Milano : Oscar Mondadori, c2002. Translation Jonathan Steinberg.

Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: Money's Prophets 1798-1848* Penguin USA (Paper); ISBN: 0140240845 ; (November 1999) pp. 37-118

Heine

MK

Readings

Heinrich Heine. A Ticket of Admission to European Culture. In Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World* pp.258-259

Heinrich Heine, The Gods in Exile. in: *The Sword and the Flame*. Selections from Heinrich Heine's Prose. Ed. and with an introduction by Alfred Werner. Thomas Yoseloff New York, London 1960. pp. 541-584.

Hannah Arendt. *The Jew as Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*. Ed. With an introduction by Ron H. Feldman. Grove Press New York 1978. pp.67-75

Week 4

February 18, 2008 **Marx**

MK

Readings

Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question" (1844) (+Lasalle/Bernstein)
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>

Disraeli

JS

Readings

Isaiah Berlin, *Against the current: essays in the history of ideas*. "Marx and Disraeli" edited and with a bibliography by Henry Hardy ; with an introduction by Roger Hausheer. London: Hogarth Press, 1979.

[also in: Isaiah Berlin, "Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx and the Search for Identity" *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society*, Vol. XXII, Sessions 1968-1969, London, 1970 pp. 1 -20]

Stanley Weintraub, *Disraeli. A Biography* (New York: Penguin Book, 1993) pp. 275-299

Robert Lord Blake, *Disraeli* (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1966), pp 757-766

Week 5

February 25 , 2008 **Jewish Salons in Berlin: the emancipation of women** MK

Readings

Rahel Varnhagen. O how painful to have been born a Jewess. in: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinhartz (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World. A Documentary History*, Oxford, New York 1995. pp.260-261

Hannah Arendt. *Rahel Varnhagen : the life of a Jewish Woman*; translated by Richard and Clara Winston. 74
[chapters: Jewess and Schlehmil pp.3-25 and One does not escape Jewishness pp.216-228]

Hannah Arendt. Writing Rahel Varnhagen. From a Letter to Karl Jaspers. in: *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. Ed. by Peter Baehr, Penguin Books 2000. pp.68-72

Meyerbeer and Wagner

MK

Readings

Meyerbeer letters to Heine, letters re Wagner. in: Heinz and Gudrun Becker. Giacomo Meyerbeer. *A Life in Letters*. Christopher Helm London 1989

Richard Wagner, *Judaism in Music (1850) and other essays*. Transl. by William Ashton Ellis. Lincoln Nebraska and London 1995.

<http://users.belgacom.net/wagnerlibrary/prose/wagjuda.htm>

Houston Stuart Chamberlain. *The Foundations of the 19th Century*. John Lane London, New York 1909. in: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*. pp. 356-359

Week 6

March 3, 2008

Wissenschaft des Judentums (Science of Judaism) MK

Readings

Modern Jewish Studies. Chapter V. Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*. pp.207-248

Abraham Geiger and liberal Judaism; the challenge of the nineteenth century. Compiled with a biographical introd. by Max Wiener. Translation from the German by Ernst J. Schlochauer. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962
A Series of 34 Lectures, Breslau 1865. pp.149-157, pp.265-269, pp.283-293

Mordecai Kaplan

JS

Readings

Mordecai M. Kaplan, *The Greater Judaism in the Making. A Study of the Modern Evolution of Judaism*, New York, The Reconstructionist Press, 1960, pp.450-511

Spring Break March 7 - 16

Week 7

March 17, 2008

Emile Durkheim and Alfred Dreyfus

MK/JS

Readings

Émile Durkheim, "Concerning the definition of religious phenomena' (1899) in *Durkheim on Religion*, ed. W.S.F. Pickering, London/Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975, pp.74-98

Émile Durkheim, *The Rule of Sociological Method*, ed with an introduction by Steven Lukes, London/Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982 pp.31-59

Readings

Emile Zola. J'accuse. In: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*. pp.351-356

Making Sense of the Rennes Verdict: The Military Dimension of the Dreyfus Affair
Robert E. Kaplan. In: *Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 34, No. 4 (Oct., 1999), pp. 499-515

Week 8

March 24 2008

Herzl

MK

Readings

Theodor Herzl. *The Jewish State*. Translated from the German by Sylvie D'Avigdor, This edition published in 1946 by the American Zionist Emergency Council,
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Zionism/herzl2.html>

Carl Schorske. *Fin de Siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture*. Cambridge University Press 1981. chapter Politics in a New Key. pp.146-175.

Week 9

March 31, 2008

Freud

MK

Readings

Sigmund Freud. *The History of the Psycho-analytic Movement*. German original first published in the *Jahrbuch der Psychoanalyse*, 4. Translation first published in the *Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series* (No. 25). New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Pub. Co.

<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/search?author=Freud&amode=words>

Carl Schorske. *Fin de Siècle Vienna. Politics and Culture*. Cambridge University Press 1981. chapter Politics and Patricide in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*. pp. 181-207

L.J. Rather, "Disraeli, Freud and Jewish Conspiracy Theories", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. No. 1 (Jan.-Mar., 1986) pp 111-131

Gay, Peter, 1923, *A Godless Jew: Freud, atheism, and the making of psychoanalysis*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1987.

Week 10

April 7, 2008

Cesare Lombroso and the Science of Crime

MK/JS

Readings

Cesare Lombroso and William Ferrero, *The Female Offender*, London 1959 pp 1-26
Cesare Lombroso, *Man of Genius*. London: W.Scott, 1891 Preface, pp v-xi, Part One, Ch II pp 5-37, Part Two, Ch III pp. 133-150

Nancy A. Harrowitz, "Villifying Difference: Lombroso and the Jews" in Nancy A. Harrowitz, *Antisemitism, Misogyny and the Logic of Cultural Difference: Cesare Lombroso and Matilde Serao* pp. 41-61

Einstein and Haber; "Jewish" Science

JS

Readings

Fritz Stern, „Fritz Haber and Albert Einstein" in *Einstein's German World* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1999), pp. 60-164

Gershom Gerhard Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem : memories of my youth*, translated from the German by Harry Zohn. (New York: Schocken Books, 1980), "Jewish Milieu", pp.21-35

Week 11

April 14, 2008

Leon Trotsky

JS

Readings

Yuri Sleskine, "The Jewish Century" (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004). pp. 105-188

Leon Trotsky. My Life

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1930-lif/ch01.htm>

Walther Rathenau and Rosa Luxemburg

MK

Readings

Walther Rathenau. Hear, O Israel! [originally in: Die Zukunft. Published: Berlin.]
excerpt in: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinhartz (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World. A Documentary History*, Oxford, New York 1995. pp.267-268.

Walter Rathenau. The New Society. Authorized translation by Arthur Windham.
Publisher: New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921.
<http://fax.libs.uga.edu/HN449xR2/#>

Fritz Stern. "Walter Rathenau and the Vision of Modernity" in *Einstein's German World*. (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1999), Chapter 4. pp.165-196

Rosa Luxemburg. No Room in my heart for Jewish suffering. in: Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World. A Documentary History*, Oxford, New York 1995. pp.261

Robert S. Wistrich. Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches and the Jewish Labour Movement, 1893-1903. pp.529-545. in: *Jewish History. Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky*. Ed. Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven J. Zipperstein. Foreword Isaiah Berlin. Peter Halban London 1986

Hannah Arendt. Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919).
[book review of J.P. Netti's Luxemburg biography]
in: *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. Ed. by Peter Baehr, Penguin Books 2000
pp.419-437

Week 12

April 21, 2008

Saul Bellow

MK

Readings "The Bellarosa Connection" in Saul Bellow, *Collected Stories*, New York: Viking Penguin, 2001, pp. 35-89

Primo Levi

JS

Readings

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity*. Translated by Stuart Woolf ; London : Abacus, 1987 (1997) pp.9-11, 87-150

Down among the Dead Men: Levi and Dante in Hell. Lynn M. Gunzberg. In: *Modern Language Studies* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter, 1986), pp.10-28

Amos Funkenstein, "Theological Responses to the Holocaust" in *Perceptions of Jewish History*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1993, pp.306-337

Week 13

April 28, 2008

The "Jewish Mind"?

JS/MK

Is there Secular Judaism?

JS/MK

Readings

Hannah Arendt. *The Jew as pariah : Jewish identity and politics in the modern age* / Hannah Arendt ; edited and with an introd. by Ron H. Feldman. New York : Grove Press : distributed by Random House, 1978. pp.240-251.

Theodor W. Adorno. *Can One Live after Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader*. Ed. By rolf Tiedemann. Stanford University Press 2003. *Heine the Wound*. pp.205-210, *Wagner's Relevance Today*. pp.314-332, *Elements of Anti-Semitism. Limits of Enlightenment*. pp.391-426.

Theodor Adorno. *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords*. Columbia University Press New York 2005. Introduction Lydia Goehr. Education after Auschwitz pp.191-204
Gregory Cochran, Jason Hardy, Henry Harpending, “Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence” YIVO Paper.

Stephen Pinker, “Why nature and nurture won’t go away” *Daedalus* Fall 2004, pp. 1-13
David Biale, “Between Jewish Culture and Multiculture: Historical and Contemporary Reflections on Jewish Identity” Lecture.

Distribution of genetic diseases in human populations. In: the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Human Evolution. Cambridge University Press Cambridge 1992/1995. pp288-291.

Yuri Slezkine, “The Jewish Century”, pp. 327 -371 (BP)

George Steiner. *Errata. An examined life*. London Phoenix 1997. pp.8-26.

David Biale. *Between Jewish Culture and Multiculture: Historical and contemporary Reflections on Jewish Identity*. Ms 2005

Helga Embacher and Hannes Klein, *A Life of Many Lives. Ari Rath – Israeli with Viennese Roots*. 60 Minute Fil.; Austria 2005. Showing to be arranged. Copy on reserve at Rosengarten Library, Van Pelt Library

Final Short Essay Due May 1 at Noon in Room 206E College Hall