

The Jewish World in the Modern Era
Fall Semester 2019

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is an introductory survey of the major currents in Jewish culture and society from the late eighteenth century to the present and presupposes no previous background in modern Jewish history. The course focuses on the history of the Jews in Europe, with an emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe and also includes lectures on major themes in American Jewish history. Topics include the social consequences of emancipation, the emergence of modern varieties of Judaism; the rise of modern anti-Semitism; Zionism, the Holocaust, and the establishment of the State of Israel.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

The course consists of lectures, readings, and selected documents. The readings are taken from the following books:

Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews in Modern Times* (2001)
Howard M. Sachar, *The Course of Modern Jewish History* (1990)
H.H. Ben-Sasson, editor, *A History of the Jewish People* (1976)
Gerald Sorin, *Tradition Transformed: The Jewish Experience in America* (1997)

Students will also read a number of primary documents. The assigned readings and documents are listed under the topic headings. The documents are taken from *The Jews in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 3rd edition, edited by Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (2011)

Research Paper:

Each student will be required to write a research paper on any subject, theme, topic or period covered in the readings from week 5 to Week 12. The paper should be double spaced, 5-6 pages in length, and contain source notes. During the first three weeks of class, students must inform me in person or by e-mail about the subject of their paper and the sources they intend to use. The paper must be turned in on or before the last week of class. Further details about the paper will be given in class.

Note: All Students are allowed three (3) unexcused absences. Students who have more than three unexcused absences will have points deducted from their final grade.

FINALGRADE:

The final grade is based on a mid-semester exam, the research paper, attendance and participation. The percentage of the grade is based on the following breakdown.

Attendance = 10%

Mid-term exam = 40%

Research paper = 50%

WEEK and TOPICS

1. Emancipation of the Jews in Western Europe

(Gartner, 128-161)

Document: The Emancipation of the Jews of France (September 28, 1791)

The Impact of Emancipation on the Jews

(Ben-Sasson, pp. 825-840)

Document: Rahel Levin Varnhagen: "O how Painful to Have been Born a Jewess!" (1795); "Deathbed Statement to Her Husband" (1834)

2. Modern Racial and Political Anti-Semitism

Document: Theodor Fritsch, "The Racists' Decalogue" (1883)

Russian Jewry: Nineteenth Century to the Russian Revolution

(Ben-Sasson, pp. 813-824; 881-890)

Document: The Pale of Settlement, 1835-1917.

3. The Rise of Zionism

(Ben-Sasson, 891-907)

Documents: "The Basle Program" (1897).

The Jews in America, 1789-1880

(Sachar, ch. 8)

Document: The Newport Congregation to George Washington and Washington's Reply (1790)

4. American Jewry, 1881- 1914

(Sachar, ch. 15)

World War I and Its Impact on the Jews

(Ben-Sasson, pp. 939-948)

Document: "The Balfour Declaration" (1917)

5. The Jews of Germany between the World Wars, 1919-1939
(Ben-Sasson, pp. 979-988)

Document: "The Operation Against the Jews" (November 9-10, 1938)

The Jews of Eastern Europe between the World Wars, 1919-1939
(Ben-Sasson, pp. 949-963)

6. MID-SEMESTER EXAM

The Jews of the Soviet Union, 1917-1939
(Ben-Sasson, pp. 964-978)

Document: Jewish Red Army Soldiers: "Appeal to Jewish Workers" (1920)

7. The Zionist Movement and the Yishuv between the World Wars
(Ben-Sasson, 989-1016)

Document: The Peel Commission Report (July 1937)

American Jewry between the World Wars
(Sorin, 179-193)

8. European Jewry on the Eve of World War II
(Gartner, 294-318)

World War II and the Holocaust
(Ben-Sasson, pp. 1017-1039)

Document: Heinrich Himmler, "A Secret Speech on the Jewish Question"
(Oct. 8, 1943)

9. The Establishment of the State of Israel
(Ben-Sasson, pp. 1040-1062)

Document: "Proclamation of the State of Israel" (May 14, 1948)

RESEARCH PAPER DUE

World Jewry after WWII
(Ben-Sasson, pp. 1063-1074; Gartner, 396-420)

Document: Jean Amery, "Reflections of a 'Holocaust Jew'" (1966)