

JWSC 12001 Section III

JEWISH CIVILIZATION II: EARLY MODERN PERIOD TO 21ST CENTURY

Winter 2022

Cobb 101

Instructor:

Dr. Yiftach Ofek yiftach@uchicago.edu

Office Hours (via Zoom*): By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a survey course of Jewish history and thought from Early Modernity to the Present. Each week we will focus on a particular era or episode in Jewish history and read some representative writings from the period. This course is a sequel to Jewish Civilization I and is in many ways based on the texts studied in the first quarter. At the same time, however, it comprises a new set of texts, problems and dilemmas that pertain specifically to the modern period. By the end of the quarter, it is hoped that you will come to understand better the contours of Jewish Civilization in the modern period, and be able to reflect better on some of the issues at the heart of contemporary Jewish debates.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the quarter, you will:

- Learn the broad contours of Jewish history from the Early Modern Period to the Present;
- Gain familiarity with a variety of primary Jewish sources from this period;
- Be able to thoughtfully reflect on the changes in Jewish identity over time, space, and culture, as well as to contribute to ongoing debates on the meaning of the term “Civilization” and its application to Jewish history;
- Identify some of the central issues of contention at the heart of Jewish thought today and learn to reflect on these thoughtfully;
- Develop analytical skills through close reading, classroom discussions, and writing.

TEXTS

Recommended Text

Raymond P. Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood*, (Oxford and NY: Oxford UP, 2000)

Other texts will be available either via Canvas, the UChicago Library website, or online.

Many of the Jewish texts discussed in class will be found at the Sefaria website at: <https://www.sefaria.org/>

Should you wish to purchase your own copy of the bible, I recommend the following edition: JPS *TANAKH: The Holy Scriptures: The New JPS Translation according to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985). (This is the version uploaded to Sefaria).

If you wish to use other translations – such as the King James Edition – you may do so at: <https://www.biblegateway.com/> or at <https://biblehub.com/>

OTHER GENERAL HISTORIES OF THE JEWS/JUDAISM

For your benefit, you may consult with any other general history of the Jews. Some of these include:

Goodman, Martin, *A History of Judaism: From Its Origins to the Present*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018) (Available as Library EBook)

Chaim Potok, *Wanderings: Chaim Potok's History of the Jews*, (New York: Knopf, 1978)

GENERAL POLICIES

COVID-RELATED ISSUES

These are difficult times, and we are encouraged to show flexibility in all academic matters. Students, e.g., should be prepared to transition to online teaching at any point should this be required of us. We will be following standard university regulations. Please stay safe.

SPECIAL NEEDS

If you have documented special needs, please let me know as soon as possible. Keep in mind that accommodations cannot normally be applied retroactively. In order to receive an accommodation, you must register your requirements with Student Disability Services.

POLICY ON ABSENCES

Please try to email instructor in advance, or as soon as you can, about any absences. You need not to specify the nature of your absence if you prefer not to. If a medical or family emergency arises during the quarter that will cause you to miss several classes, please have your advisor contact me. Again, no details are required, only the duration of your absence. If you wish, you may also email me directly in addition. In accordance with University policy, you will not be penalized for an absence due to a religious observance, as long as the instructor is notified in advance.

POLICY ON ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND NON-PURCHASED BOOKS

Cellular devices are forbidden in class. It is my preference that students do not use a computer during class, but I will not forbid you from doing so. Naturally, if you choose to use a computer during class, you should refrain from using it for other purposes, and maintain your engagement with class discussion at a maximum.

POLICY ON COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

Please note that I do not check emails between Friday and Saturday evenings. Otherwise, I will attempt to get back to you within 24 hours on weekdays and by Monday on weekends. Please address your emails properly and remember that they are formal and official correspondence between us, in our capacities as professor and student.

Students are encouraged to come to see me at office hours at least twice this quarter. If you cannot make it to my designated office hours, please email me so we can find an alternative time.

FORMATTING

Please follow standard formatting: 12-point font, double-spaced.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Do not plagiarize. Any instance of plagiarism may result in the failure of the relevant paper, withdrawal or failure of the course, and referral to university administration. Whenever you draw on or allude to ideas other than your own, you must reference the original source, whatever it may be (a book, a website, a lecture, an introductory essay, a conversation with a classmate, etc.). This rule applies not only to formally assessed work, but to all of your contributions in this class. Nor is it exclusively applicable in the case of quotations; all distinctive ideas you borrow from others, even where you paraphrase them in your own words, should be referenced.

Students are allowed to consult with each other about class readings throughout the quarter. The work you submit, however, should be your own. Again, I emphasize: please credit your classmates whenever credit is due.

If you have any questions about this while writing your papers, please ask me either via email or in person. If you are unsure about what counts as plagiarism or academic dishonesty, you can consult Charles Lipson's book *Doing Honest Work in College*.

POLICY ON LATE PAPERS AND EXTENSIONS

Extensions will be granted on an individual basis. If you need an extension, please contact me as soon as you can.

Late papers will be deducted 2/3 of a letter grade every 24 hours after the designated due date.

ASSIGNMENTS

Short Reflections

The students will be divided into three sections of six students each (A, B, and C). Each section will be assigned to write several short reflections on the readings (200-300 words) throughout the quarter (see distribution below). These should be submitted by 9:00 am, before class, on the Discussion Board on Canvas. Late submissions will not be accepted. You may be asked to discuss your thoughts in class.

Begin by selecting a specific (and small) section of the text that you believe merits our attention. Then, ask yourself, what is it about this specific passage, or passages, you find especially thought-provoking and why? What does this passage or passages help us understand about the text, the author's perspective, or about Judaism in this particular period?

Your reflections should then raise a question, identify a tension, or expose something interesting about a particular section of the text. As we progress through our readings, you will want, as much as possible, to make connections to other texts we have read in class. Nonetheless, you should keep your paragraphs focused on a narrow passage (or passages) that we can read together. Be careful not to simply provide a summary of text. Your reflections are meant to help you, and the class, think through various aspects of the text and what might be our thinkers' concerns.

You may build on the ideas expressed here in later assignments, provided that you note this in the footnotes. (E.g., "This analysis is based on the reflection I submitted to the class discussion board on Canvas on September 27th"). You should also note that each assignment will be treated, and graded, separately.

Essays

During the quarter, you will be asked to write two essays pertaining to the material studied in class. The instructor will provide the essay questions 12-14 days before the due dates.

Essay I ("Midterm") will be due by Feb. 13, 23:59. Length: 1000-1200 words.

Essay II ("Final") will be due by March 16, 23:59. Length: 1300-1600 words.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Essay I (“Midterm”):	30%
Essay II (“Final”):	50%
Participation:	20% (10% Class contributions and office hours; 10% Reflections)

READINGS

**Subject to revisions*

<u>Date</u>	<u>Theme and Assignments</u>	<u>Response Group</u>
WEEK I: INTRODUCTION		
Jan. 11	Jews and Modernity: An Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none">No readings	
Jan. 13	The Autumn of Rabbinic Judaism <ul style="list-style-type: none">Joseph Karo, <i>Shulchan Arukh</i> (1563), # (siman) 1-2, 4-10, 307 (https://www.sefaria.org/Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim)Glikl of Hameln, <i>Memoirs 1691-1719</i>, ed. Turniansky, 64-73; 106-123; 154-159; 258-263 (<i>Canvas</i>)<i>Jewish Questions: Responsa on Sephardic Life in the Early Modern Period</i>, ed. Matt Goldish, (Princeton: 2008), Responsa 5, 8, 17, 18, 31, 35 (Library EBook)	A

WEEK II: ENLIGHTENMENT AND EMANCIPATION		
Jan. 18	<p>The First Modern Jew</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spinoza, <i>Theological-Political Treatise</i> (1670), ed. Jonathan Israel and Michael Silverthorne (Cambridge: 2007): Preface, Ch. 1, 4-5, 20 (=pp. 3-26, 57-80, 250-259) <p>The Other Path</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> R' Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (RaMCHaL), from <i>The Path of the Righteous</i> (1740), in <i>Masterpiece of Hebrew Literature</i>, ed. Curt Leviant, pp. 551-569 (Canvas) 	B
Jan. 20	<p>The Jewish (“Berlin”) Enlightenment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naphtali Herz Wessely, <i>Words of Peace and Truth</i> (1782), https://www.sefaria.org/Words of Peace and Truth.1.1.1?lang=en&with=all&lang2=en R. David (Tevele) Ben Nathan of Lissa, “Sermon Contra Wessely” (1782) (Canvas) Moses Mendelsohn, from <i>Jerusalem; Or, On Religious Power and Judaism</i> (1782-1783), (Brandeis: 1983), pp. 33-45, 57-60, 70-1, 84-96 (middle), 126-139 (Library Ebook); <p>The Path to Citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> French National Assembly documents, in JMW 2nd edition, pp. 114-121 (Canvas) 	C
WEEK III: COMMUNITY, TRADITION AND REFORM IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY		
Jan. 25	<p>Crisis and Reaction in Central Europe, 1800-1840</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The New Israelite Temple Association, “Constitution of the Hamburg Temple” (December 11, 1817), in JMW, 182-183; Eliezer Liebermann, “The Light of Splendor,” JMW, 183-186; Hamburg Rabbinical Court, “These Are the Words of the Covenant” (1819), in JMW, 187-189; Hatam Sofer, “A Reply Concerning the Question of Reform” (1819), in JMW, 189-192. <p>The “Science of Judaism” (Modern Jewish Studies) In JMW, pp. 236-256:</p>	A + B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joel Abraham List, “A Society for the Preservation of the Jewish People” (1819) • The Society for the Culture and Science of the Jews, “Statutes” (1822) • Eduard Gans, “A Society to Further Jewish Integration” (1822) • Immanuel Wolf, “On the Concept of a Science of Judaism” (1822) • Leopold Zunz, “On Rabbinic Literature” (1818) • Leopold Zunz, “Scholarship and Emancipation” (1832) <p>Community and Belonging: Heinrich Heine</p> <p>Letters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A Ticket of Admission to European Culture”, in JMW, 806-807; <p>Poems:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To Edom”: https://www.commentary.org/articles/heinrich-heine/to-edom/ • “Memorial Service”: https://newcriterion.com/issues/1993/3/gedaumlchtnisfeiermemorial-service • “Princess Shabbat”: https://opensiddur.org/prayers/solilunar/shabbat/seudat-leil-shabbat/prinzessin-sabbat-princess-shabbat-heinrich-heine-1851/ 	
Jan. 27	<p>The Rise of Hasidism in the East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nahman of Breslov/Bratslav: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ “The Loss of the Princess” (Canvas) ◦ “The Rabbi and His Only Son” (in <i>Masterpiece of Hebrew Literature</i>, ed. Curt Leviant (JPS: 2008), 572-74 (Library EBook)) • From <i>Hasidism</i>, eds. Mayse and Shonkoff, (Brandeis: 2020): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Dov Ber of Mezritsh (20-26); ◦ Elimelekh of Lizhansk, Noam Elimelekh and recollections of his son (88-93); ◦ Tsevi Elimelekh Shapira of Dinov (130-135); ◦ The dynasties of Pshiskhe, Kotsk, Izhbits, and Ger (142-158) 	C

WEEK IV: THE COLLAPSE OF THE OLD WORLD AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE JEWISH QUESTION

Feb. 1	<p>Impressions of a Dying Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y. L. Peretz, “Impressions of a Journey through the Tomaszow Region,” in <i>The I.L. Peretz Reader</i>, ed. Wisse, 19-44 (Canvas) • Pauline Wengeroff, “European Culture Destroyed My Family”, in JMW, 383-385 (Canvas) • Sholem Aleichem, from <i>Tevye the Dairyman</i>, “Tevye strikes it rich”, p. 3-35 (Canvas) <p>The Haskalah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judah Leib Gordon, “The Tip of the Yud” (Canvas) <p>Bialik, King of the Jews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Haim Nahman Bialik, “Take Me Under Your Wing” (Canvas) “The Matmid” (Canvas) “Upon the Slaughter” and “In the City of Slaughter,” in Roskies, <i>Literature of Destruction</i>, 159-168 (Canvas) 	A
--------	--	---

Feb. 3	<p>Nationalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpts from Leon Pinsker, “Autoemancipation” Excerpts from Theodor Herzl, <i>Der Judenstaat</i> <p>Socialism and Yiddishism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zhitlovsky, “Territorialism: In Cash or on Credit?,” https://ingeveb.org/texts-and-translations/territorialism-in-cash-or-on-credit Y. L. Peretz, “In the Mail Coach,” in <i>The I.L. Peretz Reader</i>, ed. Wisse), 104-118 <p>Cultural Zionism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ahad Ha’am, “Slavery in Freedom” (1892) Ahad Ha’am, “Flesh and Spirit” (1904) 	B
WEEK V: THE MAKING OF AMERICAN JEWRY		
Feb. 8	<p>Emancipation, Race, and Freedom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excerpts from the autobiography of August Bondi, 90-117 (Canvas) Emma Lazarus "The New Colossus" (Canvas) Sydney Nyburg, excerpt from <i>The Chosen People</i>, in the <i>Norton Anthology of American Jewish Literature</i>, 178-189 (Canvas) <p>The Great Migration and the Making of Yiddish America, 1880-1914</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yenta Serdatsky "An Old Woman with Young Dreams": https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/language-literature-culture/pakn-treger/2018-pakn-treger-translation-issue/old-woman-young-dreams Moyshe Leyb Halpern "The Street Drummer" in Shmeruk, Howe, Wisse, <i>Penguin Book of Modern Yiddish Verse</i> (Canvas) 	C

Feb. 10	Jews and Popular Culture <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selections of songs and performances thereof by Irving Berlin and Fanny Brice [lyrics and links to be prepared by instructors] • Lamed Shapiro “New Yorkish” in Lamed Shapiro, <i>The Cross</i> • Ruth Wisse, “What’s Wrong with <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>”, <i>Mosaic</i> June 18, 2014 (Canvas) • Watch: “The Jazz Singer” (1927) 	A
FIRST ESSAY DUE BY FEB. 13, 23:59 VIA CANVAS		
WEEK VI: THE RETURN TO HISTORY		
Feb. 15	The Revision of Jewish History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Nordau, “<i>Muskejudentum</i>” • Micah Yosef Berdichevski, “Wrecking and Building” • Shaul Tshernikhovski, “Before the Statue of Apollo”: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0449010X.1964.10704145?journalCode=rjeq20 • Haim Hazaz, “The Sermon” (Canvas) Hebrew Agrarianism / Labor Zionism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A. D. Gordon, “People and Labor” and “Our Tasks Ahead” • “Pioneer women of the Second Aliyah” • Berl Katznelson, “Revolution and Tradition” in Herzberg, ed. <i>The Zionist Idea</i> • Zvi Efrat, <i>The Object of Zionism</i> [text and images]: 300-323 • Avraham Shlonsky “Toil” in <i>The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse</i>, 534 	B

Feb. 17	<p>The Modern Jewish Condition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Franz Kafka, “Before the Law” <p>Interwar Renaissance of Jewish Thought</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letters between Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig in <i>On Jewish Learning</i>, 109-118 <p>Jews and Christianity: A Reckoning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uri Zvi Greenberg: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Uri Zvi Before the Cross,” https://ingeveb.org/texts-and-translations/uri-tsvi-before-the-cross “Under the Tooth of their Plough”, https://poemsintranslation.blogspot.com/2011/01/uri-tzvi-greenberg-under-tooth-of-their.html “One Truth and Not Two”, http://saveisrael.com/greenberg/greenbergtruth.htm 	C
WEEK VII: THE REMAKING OF THE JEWISH WORLD IN THE 1940’S		
Feb. 22	<p>Shoah</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zalman Gradowski, “The Czech Transport” in Roskies ed. <i>The Literature of Destruction</i> 548-64 Rabbi Kalonymos Shapiro, “Selections from Fire of Holiness,” in Roskies, ed., <i>Literature of Destruction</i>, 506-509 Hirsh Glik, “Hymn of the Partisans,” in <i>Mir trogn a gesang</i>, ed. Mlotek 190-191 Abraham Sutzkever, “Green Aquarium”, ed. Ruth Wisse, <i>Prooftexts</i>, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 95-121. <p>Broken Tablets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uri Zvi Greenberg, “To God in Europe”, in Roskies, ed., <i>Literature of Destruction</i>, 571-77 Isaac Beshevis-Singer, “The Last Demon”, in Roskies, ed., <i>Literature of Destruction</i>, 578-84 	A

	The Other Planet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony from the Adolf Eichmann trial https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn1001698 [watch first 12 minutes or so: testimony of Y. Dinur] 	
Feb. 24	The End of Arab Jewry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sasson Somekh, <i>Baghdad Yesterday</i>, 27-35, 130-36 The Fight Against the British Empire <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Works of Avraham Stern and Lehi,” in Penslar and Kaplan, <i>The Origins of Israel</i>, 331-336 The Establishment of a Jewish State From Penslar and Kaplan, <i>The Origins of Israel</i> , sources 57-59: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natan Alterman, “The Silver Platter” • “A Jewish Child’s Letter to an Israeli Soldier” • “Public Opinion during the 1948 War” 	B
WEEK VIII: ISRAEL AND THE ARABS, ISRAEL AND THE JEWS		
Mar. 1	Perceptions of the Arab before 1948 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Y. H. Brenner, from “Breakdown and Bereavement” • S. Y. Agnon, “From Enemy to Friend” 1948 and After <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B. Yehoshua, “Facing the Forests” • Moshe Dayan, Eulogy for Roi Rotberg https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/moshe-dayan-s-eulogy-for-roi-rutenberg-april-19-1956 • Yehuda Amichai, “I Want to Die in My Bed” 	C

Mar. 3	<p>Generations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A Dialectic of Continuity and Revolt”: Gershom Scholem Interview with Ehud Ben Ezer in <i>Uneasy in Zion</i>, 263-296 <p>A New Secular Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yona Wallach, poems in <i>The Modern Hebrew Poem Itself</i> <p>The Dream of Generations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Naomi Shemer, “Jerusalem of Gold”, words: http://hebrewsongs.com/?song=jerusalemofgold; video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJytV7s-aUU <p>Israel Faces the Holocaust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yehudah Poliker, <i>Efer ve-avak</i>, listen and read translations of songs “Dust and Ashes” and “Window to the Mediterranean” here https://lyricstranslate.com/en/yehuda-poliker-lyrics.html. Etgar Keret, “Shoes” <p>Israel at the End of History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Watch</u>: The Witches, “Kessem al yam Kinneret” (TV performance), embedded Youtube with translation here https://lyricstranslate.com/en/kessem-al-yam-kinneret-%D7%A7%D7%A1%D7%9D-%D7%A2%D7%9C-%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9B%D7%A0%D7%A8%D7%AA-magic-kinneret.html <p>The Return of the Eternal Jew</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Etti Ankri (The Judah Ha-Levi Songs) Berry Sachorof (Songs by Solomon Ibn Gabirol) Erez Lev-Ari, “To You I Call” (<i>ele’icha ek’ra</i>), https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zuxViVB_0b4 Shuli Rand, “Ayekah?” (“Where art Thou?”) 	A
WEEK IX: AMERICAN JEWRY SINCE WWII		
Mar. 8	<p>Distinction and Continuity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mordecai Kaplan, “The Present Crisis in Judaism” (= introduction to Kaplan, <i>Judaism as a Civilization</i>) Joseph B. Soloveichik, from “Halakhic Man”, in <i>American Jewish Thought Since 1934</i>, (Brandeis, 2020), p. 55-57, 94-5 (Library Ebook); 	B

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abraham Joshua Heschel, "The Sabbath", in <i>American Jewish Thought Since 1934</i>, pp. 96-8 (Library Ebook); <p>Home(s), Migration, and Nostalgia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anthony Russell, "Beys" https://jewishcurrents.org/beys Lara Vapnyar, "Things that Are Not Yours" <p>Jews and Colonialism (Optional)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albert Memmi, excerpts from <i>Colonizer and Colonized</i> and <i>Portrait of a Jew</i> in <i>The Albert Memmi Reader</i> 57-96 	
Mar. 10	<p>American Radicalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shaul Magid, <i>American Post-Judaism</i>, Ch. 1 <p>Rethinking Jews and American Ideas of Race and Ethnicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grace Paley, "The Long-Distance Runner" in <i>The Grace Paley Reader</i> Ruth Behar, "Juban America" in <i>Poetics Today</i>, 16:1 (Spring 1995), pp. 151-170 Murray Friedman, "Virginia Jewry in the School Crisis," <i>Commentary: A Jewish Review</i> 27 (January 1959) <p>The Coming Jewish Civil War: America vs. Israel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gershom Scholem on Philip Roth's <i>Portnoy's Complaint</i> 	C
WEEK X: READING WEEK		
FINAL ESSAY DUE BY MARCH 16, 23:59 VIA CANVAS		