

Jewish History from Abraham to the Modern Era
History 2815E
Mondays, 10:30am-1:30pm (UCC-61)
Prof. Wobick-Segev, swobicks@uwo.ca
Office: Lawson Hall 2245
Office hours: Mondays 2-3pm and Thursdays 10-11am

Course Description:

This course is intended to introduce students to the major events, figures and themes of Jewish history from Biblical times to the post-WWII era. It explores—political, social, cultural, intellectual and religious aspects of this history. We will pay particular attention to central individuals and their experiences as a way of gaining insight into significant moments in Jewish history. We will also concentrate on the changing temporal and geographic contexts, acknowledging both commonalities and exceptional experiences of various Jewish communities. This course seeks to understand how Jews at times served as the agents of historical change, and at others reacted to changes imposed on them by non-Jewish societies. Most importantly, this course seeks to confront narratives that insist that Jewish history can simply be reduced to a tale of oppression. Instead, we will consider the vibrant and rich cultural legacy of the Jewish people. Students will read a wide variety of secondary historical and primary sources, from political and philosophical texts, religious tracts, selections from autobiographies, and modern literature.

Learning outcomes:

Students who complete this course will be able to:

- explain key developments in Jewish history and the larger contexts in which they took place;
- analyze central Jewish writings from different historical periods;
- formulate clear and analytic arguments in written work based on primary and secondary sources;
- express themselves clearly in discussion.

Required texts (for purchase at the bookstore):

The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln.

Puah Rakovsky, *My Life as a Radical Jewish Woman*

HIGHLY Recommended Reading:

Michael Brenner, *A Short History of the Jews.*

The remaining readings can be found online via OWL.

Course Requirements:

Journal	15%
Primary source essay on Gluckel's memoirs (Nov. 23)	15%
Primary source essay on Rakovsky's memoirs (Feb. 22)	20%
Book review (Dec. 7)	25%
Final Research Essay (April 4)	25%

*Students are encouraged **THOUGH NOT REQUIRED** to use their foreign language skills when researching their final research essay.

** Over the course of the year, students will be **EXPECTED** to attend several lectures and events outside of our regular class time. These are inherent and critical aspects of our course and to be treated with the same seriousness and consideration as regular class time.

All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, use 1" margins, 12-point font.

Assignments handed in late will be penalized 2% per day. Extensions will be granted only in extreme circumstances. Late assignments will not be accepted after two weeks past the due date.

Assignments:

1. **Journal:**

Students will be responsible for writing FIVE short responses at the end of five of our seven units, **namely units one, two, three, five and six**. These should be 1-2 pages in length and are **due a week** after the unit is completed.

Guiding questions for your response: What were the major themes of the unit? How did the various lectures and readings explore those themes or reflect on them? Give one to two examples of how this theme was expressed in a particular weekly lecture or a reading.

Each response will be given a grade out of 3.

0/3 for no response or an incomprehensible response.

1/3 for poor work.

2/3 for satisfactory/basic work.

3/3 for excellent work.

2. **Primary source essay on Gluckel's memoirs.** Due Nov. 23.

In 3-4 pages, identify, describe and analyze 2-3 salient aspects of Jewish life during the times of Glückel von Hameln as portrayed in her memoir. How do these features characterize or express the Ashkenazi-Jewish experience during the 17th and early 18th centuries? Consider themes such as religion and belief, politics, interaction with non-Jews, society, the role of women, work, daily life, etc. Also keep in mind how Glückel was exceptional.

3. **Primary source essay on Rakovsky's memoirs.** Due Feb. 22.

In 3-4 pages, write an essay that explores how Puah Rakovsky's life engaged and mirrored developments in modern Jewish politics. What movement or movements was she involved in? Why? What questions and problems motivated her? What does this tell us about Jewish politics during her lifetime?

4. **Book review.** Due Dec. 7

In 3-4 pages, write an academic book review on **ONE** of the books you will be using for your final research essay.

For an example, see: <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28655/reviews/49078/ashkenazi-greenspoon-jews-gym-judaism-sports-and-athletics> or another review through H-Judaic

Please also include a cover page that identifies the topic of your final research essay in broad terms.

5. **Final Research Essay.** Due April 4.

In approximately 10 pages, using 8 monograph-length sources, write a research paper on a topic of your choosing that is related to the larger and very broad field of Jewish history. Typically it is easiest if you consider an historical question – why or how did an event or series of events take place when and how they did? Start thinking of this early and discuss possible topics with the instructor.

Grading rubric:

Based on Western's grading scale (see,

http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/student_records/transcripts/grading_scale/pa_conversion.html):

A+ 90-100%

A 80-89%

B 70-79%

C 60-69%

D 50-59%

F Below 50% or assigned when course is dropped with academic penalty.

The Teaching Resource Centre suggests that following general guidelines for essays.

From:

http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/resources/resources_graduate_students/ta_handbook/markin_g_practices/essay_characteristics.html

Characteristics of an "A" Paper:

Excellent, with perhaps, one forgivable flaw.

- Challenging thesis and clearly developed.
- References used intelligently in argument.
- Correct sentence/ grammatical structure.
- Sophisticated writing style.
- Appropriate documentation.
- Subtlety and complexity in approach to subject.
- Independence of thought.

Characteristics of a "B" Paper:

Good overall (i.e., does many things right).

- Some minor errors in factual content OR
- Some errors in terminology or general writing skills OR
- Some lapses in clarity (i.e., vagueness, incompleteness, flaws in structure).

Characteristics of a "C" Paper:

Generally correct, with more than a few flaws.

- Inconsistent or superficial.
- Weakness in line of argument.
- Dull thesis.

- Mechanical approach to argument.
- Lack of support.
- Problems with basic grammar or matters of style.
- Simplicity of thought, structure, or expression.

Characteristics of a "D" or Failing Paper

- Does not make its case.
- Severe difficulties in logical structure or mechanics of expression.
- Illogical, unsupported thinking without a line or argument.
- Inadequate thinking about the topic.
- Incoherent writing.

Date	Class Topic and Readings
Unit 1: Introductions	
September 14	NO CLASS – Rosh Hashanah – syllabus to be distributed electronically
Sept. 21	<p>The Origins of the Jewish People/The Writing of the Bible</p> <p>Secondary source: Finkelstein and Silberman, <i>The Bible Unearthed: Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel and the Origin of Sacred Texts</i>, 4-24.</p> <p>Primary source: <i>Tanakh</i>, I Samuel 17: 1-58; II Samuel 21:15-22.</p>
Sept. 28	<p>Jews and Hellenic Culture/Under Roman Rule</p> <p>Secondary source: David Flusser, <i>Judaism of the Second Temple Period</i>, 6-43.</p> <p>Primary source: Flavius Josephus, <i>The Second Jewish Commonwealth</i>, 252-259.</p>
Oct. 5	<p>Rabbinic Culture/Mishnah, Talmud and Jewish Texts</p> <p>Secondary source: Judith Romney Wegner, “The Image and Status of Women in Classical Rabbinic Judaism”, 73-100.</p> <p>Primary source: <i>Sefer aggadah</i> (compiled and edited by Bialik and Ravnitzky), 614-617.</p>
Oct. 12	THANKSGIVING
Oct. 19	<p>Medieval Ashkenaz/Medieval Sepharad</p> <p>Secondary source: Mark R. Cohen, <i>Under Crescent and Cross</i>, 77-103.</p> <p>Primary source: Rabbi Yehuda Hasid, <i>Sefer hasidim: the book of the pious</i>, pp. 279-280 (#495), p. 281 (#500), pp. 282-283 (#502), pp. 283-284 (#503), pp. 285-286 (#506), p. 287 (#509), p. 289 (#512), p. 294 (#523), pp. 298-299 (#531 and 532), p. 303 (#541 and 542), p. 305 (#545).</p>

Unit 2:	<i>Establishing Boundaries, Creating New Communities</i>
Oct. 26	<p>1492 and the creation of the Sephardi Diaspora/ A New Home: The Ottoman Empire and North Africa</p> <p>Secondary source: Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue, <i>Sephardi Jewry</i>, 1-35.</p>
Nov. 2	<p>Joseph Caro, the <i>Shulhan Arukh</i> and the continued codification of the <i>Halakhah</i>/ Safed: <i>Kabbalah</i> and Jewish mysticism</p> <p>Secondary source: Rachel Elijor, “Messianic Expectations”</p> <p>Primary source: Chayyim Vital, <i>The Book of Visions and the Book of Secrets</i> (excerpts).</p>
Nov. 9	Research and Resources in Jewish history
Nov. 16	<p>The Jews in Renaissance Europe/ The Reformation and Wars of Religion</p> <p>Secondary source: Noah Efron, “Our forefathers did not tell us”</p> <p>Primary source: Begin reading <i>The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln</i> (definitely read books 1 and 2).</p>
Nov. 23	<p>Court Jews/ Poland and the Autonomous Community</p> <p>Secondary source: Adam Teller, “Jewish Literary Responses to the Events of 1648-1649 and the Creation of a Polish-Jewish Consciousness”, 17-45.</p> <p>Primary source: <i>Glückel of Hameln</i> (finish all by today!)</p> <p><i>Primary Source essay on Glückel due today</i></p>
Unit 3:	<i>Religious Change</i>

Nov. 30	<p>Amsterdam, Old Jews and New Christians/ Messianism and Heresy: Shabbetai Zvi and Sabbatianism</p> <p>Secondary source: Yosef Kaplan, “Gente Politica.”</p> <p>Primary sources: A Prophetic Vision of Nathan of Gaza.</p>
Dec. 7	<p>Hasidism/ Vilna and the <i>Mitnagdim</i></p> <p>Secondary source: Moshe Rosman, <i>Founder of Hasidism: A Quest for the Historical Ba'al Shem Tov</i> (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1996), 27-41.</p> <p>Primary source: Hasidic Tales <i>Book Review due today</i></p>
WINTER BREAK	
Jan. 4	<p>Social mobility and change in the 17th and 18th centuries, an overview/ The Enlightenment and Haskalah</p> <p>Secondary source: Shmuel Feiner, “Pseudo-Haskalah”.</p> <p>Primary source: Mendelssohn, The Right to be Different Lessing, A parable of toleration</p>
Jan. 11	<p>The Century of Enlightenment: From Germany to Russia and beyond/ Emancipation</p> <p>Secondary source: Werner E. Mosse, “From ‘<i>Schutzjuden</i>’ to ‘<i>Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens</i>’: The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany,” in <i>Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship</i> edited by Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 59-93.</p> <p>Primary source: Gabriel Riesser, <i>Defense of the Civil Equality of the Jews with Respect to the Proposals of Mr. H.E.G. Paulus</i> (excerpts).</p>

Jan. 18	<p>Reform Judaism in Europe/ Neo-Orthodoxy</p> <p>Secondary source: Moshe Samet, “The Beginnings of Orthodoxy”</p> <p>Primary source: Hirsch, Religion allied to progress</p>
Unit 4:	<i>The Politics of Integration and Difference</i>
Jan. 25	<p>German Jews and the Politics of Liberalism/ Russia and the Pale of Settlement</p> <p>Secondary source: Israel Bartal, <i>The Jews of Eastern Europe</i>, 58-69.</p> <p>Primary source: Mendes-Flohr reader, 354-364.</p>
Feb. 1	<p>The Americas: Dreams of Freedom and Political Realities/ Jews of the Balkans and North Africa: Between the Alliance and Zionism</p> <p>Secondary sources: Lucette Valensi, “Multicultural Visions: The Cultural Tapestry of the Jews of North Africa” AND Malino, “Mothers and Daughters of the AIU”</p>
Feb. 8	<p>Palestine and life in the Yishuv/ Zionism in practice</p> <p>Secondary source: Tom Segev, <i>One Palestine, Complete</i>, 375-396.</p> <p>Primary source: Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai, “The Third Redemption”, (read intro, too), 103-107.</p>
Feb. 15	Reading Week
Unit 5:	<i>Assimilation or Renovation: New Jewish Identities</i>
Feb. 22	<p>Religious Reform in America/ Communist Russia and the New Jew/Central Europe and the Return to Jewish Culture</p> <p>Primary sources: Plaut, “The Canadian Experience” and “What I believe” Buber, On Renaissance</p> <p><i>Essay on Rakovsky memoirs due today in class</i></p>

Feb. 29	<p>The birth of ultra-Orthodoxy/ The <i>Yishuv</i> and the emergence of Religious Zionism</p> <p>Secondary source: Michael Silber, “The Invention of a Tradition” AND Dov Schwartz, <i>Religious-Zionism: History and Ideology</i>, 27-33.</p>
Unit 6:	<i>Emancipation and its discontents</i>
March 7	<p>The Emergence of modern antisemitism/ WWI and the rise of Nazism</p> <p>Secondary source: Shulamit Volkov, “Antisemitism as a cultural code”</p> <p>Primary source: Wilhelm Marr, “The victory of Judaism over Germandom” Karl Eugen Duehring, “The Question of the Jew is a Question of Race”</p>
March 14	<p>WWII and the Shoah</p> <p>Secondary source: Bergen, 167-178, 182-191.</p> <p>Primary source: Mendes-Flohr, 722-726, 730-731, 757-763.</p>
Unit 7:	<i>Post-war Jewish Life</i>
March 21	<p>Jews in Cold War Europe: People and Memory</p> <p>Secondary source: Michael Meng, “From Destruction to Preservation” AND David Weinberg “The Reconstruction of the French Jewish community”</p>
March 28	<p>The Creation of a Jewish State in the Middle East/ Coming Home? Middle Eastern Jews in Israel</p> <p>Secondary source: Ella Shohat, “Rupture and Return”</p> <p>Primary source: Almog Behar, Ana min al-yahoud</p>

April 4	Jews in Latin America/ Jews in Post-war America Primary source: Englander, “Reb Kringle” <i>(Final Research paper due today)</i>
---------	--

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Prerequisites and Antirequisites:

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and

indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

Medical Issues:

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links to the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [Mental Health@Western](mailto:MentalHealth@Western), <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Morgan Sheriff, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84999 or msherif5@uwo.ca