

**The History of East European Jewry**  
**History 01:510:385/Jewish Studies 01:563:385**  
**(provisional syllabus)**

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**Office Hours:**  
**M: 10:30-11:30, 14 Miller Hall**

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This course will survey the social, economic, political, religious and cultural history of East European Jewry from the thirteenth century to the post-World War II period. Topics to be covered include: Jewish autonomy, the economic and political relationship between the Jews and non-Jewish authorities, Sabbatianism, Frankism, Hasidism, the partitions of Poland, Jewish life in the Russian and Habsburg Empires in the nineteenth century, the rise of mass politics and new forms of Jewish self-expression (nationalism, socialism, Zionism, Yiddishism), World War I, the Russian Revolution and Bolshevism, the reemergence of independent Poland, Jewish life in Poland and Russia in the inter-war years, modern anti-Semitism, the destruction of East European Jewry in World War II, and the culture of memory about East European Jewry that has emerged in its aftermath. Primary and secondary readings, as well as novels, short stories and films, will be used.

The following book is required for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore:

Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1918* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005)

The following books are recommended for purchase:

Charles Powers, *In Memory of the Forest* (Penguin, 1998).

Nathan Hannover, *The Abyss of Despair* (Transaction Books, 1983).

Lewis Begley, *Wartime Lies* (Random House, 1992).

Lucy Dawidowicz, *The Golden Tradition* (Syracuse University Press, 1997).

**\*Required course packet from Pequod Copy Center, 119 Somerset Street.**

**Course Requirements:** Students are *required* to prepare the course readings and to participate actively in class. Please note that some weeks have more reading than others, so try to pace yourself accordingly. All of the assigned readings have been put on either electronic reserve at Undergraduate Reserves or on the Sakai website (sakai.rutgers.edu), under History of EEJ F07. You will find the electronic reserves either under the course name and number, under the professor's name, or by the author's name. As well, scans of maps that will be reviewed in class are on the Sakai website and students are advised to consult them regularly to keep track of the region's changing geography.

Class participation is *required* and students should bring the course packet and any primary sources that are assigned from the Sakai site to class. There will be an in-class midterm examination and a final exam. Given the cancellation of class due to the Jewish

holidays, there is a holiday assignment. Students will have the option of writing either two analytic papers (approximately 1200-1500 words each) or one 2500-3000 word research paper.

The analytic papers require the ability to synthesize both historical information and interpretive concepts and to present them in a coherent informed argument. The research paper option is designed to allow students to explore a topic in depth. The topic must be discussed with the professor beforehand. A list of suggested topics will be given out in the third week of class. No late work will be accepted under any circumstances. The exams will include identifications and essay questions based upon the lectures as well as upon assigned readings (even if those materials were not discussed in class).

### **Grading:**

Attendance and class participation:	5%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Holiday Assignment:	10%
Papers:	15% each or 30%
Final Exam:	35%

### **1. Introduction**

[http://history.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=147](http://history.rutgers.edu/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=109&Itemid=147), see [Statement on Plagiarism](#), [Writing Historical Essays: A Guide for Undergraduates](#), [Policy on Mutual Responsibilities and Classroom Etiquette](#)

“Polin,” S. Y. Agnon, *Ir u-Melo’ah* (handout)

Terms for Polish History. (Sakai website)

### **2. Origins of East European Jewry**

Bernard Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland*, pp. 3-32. (Electronic reserve)

Norman Davies, *God’s Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 1, pp. 23-33, 53-60. (Electronic reserve).

Gershon David Hundert, “Some Basic Characteristics of the Jewish Experience in Poland.” (Sakai website)

Poland and Lithuania, 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries. (Sakai website, under “Images”)

### **3. Legal Status, Socio-Economic Conditions**

Weinryb, pp. 33-70.

Charter of Bolesław the Pious. (P\* means “Packet), P\*5-7)

Map, Central Europe, 1480. (Sakai website)

### **4. The Autonomous Jewish Community**

Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, pp. 3-43, 65-102. (Electronic reserve)

Weinryb, pp. 71-78.

“Bankruptcy Laws of the Council of the Four Lands,” and “Laws of the Lithuanian Council Governing Tax Collections.” (P\*8-9)

“Jewish Communal Ordinance, Kraków, 1595.” (P\*10-11)

Map, Central Europe, 1570. (Sakai website)  
Kahal Organization Diagram. (Sakai website)

### **5. The Cultural Characteristics of Ashkenazic Jewry**

E. E. Urbach, "Tosafot," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. (ALEX Reference)  
Weinryb, pp. 79-106.  
Haym Soloveitchik, "Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example."  
(Sakai website)  
Chava Weissler, "The Traditional Piety of Ashkenazic Jewish Women." (Sakai website)  
Terms for Soloveitchik and Weissler articles. (Sakai website)

### **6. The Seventeenth Century: Growth, Upheaval and Recovery [\*\*Holiday Assignment Due\*\*]**

Weinryb, "Background, Jewish Population" and "The Catastrophe-Cossack Uprising in 1648," (electronic reserve)  
Excerpts from Nathan of Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*. (P\*12-25)  
Map, Poland-Lithuania, 1648-1649. (Sakai website)

### **7. Sabbatianism and Frankism**

Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, pp. 183-194. (Electronic reserve)  
Weinryb, pp. 213-216, 220-261.  
Two Accounts of Jacob Frank. (P\*30-32)

### **8. Hasidism**

Katz, pp. 195-213.  
Weinryb, pp. 262-303, 321-330.  
Selections from *In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov* (P\*33-41).  
Excerpts from Hasidic theological writings (P\*42-45).  
Solomon Maimon, "The New Hasidim," and Rabbi Baruch Mordecai of Bobruisk, "How I Became a Hasid," in Paul Mendes-Flohr/Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World (JMW)* (P\*46-52).  
Map of "Hasidism's Spread." (Sakai website)  
Gwoździec Synagogue, Exterior, Interior and Women's Gallery Views. (Sakai website)

### **9. The Partitions of Poland; The Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) in Eastern Europe (\*\*1st Analytic Paper Due\*\*)**

Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*, "Introduction," chapter one (skim), and chapter two: "The Partitions of Poland."  
S. J. Fuenn, "The Need for Enlightenment," and "Awake My People!," (P\*72-76)  
Joseph Perl, *Revealer of Secrets, Prologue*. (P\*56-66)  
Preamble to Joseph II's *Toleranzpatent* for Galicia, 1789 (P\*55)  
Map, "The Partitions of Poland." (Sakai website)  
German and Hebrew Diplomas from Joseph Perl's School. (Sakai website)

### **10. Russia's Jews in the Nineteenth Century**

Salo Baron, *The Russian Jew under Tsars and Soviets*, 13-42. (Electronic reserve)

Michael Stanislawski, *Tsar Nicholas I and the Jews*, pp. 13-34, 97-122. (Electronic reserve)

“Statutes Regarding the Military Service of Jews.” (P\*69-70)

Abraham Ber Gottlober, “I Served Haskalah in Russia,” Lucy S. Dawidowicz, *The Golden Tradition*. (P\*77-80)

Max Lilienthal, “My Educational Mission in Russia,” (P\*81-83)

### **11. Cultural Conflicts (Hasidim, Mitnaggdim, Maskilim, Mussarniks)**

David Fishman, *Russia’s First Modern Jews*, pp. 7-45. (Electronic reserve)

Allan Nadler, *The Faith of the Mithnagdim*, pp. 1-28. (Electronic reserve)

Bartal, chapter four, “Hasidim, Mitnagdim, and Maskilim”

“The Volozhin Yeshivah” and “The Musar Yeshivah.” (P\*84-88)

“Attack on the Hasidim, from Szklow, 1786.” (P\*53-54)

“My Educational Mission in Russia, by Max Lilienthal, 1841.” (P\*62-64)

### **12. Midterm Examination**

### **13. Polish Jews in the Congress Kingdom and Austrian Galicia in the Nineteenth Century**

Bartal, chapter six, “Austria and the Jews of Galicia, 1772-1848”

Adam Mickiewicz, Excerpts from “Pan Tadeusz.” (P\*89-91)

Joseph Lichten, “Notes on the Assimilation and Acculturation of Jews in Poland, 1863-1943.” (Sakai website)

Stefan Kieniewicz, “Polish Society and the Jewish Problem in the Nineteenth Century.” (Sakai Website)

Piotr Wróbel, “The Jews of Galicia under Austrian-Polish Rule, 1869-1918.” (Sakai website)

### **14. Yiddish and Hebrew Literary Creativity**

Michael Stanislawski, *For Whom Do I Toil*, pp. 45-67. (Electronic reserve)

“Notes for My Literary Autobiography,” S. Y. Abramovitsch. (P\*92-96)

S. Y. Abramovitsh, “The Brief Travels of Benjamin the Third.” (P\*97-148)

John Klier, “What Exactly Was a Shtetl?” (Sakai website)

“Yiddish is a Corrupt Jargon” and “Hebrew – Our National Fortress.” (P\*151-152)

I.L. Peretz, “If Not Higher,” “Bontsha the Silent.” (P\*153-158).

### **15. 1881 and its Impact**

Bartal, chapter thirteen: “Storms in the South, 1881-1882”

Baron, pp. 43-62.

“The May Laws,” “The Massacre of Jews at Kishinev,” “The City of Slaughter,” “To America or to the Land of Israel,” “On the Latest Wave of Emigration,” “Appeal to the Jews of Russia.” (P\*159-167)

“A Solution of the Jewish Question,” “Protest Against Zionism,” “The First Zionist Congress.” (P\*169-176)

Excerpts from the writings of Ahad Ha-Am. (P\*128-142)

Bima of the Choral Synagogue. (Sakai website)

## **16. World War I and the Russian Revolution**

Baron, pp. 156-186.

Leonard Schapiro, "Introduction," and Shmuel Ettinger, "The Jews of Russia at the Outbreak of the Revolution," under Lionel Kochan, ed., *Jews in Soviet Russia* (Electronic reserve)

Nicholas Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, pp. 465-473. (Electronic reserve)

Isaac Babel, "Gedali." (P\*205-207)

"The Youth of a Bundist," (P\*193-197)

"Decisions on the Nationality Question." (P\*198-202)

"The Liquidation of Bourgeois Jewish Institutions." (P\*208-211)

recommended: Jack Jacobs, ed. *Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: The Bund at 100* (NY 2001)

## **17. Soviet Russia in the 1920s and 1930s**

Kochan, pp. 44-98, Nove, "The Jewish Population," Rothenberg, "The Jewish Religion," in Kochan (electronic reserve).

"Birobidzhan." (P\*212-213)

Riasanovsky, pp. 474-508.

Isaac Babel, "Karl-Yankl." (handout)

Lenin, "Critical Remarks on the National Question." (P\*203-204)

## **18. Independent Poland**

Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 2, pp. 378-392. (Electronic reserve)

"Minorities Treaty." (P\*215-217)

"Constitution of Poland." (P\*218-219)

## **19. The Interwar Years in Poland**

Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars*, pp. 11-83. (Electronic reserve)

---. "The Dilemma of Jewish Politics in Poland: Four Responses." (Sakai website)

Davies, *God's Playground*, vol. 2, pp. 393-434. (Electronic reserve)

Shohat, "A Woman in the Bund and in Poalei Zion." (P\*219-221)

## **20. The Rise of Nazism**

Documents of Nazi Onslaught. (P\*222-232)

Felix Gilbert, *The End of the European Era: 1890 to the Present*, pp. 185-191, 270-299. (Electronic reserve)

Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, pp. 48-69. (Electronic reserve)

## **21. WWII/Shoah, I**

Michael Marrus, *The Holocaust and History*, pp. 8-30. (Electronic reserve)

Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, pp. 197-260.

“Protocols of Wannsee Conference,” “Jewish Fighting Organization,” “Mordecai Anielewicz’s Last Communication,” “Emanuel Ringelblum’s Last Letter,” “The Jewish Residential Area in Warsaw is No More.” (P\*233-245)  
Map, World War II, 1939-1942. (Sakai website)

## **22. WWII/Shoah II**

Ainsztein, “Soviet Jewry in the Second World War,” in Kochan (electronic reserve).  
Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, pp. 279-310.  
Marrus, pp. 31-54.  
Yad Va-Shem Testimony, 03/6147, Moshe Blumen, on the Volhynian town of Luboml, the creation and liquidation of its ghetto. (P\*248-255)  
Primo Levi, “Beyond Judgment.” (P\*256-259)

## **23. The Post-War Soviet Union (\*\*2nd Analytic Paper Due\*\*)**

Map of “Birobidjan.” (P\*260)  
Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee Press Release (P\*261-262)  
Reuben Ainsztein, “Soviet Jewry in the Second World War,” and Bernard D. Weinryb, “Anti-Semitism in Soviet Russia,” in Kochan, pp. 269-319. (Electronic reserve)  
Zvi Gitelman, “Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union,” in *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR*, pp. 14-42. (Electronic reserve) Y  
“The Black Years and the Gray,” in Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence*, pp. 142-173. (Electronic reserve)  
Map, Central Europe after World War II. (Sakai website)

## **24. Postwar Poland (\*\*Research Papers Due\*\*)**

Michael Steinlauf, *Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust*, pp. ix-xii, 43-88. (Electronic reserve)  
Lukasz Hirszowicz, “The Jewish Issue in Post-War Communist Politics,” in *The Jews in Poland*, pp. 199-208. (Sakai website)  
Julian Tuwim, “We, the Polish Jews.” (P\*263-266)

## **35. Literary Images of Jewish Eastern Europe; Contested Memories of East European Jewry; Conclusions (\*\*Extra Credit Assignment Due\*\*)**

Poetry selections by Abraham Sutzkever, Aleksander Wat, Czesław Milosz, and Yevgeny Yevtushenko. (P\*267-270)  
Salo W. Baron, “Responses at the Eichmann Trial,” *American Jewish Yearbook*, 1962. (P\*271-273)

## **Conduct Code**

Regular attendance of class and active participation in class discussion is required. Students are expected to come to class on time, having prepared the assignments due that day; to respect the protocols of classroom conduct (e.g., arriving promptly, turning off cell phones, not eating during class, avoiding distracting chatter); to check their email regularly for class announcements (e.g., changes in schedule or assignments); and to turn in written work on the dates due. Students who find that they

are unable to attend class regularly for some pressing reason are required to notify their dean as well as the instructor as soon as possible. Excuses for absences will not be accepted after the final assignment for the course is due.

Except for collaborative assignments officially approved by the instructor in advance, all work a student submits must be his/her own independent effort. Students must cite properly all outside sources consulted in preparing written assignments. Students should review the university policy on Academic Integrity (see the website for the Teaching Excellence Center). Failure to comply with this policy can result in failure of the course.