

JEWS IN THE MODERN WORLD

FALL 2024

HIST 1710-401/JWST 1710-401/ RELS 1710-401/MELC 0360-401

TUES-THURS 10:15-11:44AM



INSTRUCTOR: Beth S. Wenger
OFFICE HOURS: By appt on Calendly
<https://calendly.com/bwengerpenn>

OFFICE: 320 College Hall
PHONE: 898-7156
E-MAIL: bwenger@sas.upenn.edu

- Email is my preferred method of contact

Teaching Assistant: Thomas Bull (tomrbull@sas.upenn.edu)

COURSE DESCRIPTION :

In the last year, events in Israel and Gaza have precipitated divergent interpretations of the Jewish past and present. This course is not focused on the present crisis. Yet its expansive exploration of Jewish history helps to provide crucial perspectives needed to understand the events of our time.

Modernity brought new challenges to Jews and Jewish identity and recast the very definition of “Jewishness.” Moderns—and Jews themselves—grappled with how to define “Jews”—as a religion, a race, a nation, an ethnicity, or a people? What language(s) do/should Jews speak, read, and write? To whom do their loyalties belong—to their local community, to the political states or empires in which they reside, to Jews around the world, to a Jewish state, or to all of humanity? What role would traditional religious structures and authority play in Jewish encounter with modern values, such as secularization, democracy, gender equality, and religious tolerance? How would Jews respond to new forms of antagonism or hatred against them? How would the creation of a “Jewish state” alter Jewish identities and politics? These questions and more will be explored this semester.

This course is for everyone regardless of background. Curiosity about Jewish history and the desire to explore its drama and complexity are the only prerequisites for this course. No prior knowledge of the subject is assumed. The course will have lectures as well as time for discussion. Students will examine readings in depth, and particularly, explore the assigned primary historical documents that demand close analysis and interpretation.

Regular attendance at class sessions and recitations is expected. Students will be asked to respond and raise questions about the readings; required readings should be completed prior to the class for which they are assigned. Students should be prepared to analyze and discuss the readings and primary documents assigned for each class.

****FULFILLS HISTORY AND TRADITION REQUIREMENT IN THE COLLEGE****

The History and Tradition sector focuses on studies of continuity and change in human thought, belief and action.

Courses in this sector examine the histories of diverse civilizations, their cultures and forms of expression, their formal and informal belief systems and ideologies, and the record of their human actors. Students should learn to interpret primary sources, identify and discuss their core intellectual issues, understand the social contexts in which these sources were created, pose questions about their validity and ability to represent broader perspectives and utilize them when writing persuasive essays. Understanding both ancient and modern civilizations provides students with an essential perspective on contemporary life.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. Read. Think. Listen. Consider. Discuss. Speak. Write. Question. Engage in open, thoughtful conversations. Appreciate differing points of view with civility and respect.
2. Engagement and Participation in Class, including thoughtful discussion of primary sources as well as occasional short writing assignments.
3. History Lab Assignments: Short analysis of primary documents that will be discussed in class. **Due four times during the semester as assigned.**
4. Take-Home Midterm Examination—**DUE OCT. 1**
5. In-Class Debates: All students will participate in **one** of three scheduled in-class debates. Students will assume the role of historic participants in debates about: Jewish emancipation, modern religious movements in Judaism, and Jewish political movements, including varieties of Zionism. Students will work in small groups to prepare for the debates and will divide the various positions that each student will represent. There should be exchange and discussion among the groups in each debate. **[DEBATES SCHEDULED FOR SEPT. 17, SEPT 26, AND NOV. 5. –You will participate in only one of these.]**
6. Take-Home Final Examination—**DUE DEC. 16**

GRADING:

History Lab Assignments	20%
Midterm Exam	30%
Class debate	10%
Final Exam	30%
Engagement in class/short assignments	10%

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Penn's Code of Academic Integrity defines Plagiarism as using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgement. Standards of academic integrity will be strictly enforced. See Penn's policy: <https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

WELLNESS@PENN: From student health to counseling and more, Penn has a range of helpful resources: <https://wellness.upenn.edu/>

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:

<https://wlrc.vpul.upenn.edu/disability-services/>

MARKS FAMILY WRITING CENTER: To improve your writing skills

<https://writing.upenn.edu/critical/wc/>

EXTENSIONS AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS: I expect assignments to be submitted on the date assigned. If serious situations arise, I will consider a reasonable extension request, provided that such requests come at least 48 hours prior to the assignment due date. Late assignments will not be accepted more than a week late except in the case of a genuine emergency and will automatically be graded down.

TECHNOLOGY DURING CLASS: I am, as much as anyone, a fan of technology and allow appropriate use during class. I define appropriate use to mean that you may use a laptop to take notes and to access documents on Canvas. I define inappropriate use to include but not be limited to: texting, reading your e-mail, reading or posting on social media, watching YouTube, shopping online, or surfing the web.

- I WILL REGULARLY REQUIRE THAT YOU CLOSE YOUR LAPTOPS DURING DISCUSSION OF PRIMARY SOURCES.

EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSIONS: To ensure a respectful environment, be sure to listen carefully to your classmates and their ideas, and respond in kind with considered, well-supported comments of your own. All discussions need to be grounded in thoughtful analysis of course materials. Conflicting interpretations and differing values will most likely arise, but disagreements should never take the form of personal attacks. If we treat each issue and each other with respect and reserve judgement, our diversity will strengthen our classroom conversations.

NOTE ON READING PRIMARY SOURCES: We will examine primary sources (documents with close proximity to an historical event or period) for each class. I will expect you to read these closely and carefully. Treat them as “open” historical texts with complex, sometimes contradictory meanings (as opposed to straightforward vessels of names, dates, and facts). This approach will help you read texts both critically and sympathetically, and to acquire communication and critical thinking skills that are valuable far beyond the walls of the university.

You’ll see a long list of primary sources in many weeks, but rest assured these are each quite brief.

****When you read assignments from *The Jew in the Modern World* (JMW), you should first read the first note at the end of the text to contextualize the source.**

POLICY ON GENERATIVE AI (Chat GPT): This course requires critical thinking, careful analysis of primary sources, and effective writing—all of which depend upon independent thought and engagement with course ideas and materials.

Chat GPT is unlikely to help you succeed in this course and may work to your detriment. I strongly suggest that you do not use generative AI. These tools are more likely to lead to poorly constructed assignments by producing generalized responses that do not reflect the specific themes, readings, and focus of this class.

If you choose to use generative AI as a brainstorming or preparatory exercise for an assignment, then you must indicate in a note precisely how you used such tools. Failure to do so will be considered plagiarism.

REQUIRED BOOK AVAILABLE AT UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA BOOKSTORE:

Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. Third Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. **[must be THIRD edition]** Abbreviated as JMW in the syllabus.

*You may be able to find used copies through Amazon or [bookfinder.com](https://www.bookfinder.com) but you must select the 3rd edition. Rental is also available through Amazon.

*This book will also be available at Rosengarten Reserve, Van Pelt Library.

- All other required readings for the course are available through Canvas:
 - Please look for the course under HIST 1710-401

COURSE SCHEDULE

Aug. 27 Introduction

Why Study Jewish History?

Aug. 29

Jewish Life and Culture in Early Modern Europe

Secondary Sources:

David B. Ruderman, "Looking Backward and Forward: Rethinking Modernity in the Light of Early Modernity," in Jonathan Karp and Adam Sutcliffe, eds., *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 7, 1089-1109.

Chava Turniansky, "Glueckel of Hameln," <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/glueckel-of-hameln>

Primary Sources:

- *Glikl: Memoirs, 1691-1719*, translated by Sarah Friedman, 59-61, 86-88, 94-95 (ON CANVAS)

Sept. 3

Harbingers of Modernity

Secondary Sources:

John Efron, Steven Weitzman, et. al, *The Jews: A History*, "The Haskalah in Western Europe," 178 (Shaded box on Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews) and 179-183 (middle first column), 219-224.

Primary Sources:

- Menasseh Ben Israel, "How Profitable the Nation of the Jews Are," JMW, 9-11.
- John Toland, "Reasons for Naturalizing the Jews in Great Britain," JMW, 12-15.
- Baruch Spinoza, "On the Election of the Jews," JMW, 63-5.

Sept. 5 - 10

Enlightenment and *Haskalah* [Jewish Enlightenment]

Secondary Sources:

Lois Dubin, "Enlightenment and Emancipation," in Nicholas De Lange and Miri Freud-Kandel eds., *Modern Judaism: An Oxford Guide*, 29-37.

Nicholas De Lange, *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People*, 199-209.

Primary Sources:

Sept. 5:

- Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, "On the Civic Improvement of the Jews," JMW, 27-34.
- Johann David Michaelis, "Arguments Against Dohm," JMW, 34-36.

- Abbe Gregoire, “An Essay on the Physical, Moral, and Political Reformation of the Jews,” JMW, 54-58.

Sept. 10:

- Joseph II, “Edict of Tolerance,” JMW, 42-45.
- Naphtali Herz Wessely, “Words of Peace and Truth,” JMW, 74-77.
- Moses Mendelssohn, “The Right to be Different,” JMW, 73.

**Sept. 12 – 17 Emancipation in Western Europe and the
Reorganization of the Jewish Community**

Secondary Sources:

De Lange, *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People*, 210-16.

Michael Brenner, *A Short History of the Jews*, 189-200.

Primary Sources:

Sept. 12:

- French National Assembly Debates on Emancipation, JMW, 123-28.
- Berr Isaac Berr, “Letter of A Citizen to his Fellow Jews,” JMW, 128-30.

Sept. 17:

- Decree and Instructions to Assembly of Notables,” JMW, 148-50.
- Replies of Assembly of Notables, JMW, 150-56.
- “Summons for Convening Parisian Sanhedrin, JMW, 156-59.
- “Organic Ordinance” (on Canvas)

***** Class Debate #1 on Jewish emancipation on SEPT 17.**

**Sept. 19- 24 Modern Varieties of Judaism: Reform, Conservative and
Orthodox Judaism; the “Science of Judaism”**

Secondary Sources:

De Lange, *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People*, 216-224.

Ismar Schorsch, "Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism," *Judaism* 30:3 (Summer 1981), 344-54.

Michael Meyer, "Jewish Religious Reform & Wissenschaft des Judentums . . .", *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 16 (1971), 19-41.

Moshe Samet, "The Beginnings of Orthodoxy," *Modern Judaism* 8:3 (Oct. 1988), 249-69.

Marion Kaplan, "Tradition and Transition: Jewish Women in Imperial Germany," in Judith R. Baskin ed., *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, 202-21.

Primary Sources:

Sept. 19:

- Constitution of the Hamburg Temple, JMW, 82.
- Eliezer Liebermann, "The Light of Splendor," JMW, 183-87.
- Hamburg Rabbinical Court, "These are the Words of the Covenant," JMW, 187-89
- Hatam Sofer, "A Reply Concerning the Question of Reform," 189-92.
- Excerpts from Reform Rabbinical Conferences, JMW, 201-209.

Sept.24:

- Eduard Gans, "A Society to Further Jewish Integration," JMW, 240-43.
- Immanuel Wolf, "On the Concept of a Science of Judaism," JMW, 244-45.
- Zacharias Frankel, "On Change in Judaism, JMW, 217-19.
- Samson Raphael Hirsch, "Religion Allied to Progress, JMW, 220-224.
- "Manifesto of Ultra-Orthodoxy," JMW, 224-29.
- Samson Raphael Hirsch, "The Secession of the Orthodox," JMW, 230-31.

Sept. 26 In-Class Debate #2: Modern Jewish religious movements

**Oct. 1 East European Jewry and Its Traditional Cultures;
Hasidism and Its Opponents**

Secondary Sources:

De Lange, *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People*, 224-33.

John Efron, Steven Weitzman, et. al, *The Jews: A History*," 260-69 (until bottom first column).

Chava Weissler, "Prayers in Yiddish and the Religious World of Ashkenazic Women," in Judith Baskin, ed., *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, 159-81.

Article on women in Hasidism at Jewish Women's Archive site:

<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/Hasidism>

Primary Sources:

- Solomon Maimon, "The New Hasidim," JMW, 365-68.
- "Excommunication of the Hasidim," JMW, 368-69

- “The Baal Shem Tov and the Herdsman,” trans. Leonard Wolf. *Yiddish Folktales*, 267-69 (on Canvas).
- Baruch Mordecai Ettinger, “How I Became a Hasid, JMW, 369-71.

Oct. 3 **NO CLASS:** Fall Break

Oct. 8 **Middle Eastern/Ottoman Jewry Through the Nineteenth Century**

Secondary Sources:

Avigdor Levy, *The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire*, 13-14, 42-53, 98-115.

Primary Sources:

- “On the Possibilities of Synagogue Reform,” *Sephardi Lives*, 54-58. (on Canvas).
- “An Etiquette Handbook for Sephardi Women,” *Sephardi Lives*, 62-64. (on Canvas).
- “Privileges and Immunities of Non-Muslim Communities,” (1856), JMW, 449-50.
- “The Ottoman Chief Rabbi’s Ambivalent Response to the Proclamation of Jewish Equality,” *Sephardi Lives*, 121-122. (on Canvas).
- Alliance Israélite Universelle, “Our First Thirty-Five Years” JMW, 293-96.

Oct. 10 **East European Jewry in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries I: *Language, Enlightenment and Modernization***

Secondary Sources:

Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*, 58-69.

Primary Sources:

- Statutes Concerning the Organization of Jews, Military Service and Pale of Settlement, JMW, 350-55.
- Nicholas I, “Delineation of the Pale of Settlement,” JMW, 354-355.
- “A Jewish Program for Russification,” JMW, 359-60.
- Isaac Dov Levinsohn, “Yiddish is a Corrupt Jargon,” JMW, 380.
- Peretz Smolenskin, “Hebrew—Our National Fortress,” JMW, 381.
- Pauline Wengeroff, “European Culture Destroyed My Family,” JMW, 383-5.

Oct. 15 **East European Jewry in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries II: *Political Unrest, Socialism, and Diaspora Nationalism***

Secondary Sources:

Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of Jews in Modern Times*, 238-248.

Anke Hilbrenner, Jonathan Lutes and Luisa Zielinski, "Civil Rights and Multiculturalism: Simon Dubnow's Concept of Diaspora Nationalism," *Osteuropa* 58: 8/10 (August-Oktober 2008): 101-116.

Primary Sources:

- Alexander III, "May Laws," JMW, 356.
- "Awaiting a Pogrom in Vilna," JMW, 388.
- N. Tchaykovsky, "Massacre of Jews at Kishinev," JMW, 389.
- Haim Nahman Bialik, "City of Slaughter," JMW 390-91.
- The Bund, "Decisions on the Nationality Question," JMW, 399-402.
- Simon Dubnow, "Cultural Autonomy," JMW, 397-99.

Oct. 17 NO CLASS—Jewish Holiday of Sukkot

Make-up Class: Middle Eastern Jews in Transition—discussion to be held on November 26th.

Watch the film and read the two primary sources below: NO LATER THAN SUNDAY, NOV 24 AT 5PM, POST A ONE-PARAGRAPH RESPONSE TO THE MATERIAL ON CANVAS.

FILM: *Forget Baghdad:*

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1M1VQrTkcJATzVYF15hOfmKCYWT5Gm3e_/view?usp=sharing

Primary Sources:

- Mesopotamian Zionist Committee, "Iraqi Zionists...Ashkenazi Bias," JMW, 485-86.
- "Iraqi Law Permitting Jews to Emigrate...", JMW, 497.

Oct. 22 Modern Antisemitisms

Secondary Sources:

John Efron, Steven Weitzman, et. al, *The Jews: A History*, 298 (middle first column) -309 (middle first column).

Primary Sources:

- Richard Wagner, "Jewry in Music," JMW, 302-305.
- Wilhelm Marr, "The Victory of Judaism Over Germandom," 306-307.
- Adolph Stoecker, "What We Demand of Modern Jewry," JMW, 317-19.
- Heinrich Von Treitschke, "A Word About Our Jewry," JMW, 319-22.

- Houston Stewart Chamberlain, “The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century,” JMW, 333-36.
- “Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” JMW, 339-42.

Oct. 24 NO CLASS: Jewish holiday of Shemini Atzeret

****To be made up with a session on Jewish rare books related to our course to be scheduled in late November/early December.**

Oct. 29 – Oct. 31 Emergence of Zionism

NOTE: Zionism is a term used in contemporary debates often without understanding its origins. These classes evaluate Zionism in the years that it first emerged.

Secondary Sources:

Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State*, 3-13.

David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*, 176-203.

Primary Sources:

Oct. 29:

- Jacob Klatzkin in Arthur Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 315-27, (on Canvas).
- Aaron David Gordon in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 369-86 (on Canvas).
- Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 417-31 (on Canvas).

Oct. 31:

- The Bilu, “Manifesto,” JMW, 588-89.
- Theodor Herzl, in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 200-30 (on Canvas).
- Ahad Ha-am, in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea*, 249-77 (on Canvas).
- First Zionist Congress, “The Basle Program,” JMW, 605.
- Seventh Zionist Congress, “Anti-Uganda Resolution, JMW, 622.
- Seventh Zionist Congress, “Resolution on Palestine, JMW, 623.
- James Balfour, “The Balfour Declaration,” JMW, 660.
- Migration to Palestine Israel, Table XVW, JMW, 888.

Nov. 5 Class Debate #3: Jewish political movements, including varieties of Zionism.

Nov. 7 Jewish Life in the United States: *Settlement and Growth*

Secondary Sources:

Beth S. Wenger, *The Jewish Americans: Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America*, 1-23.

Primary Sources:

- Peter Stuyvesant, “Petition to Expel the Jews”; Reply from the Dutch West India Company; JMW, 501-503.
- Abigail Franks letter to her son (on Canvas)
- Letter, Rebecca Samuel, JMW, 509-10.
- “The Pittsburgh Platform,” JMW, 521-22.
- Kaufman Kohler, “The Concordance of Judaism and Americanism,” JMW, 525-26.

Nov. 12 Jewish Life in the United States: *Expansion and Evolution*

Secondary Sources:

Wenger, *The Jewish Americans*, 87-113.

Primary Sources:

- Table of Jewish Immigration to US, JMW, 532.
- Charles Bernheimer, “Sweatshops in Philadelphia, JMW, 539-41
- Clara Lemlich, Remembering the Shirtwaist Workers Strike (on Canvas)
- Louis Brandeis, “Zionism is Consistent with American Patriotism” JMW, 555-56.
- Solomon Schechter, “Catholic Israel, JMW, 557—58.
- Bernard Revel, “The American Yeshiva,” JMW, 563-65.
- “Temporary Suspension of Immigration,” JMW, 568-70.

Nov. 14 World War I and its Aftermath

Secondary Sources:

John Efron, Steven Weitzman, et. al, *The Jews: A History*, 338-57.

Primary Sources:

Russia and the Soviet Union:

- V.I. Lenin, “Critical Remarks on the National Question,” JMW, 407-409.
- Joseph Stalin, “The Jews are Not a Nation,” JMW, 409-11.
- Yevsektsiya, “The Liquidation of Bourgeois Jewish Institutions,” JMW, 412-14.
- Birobidzhan: A Jewish Autonomous Region, JMW, 428-29.

Poland:

- Minorities Treaty, JMW, 415-17.

- Constitution of the Republic of Poland, 422-23.

Palestine:

- The Balfour Declaration, JMW, 660.

Nov. 19- 21 The Holocaust

Secondary Sources:

Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of Jews in Modern Times*, 349-376.

“The Women’s Camp,” in Józef Garlinski, *Fighting Auschwitz: The Resistance Movement in the Concentration Camp*, 183-210.

Primary Sources:

Nov. 19:

- Adolph Hitler, “Letter on the Jewish Question, and “Mein Kampf” JMW, 716-19.
- Robert Weltsch, “Wear the Yellow Badge with Pride,” JMW, 720-21.
- “First Racial Definition,” JMW, 722.
- “Why the Nuremberg Laws,” Law for Protection of German Blood and Honor,” and “Reich Citizenship Law, JMW, 729-31.
- “*Kristallnacht*—A Preliminary Secret Report,” JMW, 735-36.
- “Operation against the Jews,” JMW, 737.
- “Protocols of Wannsee Conference, JMW, 751-54.

Nov. 21:

- Chaim Kaplan, “Warsaw Ghetto Diary,” JMW, 755-57.
- Janusz Korczak, “Warsaw Ghetto Memoirs, JMW, 757-63.
- Mordecai Anielewicz, “Last Communication as Ghetto Revolt Commander, JMW, 763-64.
- Emanuel Ringelblum, “Last Letter from Warsaw,” JMW, 764-67.
- Chart of Estimated Number of Jews Killed, JMW 787-88.
- The Political Underground: A Letter from the Bund (1942), in Dawidowicz, *A Holocaust Reader*, 213-18 (on Canvas).

[REMINDER: YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FILM IS DUE NOV. 24TH AT 5PM. Be sure to prepare the materials listed above under Oct. 17th and we will discuss on Nov. 26th.]

Nov. 26 Israeli Statehood

*This week will begin with a discussion of make-up materials for “Middle Eastern Jews in Transition” assigned earlier. See Oct. 17th above.

Secondary Sources:

De Lange, *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People*, 357-70.

Primary Sources:

- “White Paper of 1939,” JMW, 694-97.
- Jewish Agency for Palestine, “Statement on the MacDonald White Paper,” JMW, 697-99.
- “The Case for A Bi-National Palestine,” JMW, 702-05.
- “Bi-Nationalism is Unworkable,” JMW, 705-07.
- “Proclamation of the State of Israel,” JMW, 709-10.
- “Law of Return,” JMW, 713.

Nov. 28 **NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break**

Dec. 3 **Israel and America: Two Centers of Postwar Jewish Culture**

Secondary Sources:

Beth S. Wenger, *The Jewish Americans: Three Centuries of Jewish Voices in America*, 283-306.

Primary Sources:

- Chart, World Jewry Before and After the War, 1939-1945,” JMW, 274.
- Blaustein and Ben-Gurion Agreement,” JMW, 322-26.
- A.B. Yehoshua, “The Meaning of Homeland,” JMW, 866-70.

Dec. 5 **Course Conclusions: Looking Backward; Looking Forward**

Moshe Rosman, “Defining the Postmodern Period in Jewish History,” in *Text and Context: Essays in Modern Jewish History and Historiography in Honor of Ismar Schorsch*, 95-130.

SELECTED NEWS ARTICLES MAY BE ADDED.