HI 443
Jews in Modern German History

Course Description  This course explores the transformation of Jews in German-speaking lands from emancipation to the Shoah (Holocaust) and afterward. Beginning with the struggle for Jewish civil rights, the course aims to arrive at an understanding of minority identity-formation in western societies by taking up the German-Jewish example. In addition to examining the social and economic transformation of German Jews, we will examine the consequences of Jewish acculturation and assimilation, including the changing modes of modern Jewish religious expression (Reform, Neo-Orthodoxy, Conservativism); the invention of scholarly approaches to the study of Judaism and the Jews; modern Jewish political ideologies and movements, including socialism and Zionism; modern anti-Jewish sentiment and Jewish responses; Jewish life under the Nazis. We will end the course with a consideration of German-Jewish history, the vitality of the current German-Jewish community, and post-1945 German attitudes toward Jews.

Requirements  Grades will be determined by your performance on the following assignments:
Class participation  15 percent
Presentation and response  15 percent
Two five-page papers (Oct. 1 and Nov. 5)  30 percent
One 10 to 15-page paper (Dec. 10)  40 percent

Participation  It is your responsibility to attend class regularly and contribute to the class discussion. Note that one-third of your grade is based on your contribution to class discussion. Participation is not simply a matter of speaking up in class. It also entails demonstrating your engagement with the assigned texts, asking relevant questions, respecting the opinions of others, and having the courage to make mistakes. Making mistakes is integral to learning; it is only through mistakes that you can clarify confusions and deepen your understanding of the subject. For this reason, you will not be graded on the content of what you say, but rather on how much you contribute constructively to the class.

Presentation  To facilitate discussion, each student will be asked to make one oral presentation during the course of the semester. The oral presentation, which you will undertake with other students, should not assume the form of a dry exposition of the week’s readings, but rather involve an attempt to engage your peers in a discussion of what you consider to be the key questions brought up by the readings. Your presentation can take any form you think will be most effective in starting discussion; I encourage you to be as creative as you can in carrying out this assignment.

Response  In addition, the week after your presentation, you will be asked to prepare a response to the next presentation. Once again, the idea is to facilitate discussion. Having survived your own presentation, your new job is to glean the most important points from the assigned readings. Rather
than preparing anything for presentation, your job is to respond spontaneously to the oral presentation for that week, with an eye to engaging with your peers.

PAPERS Students will be asked to write three papers. The first two assignments are five-page papers based on an analysis of the week’s readings (Oct. 1 and Nov. 5). In these short papers, you will be asked to engage one argument or problem that appears in the readings up to that week and evaluate its consequences. In contrast, the final and longer paper will involve researching a topic at greater length using at least two outside sources. You will be asked to hand in a brief description of the paper on November 19, which is intended to get you thinking about possible topics. The papers themselves are due on December 10. Please turn papers in on time. “On time” means at the beginning of class on the day they are due. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade per day.

CHEATING Cheating is a serious infraction of scholarly conduct, and will earn an automatic F for the course. Cheating includes plagiarism, which is defined as the use of intellectual material produced by another person without appropriate acknowledgment. Plagiarism includes three words or more in order taken from a source without attribution. Please read the Boston University Academic Conduct Code carefully, and the section on plagiarism in particular.

REQUIRED READING The following books are available for purchase at Barnes and Noble:
- Sigmund Freud, Moses and Monotheism (Vintage, 1955)
- Paul Mendes-Flohr and Yehuda Reinharz, eds., The Jew in the Modern World (OUP, 2nd edition)

All readings marked with an asterisk (*) can be found online at the CourseInfo website; all articles marked with a second sign ($) can be found via JSTOR, Project Muse, or BU’s online catalogue.

RECOMMENDED READING If you are unfamiliar with the general outlines of German history from 1790 to 1990, you may have difficulty following the course. To gain a sense of both the turning points in German history and the reduction by historians of German-Jewish history to the history of antisemitism, I strongly urge you to read a synthetic history, such as James J. Sheehan, German History, 1770-1866 or Dietrich Orlow, A History of Modern Germany, 1871 to the Present.

September 10: Introduction
 Film: Paul Wegener, The Golem (1920), 85 minutes

September 17: Jews and Germans in Historical Perspective
* Gershom Scholem, “Against the Myth of the German-Jewish Dialogue” (1964)
Zatlin - 3


**September 24: Enlighteners and Maskilim**

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Nathan the Wise*, parts one and two
*Jakob Katz, Out of the Ghetto*, chaps. 4-5
*David Sorkin, The Transformation of German Jewry*, 13-78.

**October 1: Towards Emancipation**

Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” (available online at marxists.org)
*Eduard Silbermann, Itzig Hamburger, and Moses Seligmann, in Richarz, 80-93, 124-33, 141-7.


**Film**: Pawnshop scene from Werner Herzog, *Woyzeck* (1979)

**First Short Paper Due**

October 8: No class – Columbus Day (substitute Monday for Tuesday)

October 9: The Transformation of Jewish Cultural and Religious Practice


*Derek Penslar, “Philanthropy, the ‘Social Question’ and Jewish Identity in Imperial Germany,” *LBIYB* 38 (1993), 51-73.


October 15: **Backlash**


*Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Antisemitism*, 1-183

*Till van Rahden, “Words and Action: Rethinking the Social History of German Antisemitism, Breslau, 1870-1914,” *German History* 18:3 (2000), 413-38

October 22: **Popular Antisemitism**
Helmut Walser Smith, *The Butcher’s Tale*

October 29: **The Transformation of German-Jewish Identity**

Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*

November 5: **Jews and Political Movements: Socialism and Zionism**


*Stephen Poppel, Zionism in Germany, 1897-1933, excerpts.

*Lars Fischer, The Socialist Response to Antisemitism in Imperial Germany, Intro and Ch. 1.


*Hillel Kieval, Languages of Community, 10-36, 135-58

**Second short paper due**

November 12: no class – Veterans Day

November 19: **Culture between the Wars**


*Gershom Scholem, “Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea in Judaism”

*Walter Benjamin, “Theses on History”

*Sigmund Freud, “Negation”

*Michael Brenner, The Renaissance of Jewish Culture in Weimar Germany, 69-212

**Short description of long paper due**

November 26: **Politics between the Wars**

*Steven Aschheim, Brothers and Strangers, 3-31, 183-214

*Donald L. Niewyk, The Jews in Weimar Germany, 43-95

*Victor Klemperer, I Will Bear Witness, excerpts


Film: excerpts from Veit Harlan, Der Ewige Jude (1940)

December 3: **The Shoah**

*David Bankier, “German Public Awareness of the Final Solution,” in: David Cesarani, The Final Solution, 215-27


*Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz, excerpts

Film: excerpts from Claude Lanzman, *Shoah* (1983)
December 10: **Jews and Germans after Genocide**


*Paul Celan, “Near the Graves,” “The Sand from the Urns,” “Death Fugue,” “Assisi,” “Speak You Too,” “No More Sand Art”*

*Yehuda Bauer, “From the Holocaust to the State of Israel,” in *Rethinking the Holocaust*


**Final paper due**