

University of Florida
Spring Semester 2015

JST 3930 section 0976 / EUH 1249

**JEWS AND RUSSIAN REVOLUTION.
JEWS IN RUSSIAN EMPIRE AND THE SOVIET UNION. NINETEENTH-TWENTIETH CENTURIES**

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Course description

This course will examine history, politics and culture of Russian and Soviet Jewry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The course focuses on the tsarist legacy, the impact of the Russian Revolution and Civil war, new Bolshevik policies toward the Jews, and the development of a Soviet Jewish culture. It will also examine the "Great Turn" under Stalin, the Great Fatherland War, and the Holocaust on Soviet soil. We will also look at postwar developments such as revival of Judaism and Jewish identity, the fate of Jews under late Stalinism, the struggle for emigration, and Jewish life in today's Russia and former Soviet republics.

The course draws on a variety of source material, such as primary historical texts, historical scholarship, and works of art, including literature and film.

Each class will be a combination of lecture and discussion. Discussion will draw heavily on the assigned readings, mainly on primary sources. Grading in the course is based on written assignments and on class work (i.e., discussion) that demonstrates critical thinking.

Essential texts

1. Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (Basic Books, 2010) (henceforth: Snyder).
2. Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union. The History of a National Minority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) (henceforth: Pinkus).
3. Ezra Mendelsohn, ed., *Essential Papers on Jews and the Left* (New York: New York University Press, 1997) (henceforth: Jews and Left).

Supplementary texts

1. David Biale, ed., *Cultures of the Jews* (Schocken Books, 2006) (henceforth: Biale).
2. Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004) (henceforth: Slezkine).
3. Ezra Mendelsohn, *Class Struggle in the Pale. The Formative Years of the Jewish Workers' Movement in Tsarist Russia* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970) (henceforth: Mendelsohn).
4. Zvi Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality and Soviet Politics: The Jewish Sections of the CPSU, 1917-1930* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972) (henceforth: Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality*).

5. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern, *Lenin's Jewish Question* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) (henceforth: Petrovsky-Shtern).
6. Zvi Gitelman, ed., *Bitter Legacy. Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) (henceforth: Gitelman, *Bitter Legacy*).
7. Lucjan Dobroszycki, Jeffrey Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Studies and Sources on the Destruction of the Jews in the Nazi-Occupied Territories of the USSR* (Armonk, Lonton: M.E.Sharpe, 1993) (henceforth: Dobroszycki, Gurock).
8. Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry on the Eve of the Holocaust. A Social and Demographic Profile* (Jerusalem, 1998) (henceforth: Altshuler, *Eve of the Holocaust*).
9. Mordechai Altshuler, *Soviet Jewry Since the Second World War. Population and Social Structure* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987) (henceforth: Altshuler, *Since WWII*).
10. Yaacov Ro'i, Avi Beker, eds., *Jewish Culture and Identity in the Soviet Union* (New York, London: New York University Press, 1990) (henceforth: Ro'i, Beker).
11. Yaacov Ro'i, ed., *Jews and Jewish Life in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1995) (henceforth: Ro'i).
12. Zvi Gitelman, Yaacov Ro'i, eds., *Revolution, Repression, and Revival. The Soviet Jewish Experience* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007) (henceforth: Ro'i, Gitelman).
13. Anna Shternshis, *Soviet and Kosher: Jewish Popular Culture in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006) (henceforth: Shternshis).
14. Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead: The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (Basic Books, 1994) (henceforth: Tumarkin).
15. Additional readings will be announced and posted by instructor during the semester as needed.

Texts for book reviews

1. Chapter(s) TBA in Snyder.
2. Yuri Slezkine, "Hodl's Choice: The Jews and Three Promised Lands," in Slezkine.
3. Chapter(s) TBA in Petrovsky-Shtern.

Primary Sources

Thematic selection of primary sources from Benjamin Pinkus, ed., *The Soviet Government and the Jews. 1948-1967. A Documented Study* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Shimon Redlich, ed., *War, Holocaust and Stalinism* (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995); and other publications will be announced and posted and distributed by instructor on regular basis.

Movies

Show dates will be announced in class prior to the showing. Film guides with a background information and class assignments on video materials will be distributed as well.

1. *October* (1927)
2. *Tevye* (1936).
3. *Jewish Luck* (1925).
4. *Commissar* (1967).
5. *Return of Nathan Becker* (1932).

6. *Defiance* (2008).

7. *Quarrel* (1991).

More titles may be added during semester.

Please note, that all readings, including essential and supplementary texts, primary sources, and other assignments, will be available as PDF files through the course web site at e-Learning.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Four Quizzes: will be given every three- to four-weeks period, and will test your knowledge (such as facts, names, dates) of class material (mainly lectures and readings). Each quiz is 5% of the final grade, 20% total.
2. Two Reaction Papers (3-4 pages): one question pertaining to the current theme will be posted weekly. Students are expected to pick up any of those questions, and answer them by integrating readings into their essays. First paper is due on Week VIII (February 26). Second paper is due on Week XV (April 21). Each paper is 10% of the final grade, 20% total.
3. One film review (3-4 pages): an essay answering questions from the movie guides, relating movies to other materials discussed in class. Due on Week XV (April 21). 10% of the final grade.
4. One book review (3-4 pages): an essay providing critical evaluation in the context of other course materials (lectures, discussions, readings, film) of one chapter from of the texts by Snyder, Slezkine or Petrovsky-Shtern. Due on Week XV (April 21). 10% of the final grade.
5. Final Exam: The exam will be an essay drawing on topics discussed in class. 20% of the final grade.
6. Attendance and Participation: You are expected to participate in in-class discussions. This presumes that you DO the reading, COME to class, and PARTICIPATE intelligently and soundly in the discussion. 20% of the final grade.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Weeks I-IV

January 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22, 27, 29

Introduction

- Impact of Russian revolution.

Phenomenon of Russian Jews

- Challenges of modernity and Jewish responses
- Modernization without emancipation
- Modern Jewish politics and Russian revolution

Readings: Pinkus 1-48
Biale 799-860
Snyder vii-xix
Mendelsohn pages TBA
Jews and Left TBA

Movies: *October*
Tevye

Quiz 1: **January 29**

Weeks V-VIII

February 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26

Russian Revolution and Making of the Soviet Jews. 1917-1941

- Revolution on Jewish street
- Impact of Russian Civil war
- Social engineering of Russian Jews
- Soviet Jewish culture

Readings: Pinkus 49-137
Snyder pages TBA
Slezkine 204-371
Jews and Left TBA
Gitelman, *Jewish Nationality* pages TBA
Petrovsky-Shtern pages TBA
Shternshis pages TBA
Altshuler, *Eve of the Holocaust* pages TBA
Ro'i pages TBA
Ro'i, Beker pages TBA
Ro'i, Gitelman pages TBA

Movies: *Jewish Luck*
Commissar
Return of Nathan Becker

Quiz 2: **February 26**

First reaction paper due: **February 26**

Weeks IX-XI

March 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26

Holocaust and post-WWII Soviet antisemitism. 1941-1953

- Before the final solution: Holocaust by bullets
- Jewish responses: ghettos and resistance
- Jewish anti-fascist committee
- Stalin's last purge: antisemitic campaign of 1948-1953

Readings: Pinkus 139-208
Snyder pages TBA
Ro'i pages TBA
Ro'i, Beker pages TBA
Ro'i, Gitelman pages TBA
Dobroszycki, Gurock pages TBA
Gitelman, *Bitter Legacy* pages TBA

Movie: *Defiance*

Quiz 3: **March 26**

Weeks XII-XV

March 31, April 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 21

After the Holocaust and after USSR

- Soviet and post-Soviet Jewish identity
- Jewish life in late Soviet Union and in the former Soviet republics after the fall of communism

Readings: Pinkus 210-321
Snyder pages TBA
Ro'i pages TBA
Ro'i, Beker pages TBA
Ro'i, Gitelman pages TBA
Gitelman, *Bitter Legacy* pages TBA
Altshuler, *Since WWII* pages TBA
Tumarkin pages TBA
Petrovsky-Shtern pages TBA

Movies: *Quarrel*

Quiz 4: **April 16**

Second reaction paper due: **April 21**

Film review due: **April 21**

Book review due: **April 21**

Final exam: **TBA**