

HISTORY 574 SYLLABUS
Modern German History: Selected Topics

TOPIC: The German-Jewish Relationship – Symbiosis or One-Sided Love Affair?

Required Texts:

Amos Elon, *The Pity of It All; A Portrait of the German-Jewish Epoch, 1743-1933* (2002)

Gerschom Scholem, *From Berlin to Jerusalem; Memories of My Youth* (1980)

(Chapters 1-3 available on e-reserves in Jackson Library)

Peter Gay, *My German Question; Growing Up in Nazi Berlin* (1998)

Mary Lynn Rampolla, *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, 4th ed. (2004)

Course Description:

This course examines the relationship of Germans and Jews from the beginning of Jewish emancipation in the mid- 18th century until the Nazis took control of the German government in 1933. What began with great promise during the Enlightenment ended with the disaster of what the Nazis called their “Final Solution to the Jewish Problem.”

Enlightenment ideas of the 18th century had paved the way for the emancipation of the Jews from the caste-like restrictions of the Middle Ages. Their formal emancipation in the German states, begun in the early 19th century and completed in 1871, was accompanied by what seems a remarkably successful assimilation of Jews into German society and culture. Their contributions to education, science, the professions, music, arts, literature and business during the course of the century contributed significantly to their new “Fatherland’s” growing power and prestige.

By the late 19th century German Jews were speaking of having landed in a “safe harbor, a claim they knew Jews in France or Russia were not able to make. Their commitment to things German was most fundamentally reflected in the high rate of intermarriage with non-Jews and, in 1914, by the enthusiasm with which Jewish men volunteered for service in the German army. So deep was the commitment that the term *symbiosis* is often used to describe it.

But the arrival of the Nazis in 1933 raises questions about the German-Jewish relationship. Was it really symbiotic? Was the assimilation as successful as it seemed? Or was there something fundamentally flawed underneath it all? Was the Jewish enthusiasm for things German merely a one-sided love affair, in which Germans failed to reciprocate? Or was it, as it was thought at the time, a basically healthy relationship that became unraveled only later under the wrenching social and political stress induced by World War I? The exploration of these questions will be at the core of this course.

Course Procedures:

The first stage of the course will be devoted to the reading and discussion of the required texts. These readings will be the basis for class discussions. If needed, background lectures by the instructor will provide a context to the readings. These readings, the discussions, and the lectures will set the stage for the consideration of the questions outlined above.

Examinations:

Exams: There will be a mid-term exam (essay) on October 8th.

Grading Policy:

Class Discussion (20%); Mid-Term (20%); Oral Reports (20 %); Final Paper (40%);

Attendance Policy:

The seminar-like nature of this course makes regular attendance absolutely necessary. Unexcused absences can lead to a reduction in the final grade.

Course Schedule:

Aug. 17	Course Introduction
Aug. 19	Outline of German History from 1743-1933
Aug 24	Outline of Jewish History (Germany) 1743-1933
Aug 26-Sept. 14	Reading/Discussion of Elon's <i>The Pity of It All</i>
Sept. 14-16	Reading/Discussion of Scholem's <i>From Berlin to Jerusalem</i> (Chapters 1-3)
Sept. 21-30	Reading/Discussion of Gay's <i>My German Question</i>
Oct. 5	Review for Mid-Term Exam
Oct. 7	MID-TERM EXAM
Oct. 12	Fall Break
Oct. 14-Dec. 3	Reports/Discussion of Research Topics

Paper Instructions:

As you are reading the required texts and participating in class discussions, look for topics or areas that are of special interest to you and in which you would like to do research for your paper. By the end of the fourth week of the semester, you will be required to submit a list of at least four possible research topics. Each topic on this initial

list needs to be followed an explanation of how the research topic is “doable.” The items on this list will be the basis upon which you and I will negotiate about your research topic. (It is important that the topics selected by the class range across the period from the mid-18th to the early 20th centuries. Sample topics are listed below.)

Mary Lynn Rampolla’s *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History* should be your guide every step of the way in this process, beginning with the selection a topic to documenting your sources (footnotes/endnotes) to producing the final bibliography.

Undergraduate students are required to produce a 8-12 page paper on their research topic.

Graduate students are required to produce a 15-20 page paper on their research topic.

Important Sources:

Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, Vol. 1 (1956) – Vol. 48 (2003)

Encyclopedia Judaica, 16 volumes

Jewish Social Studies, Vol.1 (1946) – Vol. 49 (1987)

Useful Library of Congress Subject Headings:

Antisemitism in Literature (20 items listed)

Haskalah Germany (5 items listed)

German-Germany-History (16 items listed)

Jews-Germany-History-1800-1933 (26 items)

Possible Topics: (A Sampling Only)

Jewish Emancipation (1806-1813)

Heinrich Heine

Moses Mendelssohn

Jews in 1848 Revolutions

Jews in WWI

Jewish conversions

J.F. Stahl/ Jewish conservatives

Jewish women/feminism

Zionism in Germany/Theodor Herzl

Jewish radicals

Karl Marx

Ferdinand Lassalle

Eduard Bernstein

Rosa Luxemburg

Mixed marriages

Sigmund Freud

Richard Wagner

Wilhelm Marr

1879/anti-Semitism

Wilhelm Marr

Reform Judaism

Central-Verein

Jews in biblical criticism

1916 Jewish census

Jewish/Gentile marriages

Jews and social mobility

Jewish department stores

Jewish publishers

Jews in free professions

