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Hebrew and Jewish Studies Department
UCL

Academic Year 2009/10

Course HEBR7740/HEBRG006: History of the Jews in Poland

This course offers a survey of Polish-Jewish history from its inception in the middle ages through the contemporary period. It will be understood as the trajectory of Jewish community that experienced an unprecedented extent of autonomy in a multi-ethnic setting. The course will offer comparative perspectives to the history of the Jews in Russia and other Eastern European commonwealths and regions. It focusses on communal and political structures, self-organization, migrations and economic networks, religious traditions and movements, legal status, (self-) images and narratives, aspects of cohabitation and anti-Semitism, political culture and movements, dimensions of gender as well as characteristics of everyday life.

Means of assessment:

For the weekly meetings, participants will have to read those texts that are listed in the outline. Active participation in discussion is expected. Undergraduate and Full-year JYA: 3 essays (30 %), 1 exam (70 %). One-term JYA see below. MA Students: 1 essay (20 %), 1 exam (80 %).

Undergraduate students are required to write three essays of 2,500 words in length, which will each count 10 % of the total mark for the class.

Essays are due on: 20 November 2009
20 January 2010
29 March 2009
Undergraduate Essay Topics

Essay One:
Discuss the phenomenon of Jewish self-government in Poland in the early modern period (until the partitions of Poland in the end of the 18th century). Include a discussion of Jewish autonomy, the structure of the Jewish community, and supra-local organization.

Due 20 November 2009.

Essay Two:
How did religious diversification affect the life of Polish Jewry in the course of the 19th century? Give and discuss examples.

Due 20 January 2010.

Essay Three:
Discuss the factors influencing Polish-Jewish cohabitation in the 19th and 20th centuries (until 1939). Optional: Discuss the impact of these factors on Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation (1939-1944).

Due 29 March 2010.

One-Term JYA Students

One-term JYA students enrolled only for the First (or Second) Term, are assessed entirely on the basis of a 6,000 word essay. They may choose any of the three topics listed above. These students should submit an essay proposal and a short bibliography in class by:

19 November 2009 [First Term]

or

18 February 2010 [Second Term]

The essay itself is due on
14 January 2010  [First Term]

or

15 April 2010  [Second Term]

MA students will sit a graduate-level three-hour examination, consisting of essay questions. This examination will count 80% of the total mark. In addition, MA students must submit an essay of at least 5,000 words which will count for 20% of the total grade. This essay, the subject of which should be chosen in consultation with the instructor, will be due on 29 March 2010.

All students must use the guidelines of the HJS Departmental Style Sheet for all questions of layout, organization, citations, etc. Essays must have a bibliography of works consulted and/or cited and footnotes or endnotes. Please pay special attention to the rules governing plagiarism since it carries serious penalties. Essays should be wordprocessed and must be submitted in duplicate with a cover sheet, which may be downloaded from the web address listed below. All essays should be handed in to the HJS office, not to the instructor. Deadlines must be adhered to, and late essays will be penalized. If there are problems meeting a deadline, please consult with the instructor in advance.

An electronic version of the Style Sheet and the cover sheet may be downloaded at:

http://www.ucl.ac.uk/hebrew-jewish/studentres/guidelines.php

It is departmental policy that all student work submitted on time should be returned to students within a fortnight. Late submissions do not fall within this rule. All students are entitled to receive an tutorial to discuss their returned essay with the instructor.
Course Outline:

Term One:

Week 1: Induction Week
Week 2: The emergence and the structure of the Jewish community in Poland
Week 3: Golden Age and Chmielnicki-Uprising 1648
Week 4: The Jewish community in Poland and its hierarchies
Week 5: Eighteenth Century and Partitions of Poland
Week 6: -- Reading Week --
Week 7: Religious attitudes and cultures
Week 8: Changes in Legal Status and the Jewish Political Tradition
Week 9: Diversification of Religious Life in the 19th Century:
Week 10: Gender in Eastern European Jewish History
Week 11: Economic and social history

Term Two:

Week 1: Images and Narratives
Week 2: Entangled histories: Poland, Russia, and the Jews
Week 3: Acculturation in Partitioned Poland
Week 4: Jewish politics in the age of mass organization: Social Democracy and Zionism
Week 5: Every-day life, cohabitation, Jewish-non-Jewish relations, antisemitism, anti-Jewish violence
Week 6: -- Reading Week --
Week 7: World War One and the Emergence of the Second Republic
Week 8: Jews in Wartime Poland
Week 9: Postwar Poland, Jews and Communism/Stalinism, People’s Republic of Poland
Week 10: New Perspectives and discussions: the 1980s
Week 11: The Jedwabne-Debate

Bibliography (for term 1 and 2):

Bibliographic and other reference works

Journals:

Internet Ressources:
Index of Articles on Jewish Studies, Jerusalem (“Rambi“):
http://jnu.huji.ac.il/rambi/

Survey titles:
Baron, Salo Wittmayer.: The Jewish community, its history and structure to the American revolution, 3 Bde. Philadelphia 1942 (Reprint 1972).

First term: Topics and required readings:

Week 1: Induction week

Week 2: The emergence and the structure of the Jewish community in Poland


Week 3: Golden Age and Chmielnicki-Uprising 1648


Hanover, Nathan: Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah), ed. & translation: Abraham J. Mesch. New York 1950, 1-12, 50-61, 110-121


Week 4: The Jewish community in Poland and its hierarchies


Week 5: Eighteenth Century and Partitions of Poland


Week 6: Reading week

Week 7: Religious attitudes and cultures


Week 8: Changes in Legal Status and the Jewish Political Tradition


Week 9: Diversification of Religious Life in the 19th Century:


Week 10: Gender in Eastern European Jewish History


Week 11: Economic and social history:


Term Two

Week 1: Images and Narratives:


Week 2. Entangled histories: Poland, Russia, and the Jews


Week 3: Acculturation in Partitioned Poland

Cala, Alina: The Question of the Assimilation of Jews in the Polish Kingdom

**Week 4: Jewish politics in the age of mass organizations: Social Democracy and Zionism**


**Week 5: Every-day life, cohabitation, Jewish-non-Jewish relations, antisemitism, anti-Jewish violence**


**Week 6: -- Reading week --**

**Week 7: World War One and the Emergence of the Second Republic**


**Week 8: Jews in Wartime Poland**


Tec, Nechama: Resilience and Courage, Newhaven 2003, ch. 6: Hiding and
Passing in the Forbidden Christian World, 205-255.


Week 9. Postwar Poland, Jews and Communism/Stalinism, People’s Republic of Poland


Week 10: New Perspectives and discussions: the 1980s


Steinlauf, Michael C. Bondage to the Dead: Poland and the Memory of the Holocaust. Syracuse, NY, 1997, chs. 6-7, 89-146.

Week 11: The Jedwabne-Debate

