Course Description: Can Judaism exist without the religion? Are there secular Jews? Is it possible for people to consider themselves to be Jewish without any formal affiliation with either a religious or other specifically Jewish institution? If so, what sort of Jews are they? These questions trouble all those interested in the history, present position and future prospect of the Jews as a people. There have been many answers: Zionist, non-Zionist, cultural, ethnic, sociological, theological (both Christian and Jewish) and others less respectable. We have no answers but we have a different way to put the question, a biographical way, which may help to define the parameters of a possible answer. We ask how have individual Jews defined themselves and how have they chosen to live their lives. Such choices only became possible in the Western world after the Enlightenment, the American and the French Revolutions had created the category of “citizen”, a new, free, universal, abstract person, who had the right to be what he or she chose. Some Jews thought that they could simply shed their old identities and become members of the new community of citizens. In many countries, whatever Jews thought they were, the host populations saw them as Jews. The most violent and terrible of those rejections ended in the Holocaust, which made “Jews” of Catholic priests and nuns, Protestant pastors, communists, socialists, believers and non-believers, rich and poor, assimilated and orthodox. A national home for the Jews arose out of the ashes but it could not agree on a definition of Jewish identity to ground its Law of Return and the “Jewish” identity of many groups of immigrants to Israel remains contested. In the USA and Western Europe, inter-marriage rates have risen. In what sense can mixed couples or their children still be “Jewish”? This course will try to address these questions in a strictly historical way, following a selection of lives of important Jews who at different times and places attempted their own answers to these questions. These lives will be drawn mainly from Western Europe, where until the Second World War, the majority of Jews lived. We shall also consider some American lives since during the Twentieth Century the American Jewish community became the place where choice of identity became an unusually important issue. We shall also look at the lives of some who chose Israel as the “national” answer to the question of Jewish identity and some who chose socialism or communism as the way to “solve the Jewish Question” and find a new identity.

1. **Response Papers**: Twice during the semester, students will be asked to submit response papers of not more than 1000 words on the readings.
2. **Presentations**: Students will be asked to present and discuss selected literature.
3. **Final Short Essay or Oral Exam**: The final essay [ca 1200 words] or the oral exam will give students a chance to come to a conclusion about what the main issues in the course have been and how they assess them now that they have covered the material. The instructors will set the question or questions well before the end of the semester.

Response papers 30%
Presentations 20%
Final Essay/Exam 30%
Class Participation  20%

“Double Marking”/Grades:
Both instructors read all the students’ formal work independently, compare notes and arrive at a comprehensive mark, a system known as “double-marking”. This has two advantages for students. Each reader checks the other’s grades for fairness and students get two opinions instead of one. Both instructors will be happy to help to improve technique, discuss questions and consider where problems have arisen. There is no curve and, if all the work reaches an agreed “A”, the students will all get “A” s. Improvement in thought and/or style over the semester will always be rewarded.

Note on the Readings for each topic:
Since this course is unconventional, we cannot rely on conventional textbooks. The only source book which suits our needs is Paul Mendes-Flohr, and Jehuda Reinharz (eds.): The Jew in the Modern World. A Documentary History, Second Edition, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1995. We shall use it to provide English versions of many crucial texts. If students want to buy the book, copies will be available at the Penn Bookstore and Penn Book Centre. The rest of the readings will come in a bulkpack, available as always, through Campus Copy Center (3907 Walnut Street) or at the Rosengarten Reserve in the Van Pelt Library (3420 Walnut Street).

Calendar:

MONDAY JANUARY 21. NO CLASS: MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

Week 1
January  28, 2008  Introduction  JS/MK

Readings


Enlightenment: Moses Mendelssohn and Immanuel Kant  MK

Readings


**Week 2**  
February 4, 2008  
**French Revolution: Robespierre and the Religion of Virtue**  
**Edmund Burke and the Critique of the Revolution**  
JS

**Readings**  
The process of Political Emancipation in Western Europe. Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda (eds.): The Jew in the Modern World, pp. 114-144


**Week 3**  
February 11, 2008  
The Rothschild Family  
JS

**Readings**  

**Heine**

**Readings**

Heinrich Heine. A Ticket of Admission to European Culture. In Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinharz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World* pp.258-259


**Week 4**

**February 18, 2008**

**Marx**

**Readings**

Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” (1844) (+Lasalle/Bernstein)

http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/

**Disraeli**

**JS**

**Readings**


**Week 5**

**February 25 , 2008**

**Jewish Salons in Berlin: the emancipation of women**

**Readings**


**Meyerbeer and Wagner**

**Readings**

Richard Wagner, Judaism in Music (1850) and other essays. Transl. by William Ashton Ellis. Lincoln Nebraska and London 1995. [http://users.belgacom.net/wagnerlibrary/prose/wagjud.htm](http://users.belgacom.net/wagnerlibrary/prose/wagjud.htm)


**Week 6**
March 3, 2008  *Wissenschaft des Judentums (Science of Judaism)*  MK

**Readings**

A Series of 34 Lectures, Breslau 1865. pp.149-157, pp.265-269, pp.283-293

**Mordecai Kaplan**

**Readings**

**Spring Break  March 7 - 16**

**Week 7**
March 17, 2008  **Emile Durkheim and Alfred Dreyfus**  MK/JS

**Readings**


**Readings**


Making Sense of the Rennes Verdict: The Military Dimension of the Dreyfus Affair

**Week 8**
March 24 2008


Making Sense of the Rennes Verdict: The Military Dimension of the Dreyfus Affair

**Readings**


Making Sense of the Rennes Verdict: The Military Dimension of the Dreyfus Affair

**Week 9**
March 31, 2008


**Readings**


**Week 10**
April 7, 2008


**Week 10**
April 7, 2008


Readings


**Einstein and Haber; “Jewish” Science**

Readings


**Week 11**
April 14, 2008

**Readings**

Leon Trotsky. My Life
http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/1930-lif/ch01.htm

**Walther Rathenau and Rosa Luxemburg**

Readings

http://fax.libs.uga.edu/HN449xR2/#


**Week 12**

April 21, 2008

**Saul Bellow** MK


**Primo Levi** JS

**Readings**


**Week 13**

April 28, 2008

**The “Jewish Mind”?** JS/MK

Is there Secular Judaism? JS/MK

**Readings**


Gregory Cochran, Jason Hardy, Henry Harpending, “Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence” YIVO Paper.


David Biale, “Between Jewish Culture and Multiculture: Historical and Contemporary Reflections on Jewish Identity” Lecture.


Yuri Slezkine, “The Jewish Century”, pp. 327 -371 (BP)


David Biale. Between Jewish Culture and Multiculture: Historical and contemporary Reflections on Jewish Identity. Ms 2005

Helga Embacher and Hannes Klein, A Life of Many Lives. Ari Rath – Israeli with Viennese Roots. 60 Minute Fil;. Austria 2005. Showing to be arranged. Copy on reserve at Rosengarten Library, Van Pelt Library

Final Short Essay Due May 1 at Noon in Room 206E College Hall