JS 480 #32817
European Jewish Writers
T/Th 09:35-10:50
HUM 118

Professor:
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Program:
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Bulletin Description: Surveys the works of modern Jewish writers throughout Europe between the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries. Pays special attention to the influence of the Jewish Enlightenment on modern Jewish literatures.

Course Description: This course surveys the works of modern Jewish writers throughout Europe between the nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first centuries by examining the kind of subject positions emerging with these writers as potential Jewish identities that portend great promise. Beginning with the effects of the Haskalah Movement, known as the Jewish Enlightenment, on nineteenth-century Germany, the first set of texts examines the notion of the "cosmopolitan subject" as Heine imagines it. Seeing Enlightenment as the impetus behind the development of a new kind of Jewish identity—the secular Jewish writer—Heine defines an aesthetics in which the mind crosses boundaries in order to be "liberated." His move to embrace the "cosmopolitan" enables him to imagine a subject position liberated from European ghettos. Thus Heine's work begins to foster a cohort of writers and artists who imagine themselves free of rabbinic and civil restraints, writers who imagine that they articulate a newly realized European rather than an exclusively national identity in which they remain tethered to a minority. The next set of texts focuses on a close examination of the concepts underpinning the Jewish writer's liberation, then, from religious and national traditions so that two new subject positions, the "subject of Law," and the "subject of transgression," become visible as part of modernity's potential promise for Jewish existence. Juxtaposed to these three positions is the "subject of memory," an adjunct position derived from Proust. Students will contrast this aggregate of subject positions as they explore works by Kafka, Schulz, and Roth. With the sudden dissolution of their modernist visions because of Nazism, the crisis of the Holocaust and its effects on how the Jewish writer begins to define herself, students will excavate two new subject positions, the "subject of extermination," and the "subject of social justice." These positions will allow students to chart how Jewish writers attempt to bear witness to the experience of the camps. The last set of readings concentrates on the implications of the reemergence of the Jewish writer in Europe.

Course Objectives:

1. To survey modern Jewish literatures across Europe during 20th-21st centuries.
2. To gain a perspective on the impact of history on Jewish literary production
3. To examine concepts underpinning secular Jewish writing
4. To understand the notion of "European identity" and its relevance to theories of Jewish secular humanism.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Be able to identify the main figures associated with European Jewish writing
2. Be able to identify the main concepts associated with Jewish aesthetic traditions
3. Be able to identify the main Jewish writers of the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries
4. Be able to explain the influence of specific historical conditions on the emergence of secular

Jewish literatures
5. Be able to analyze one or more Jewish writers within a specific national tradition in Europe
6. Be able to identify the influence of European theories of the subject on Jewish writers
7. Be able to trace Jewish subject positions as they emerge in texts

Assignments	Percentage
Drafts of Final Paper (minimum 2 drafts attempted; first draft due end of February)	40%
Paper (7-10 pages)	15%
Secondary Source Review (2 pages; optional due date)	15%
Oral Presentation / Forum / Proposal (optional due date)	10%
Homework, low stakes writing, class participation, unscheduled wrtg	20%

Required Texts:

Swann's Way. Marcel Proust.
Liar's Gospel. Naomi Aldergate.
Emperor's Tomb. Joseph Roth.
Street of Crocodiles. Bruno Schulz.
The Exiles' Return. Elisabeth de Waal.
Penal Colony. Franz Kafka
Fatelessness. Imre Kertesz

Optional Texts:

Required PDF files

Heine "Shylock" and poems
excerpts from Isaac Babel
excerpts from Veza Canetti

Information on Assignments and Attendance

Assignments:

Assignments come from required texts, handouts distributed in class, and occasional readings from e-texts readily available either on the web or at eres. Be sure to have assignments completed before coming to class and to format these assignments according to MLA. I won't accept handwritten assignments so don't try.

If you're having difficulties with any of the assignments, come to see me asap. Don't debate about it; come to my office hours.

I wish to make this course as accessible as possible to students with disabilities or medical conditions that may affect any aspect of course assignments or participation. You are invited to communicate with me at the beginning of the course or at your discretion about any accomodations that will improve your experience of or access to the course. You can and should also contact the Disability Resource Center at 338-2472 (Voice/TDD).

Borderline grades are resolved on the basis of "effort," e.g. preparation for and participation in discussion; care and thoughtfulness in preparation and presentation of assignments.

This course is not a composition course; the student learning outcomes for this course are significantly different from those articulated for composition and GWAR courses. We will not engage in small group drafting or substitute writing exercises for lectures and classroom discussion. We will though work as a seminar in which your ideas are the currency of classroom discussion. There may be times when I ask you to share your written work as the basis for classroom discussion. If you are uncomfortable with this possibility, just email me.

Plagiarism:

Any student who uses the words or ideas of another person, be it author, critic, or another student, without attributing those ideas according to MLA standards, will receive a No Credit for that paper and will not be allowed to revise; a student who turns in a paper that is substantially or completely written by someone else will receive No Credit for the course.

In either case the student will be reported to the SFSU Student Discipline Officer, who may take further action.

Students should also consult with the teacher about improper attribution.

Attendance Policy:

Since class meets once a week and I cancel class for Jewish holidays, course attendance is particularly important. If you miss more than three classes, I will lower your final course grade by 1/4 step for each additional absence. Thus if you earned an"A," and you missed four classes, your final grade would be "B+."

Attendance for the entire class period is also required; if you leave early or arrive late chronically, I will mark you as absent for those class sessions.

Tentative Schedule:

Date	**Lecture**	**HW (completed for the next class)**	**Supplemental Resources**
1/28	European Jewish Writing, the context.	Rdg: Heine excerpts.	Heine, 1797-1856
1/30	Jews and the Grand Narratives of European Modernity: Cosmopolitan Subject.	Rdg: Heine excerpts.	
2/04	Art and Phillistines.	Rdg: "Hunger Artist"	Kafka, 1883-1924. Option #1 for final papers: Analyze one author's aesthetic project and its conceptual view on Jewish identity. Draft due: anytime in February.
2/06	Transcendence; Subject of Art.	Finishing "Hunger Artist" stories	Proust, 1871-1922
2/11	Transcendence; Subject of Memory.	Rdg: *Swann,* "Overture," 5-45 in the Norton edition.	
2/13	Odette and Zipporah	Rdg: *Swann,* "Combray" 46-173	optional student presentation:

2/18	*écrire*	Rdg: *Swann,* "Swann in Love," 174-203	Option #2 final papers: Analyze Proust's notion of writing and displacement. Draft due: February.
2/20	Subject of Writing	Rdg: *Swann,* 203-end (finishes "Swann in Love" and "Place-Names"	
2/25	*Swann* finishes		Roth, 1894-1939. Option #3 final paper: Analyze Roth's theory of empire. Draft due: anytime in March.
2/27	Cosmopolitan and Social Critic		optional student presentation:
3/04	Subject of Nationalism		
3/06			optional student presentation:
3/11		Rdg: *Emperor's Tomb,* 7-30 (I-IV).	Option #4 final paper: Analyze in one author the notion of the *mitzvah*. Draft due: anytime in March
3/13		Rdg: *Emperor,* 31-end	Schulz, 1892-1942
3/18			
3/20	*Emperor* ends.	Rdg: *Street of Crocodiles*, 1-71	optional student presentation:
3/25	Spring Break		
3/26	Spring Break		optional student presentation:
4/01	Subject Position of Social Justice: Veza Canetti,1897-1963	Rdg: *Street of Crocodiles,* 72-end.	Option #5 final paper: Analyze "transgression" in any one of the assigned authors. Draft due: anytime in April.
4/03	*Street of Crocodiles* ends.		
4/08		Rdg: Chapter 1	optional student presentation:
4/10	Imre Kertesz: Subject of Extermination	Rdg: Chapters 2-7.	Option #6 final paper: Analyze the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish thinking in literature. Drafts due: anytime in April.
4/15	**Pesach. JS Classes cancelled.**		
4/17	Kertesz continues	Rdg: Chapters 8-end	optional student presentation:
4/22	**Pesach. JS Classes cancelled.**		
4/24	Kertesz finishes.		

4/29	Elisabeth de Waal: Imagined Subject Position of Exile / Outsider/Insider	Beginning of Secondary Source Review submission period.	Option #7 final paper: Topic of Student's Choosing or can derive from any of the topics described for Source Review assignment. Should be determined in conjunction with professor.
5/01	The New Jewish Identity and Imagined Identification. Post-Modern Subject Position		optional student presentation:
5/06	Naomi Alderman		
5/08	Gender and Jews		
5/13			
5/15			
5/20	**Finals week**	Final papers due.	