

Jews and the City

Syllabus

In this course, we will explore the urban Jewish experience, a central feature of Modern Jewish History. We will focus primarily on the eight largest and most diverse Jewish communities of the last three centuries – the Jews of Warsaw, Budapest, Vienna, Odessa, St. Petersburg, Istanbul, Berlin, and, of course, New York City. Like the cities they were located in, each of these Jewish communities grew rapidly and dramatically during the nineteenth century, from a few thousand Jews in 1800 into the 100,000s by the turn of the twentieth century. This rapid growth provided the basis for an increasingly complex relationship with the non-Jewish world and the state, an equally complex communal organization, and an explosion of Jewish religious and cultural identities.

We will begin by exploring the pre-modern exclusion of Jews from major cities and then consider three transitional cases: the Jewish communities of imperial or royal capitals, notably Prague and Cracow; the magnate owned market towns of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Lands; and the paradoxical role of the Italian ghettos in creating a permanent Jewish presence in Italian urban life. We will then explore the dynamics that made Jewish settlement and rapid growth in urban centers possible, comparing the dynamics of settlement in port cities such as Amsterdam and London with that of “river cities” such as Budapest and Warsaw. We will also consider the phenomenon of the Jewish neighborhood, and the endemic and often problematic presence of illegally residing Jews.

After examining the structure of urban Jewish life, we will explore the challenges of Jewish communal organization in an urban context. The entrepreneurial and free-spirited character of initial Jewish settlers, coupled with the absence of an officially recognized Jewish community, challenged Jewish communal leaders to conduct Jewish communal affairs without the benefit of coercive authority in matters of observance and affiliation. Against this background of religious volunteerism, this unit will look at four aspects of urban Jewish identity as they developed during the nineteenth century: the predominance of pragmatic, non-ideological religious outlook; the paradoxical impact of urban life on religiously observant Jews, balancing erosive effects of openness and fluidity with the fortifying effects of concentrating so many committed Jews in a compact urban space; the subtle but crucial distinction between assimilated and secular Jews (and the urban roots of Theodore Herzl’s path to Zionism); and the expanding social and cultural horizons that Jewish women discovered in a large city.

The last part of the course will focus on the Jews of New York City as a test case of “American Exceptionalism,” and an exercise in transatlantic comparative history. With these aims in mind, we will consider the similarities and differences between New York Jewry the Jews of Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw, and Odessa. We will compare the settlement of Jews in New York with that of other communities of port Jews and the Lower East Side with its counterpart Jewish neighborhoods in Budapest, Warsaw, and Vienna. We will then compare the character of religious reform and Orthodoxy in New York with that of its European counterparts, and the secular dimensions of New York Jewry. We will also revisit the matter of gender and the possibilities for Jewish women in New York. Finally, this unit will consider how New York Jews managed the difficulties of the Great Depression, comparing this challenge to urban Jewish life with the challenges of European Anti-Semitism and the First World War. The course will conclude with a brief look at urban Jewish life in the context of a Jewish State by looking at Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

Discussion Topics and Reading Assignments:

Sep 13 Introduction The City: A Laboratory of Modern Jewish Identities

20 Imperial and Royal Capitals: Prague, Cracow, Istanbul

Reading: Gershon Hundert, "Jews, Money and Society in the 17th Century Polish Commonwealth : the Case of Krakow" *Jewish Social Studies* 43, 3/4 (1981) 261-274

Hanna Zaremska, "Jewish Street in Cracow : the 14th-the First Half of the 15th Century" *Acta Poloniae Historica* 83 (2001) 27-57

François Guesnet, "Textures of Intercession : Rescue Efforts for the Jews of Prague, 1744/1748" *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 4 (2005) 355-375

Minna Rozen, "Public Space and Private Space among the Jews of Istanbul in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" *Turcica* 30 (1998) 331-346

27 Market Towns

Reading: Adam Teller, "The Legal Status of the Jews on the Magnate Estates of Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century" *Gal-Ed* 15-16 (1997) 41-63

Howard Lupovitch, "Jews and the Zichy Estate : a Case Study in Magnate-Jewish Relations" *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 7 (2008) 15-37

Rebecca Gates, "18th Century Schutzherren : Esterhazy Patronage of the Jews" *Jewish Social Studies* 47, 3/4 (1985) 189-208

Oct 4 The Paradox of the Ghetto

Reading: David Ruderman, "The Cultural Significance of the Ghetto in Jewish History" *From Ghetto to Emancipation; Historical and Contemporary Reconsiderations of the Jewish Community*. Ed. by David N. Myers

David Malkier, "The Ghetto Republic" *The Jews of Early Modern Venice*. Ed. by Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001

Benjamin Ravid, "All Ghettos were Jewish Quarters but not all Jewish Quarters were Ghettos" in *The Frankfurter Judengasse*

11 Port Jews : Livorno, Amsterdam, London, Odessa and Trieste

Reading: Francesca Trivellato, "The Port Jews of Livorno and Their Global Networks of Trade in the Early Modern Period" *Jewish Culture and History* 7,1-2 (2004) 31-48

Benjamin Ravid, "A Tale of Three Cities and their "Raison D'Etat" : Ancona, Venice, Livorno, and the Competition for Jewish Merchants in the Sixteenth Century" *Mediterranean Historical Review* 6,2 (1991) 138-162

David Sorkin, "The Port Jew : Notes toward a Social Type" *Journal of Jewish Studies* 50,1 (1999) 87-97

David Cesarani, "The Forgotten Port Jews of London : Court Jews who were also Port Jews" *Jewish Culture and History* 4,2 (2001) 111-124

- Jonathan Israel, "The Dutch Republic and its Jews during the Conflict over the Spanish Succession (1699-1715)" *Dutch Jewish History* 2 (1989) 117-136
- Dubin, "Subjects into Citizens : Jewish Autonomy and Inclusion in Early Modern Livorno and Trieste" *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 5 (2006) 51-81
- Steven Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa* Ch 1-2
- Maria Vassilikou, "Greeks and Jews in Salonika and Odessa : inter-ethnic relations in cosmopolitan port cities" *Jewish Culture and History* 4,2 (2001) 155-172
- Patricia Herlihy, "Port Jews of Odessa and Trieste - a Tale of Two Cities" *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 2 (2003) 183-198
- John Klier, "A Port, not a Shtetl: Reflections on the Distinctiveness of Odessa" *Jewish Culture and History* 4,2 (2001) 173-178

18 **River Cities: Warsaw, Buda-Pest, Kiev, Vienna, St. Petersburg**

- Reading: Howard Lupovitch, "Beyond the Walls: The Beginnings of Pest Jewry" *Austrian History Yearbook*
- Daniel Stone, "Jews and the Urban Question in late Eighteenth Century Poland" *Slavic Review* 50,3 (1991) 531-541
- Israel Gutman, "The Undefined Town within a Town: A History of Jewish Settlement in the Western Districts of Warsaw" *Polin* 3
- Ela Bauer, "From the Salons to the Street : the Development of a Jewish Public Sphere in Warsaw at the End of the 19th Century" *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 7 (2008) 143-159
- Natan Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History, 1859-1914*, Ch 1
- Ben Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, Intro, ch 1-2
- Robert Wistrich, "Vienna, the Habsburg Empire and the Jews " *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 7 (1991) 317-327

25 **Communal Organization and the Urban Economy**

- Reading: Vera Bácskai, "Jewish Wholesale Merchants in Pest in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" in *Jews in the Hungarian Economy* 40-49
- Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, ch 4
- Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis*, ch 2-3

Nov 1 **Jewish Streets, Jewish Neighborhoods, Non-Jewish Neighbors**

- Reading: Berger, Heinrich, "Social Structure of the Jewish Quarter in Vienna during the Liberal Era (1850-1900)" *History of the Family* 8,4 (2003) 531-544
- Peter Schmidtbauer, "Households and Household Forms of Viennese Jews in 1857" *Journal of Family History* 5,4 (1980) 375-389
- Ivar Oxaal, "The Jews of pre-1914 Vienna : an exploration of basic sociological dimensions" *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 30 (1985) 395-432

Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, ch 3
Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis* Ch 5

8 Religious Outlook of Urban Jews I: Moderation and Progress

Reading: Siegel, Björn, "Facing Tradition : Adolf Jellinek and the Emergence of Modern Habsburg Jewry" *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 8 (2009) 319-344

Marsha Rozenblit, "The Struggle over Religious Reform in Nineteenth-Century Vienna" *AJS Review* 14,2 (1989) 179-221

Michael K. Silber, "The social composition of the Pest Radical Reform Society, 1848-1852" *Jewish Social Studies* 1,3 (1995) 99-128

Grill, Tobias, "Odessa's German Rabbi - the Paradigmatic Meaning of Simon Leon Schwabacher (1861-1888)" *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 2 (2003) 199-222

15 Religious Outlook of Urban Jews II: Orthodoxy in the City

Reading: David Rechter, "Galicia in Vienna : Jewish Refugees in the First World War" *Austrian History Yearbook* 28 (1997) 113-130

Robert Wistrich, "Zionism and its Religious Critics in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna" *Jewish History* 10,1 (1996) 93-111

Miklos Konrád, "Jews and Politics in Hungary in the Dualist Era, 1867-1914" *East European Jewish Affairs* 39,2 (2009) 167-186

Tobias Grill, "The Politicisation of Traditional Polish Jewry: Orthodox German Rabbis and the Founding of Agudas Ho-Ortodoksim and Dos yidishe vort in Gouvernement-General Warsaw, 1916-18" *East European Jewish Affairs*; Aug2009, Vol. 39 Issue 2

22 Assimilated or Secular?

Reading: Scott Ury, "On the Gallows" : the 'Politics of assimilation' in Turn-of-the-Century Warsaw" *Polin* 20 (2008) 339-353

Ben Nathans, " Mythologies and Realities of Jewish Life in Pre-Revolutionary St. Petersburg" *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 15 (1999) 107-148

Rozenblit, Marsha L, "Jewish Assimilation in Habsburg Vienna" *Assimilation and Community* (1992) 225-245

Steven Zipperstein, "Jewish Enlightenment in Odessa : Cultural Characteristics, 1794-1871" *Jewish Social Studies* 44, 1 (1982) 19-36

Michael Steinlauf, "Jews and Polish Theater in Nineteenth Century Warsaw" *Polish Review* 32,4 (1987) 439-458

29 Cosmopolitanism and Anti-Semitism

Reading: Robert Weinberg, "Workers, Pogroms, and the 1905 Revolution in Odessa" *Russian Review* 46,1 (1987) 53-75

Mary Gluck, "The Budapest Flâneur : Urban Modernity, Popular Culture, and the 'Jewish Question' in *fin-de-siècle* Hungary" *Jewish Social Studies* 10,3 (2004) 1-22

Robert Blobaum, "The Politics of Antisemitism in *fin-de-siècle* Warsaw" *Journal of Modern History* 73,2 (2001) 275-300

Jacques Kornberg, "Vienna, the 1890s : Jews in the Eyes of Their Defenders (the *Verein zur Abwehr des Antisemitismus*)" *Central European History* 28,2 (1995) 153-173

John Boyer, "Karl Lueger and the Viennese Jews" *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 26 (1981) 125-141

Nathans, *Beyond the Pale*, ch 7

Dec **5 The Lower East Side: Myth and Reality**

Reading: Beth Wenger, *New York Jews*, ch 1-2;
 Jeffrey Gurock, *Orthodox Jews*, ch 1-2, 4-7, 9
American Jewish Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective, ch 1-2, 4
 Beth Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression* ch 3-7

12 Tel Aviv and Jerusalem

Reading: Joachim Schnör, *From Dream to City* ch 1-2
 Anat Helman, *Young Tel Aviv: a Tale Two Cities*, ch. 1-2