Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern
History 203-2

JEWISH HISTORY II: EARLY MODERN, 1492-1789

Day/Time: TTH 11:00-12:20
Discussion Sections: F 9:00, F 10:00, F 3:00
Office Address: Harris Hall Room 317
Office Phone: (847) 467-3399
Email Address: yps@northwestern.edu
Maximum Enrollment: 45

COURSE DESCRIPTION: In 1492, the Spanish Catholic Kings issued a decree banishing Jews from the Iberian Peninsula and allowing converts to stay. In 1789, the French Revolutionary Parliament accepted Jews as legal citizens ushering in the era of Jewish emancipation. This course explores three centuries of radical changes that triggered the rise of more tolerant treatment of and attitude toward Jews. Students will analyze cultural, political, economic, and religious premises of this new tolerance. We will concentrate on the following major issues: early modern era of mercantilism that reshaped the Jewish community economically and culturally; the legalization of the process of readmission of Jews to urban centers from which they were expelled in medieval times; the spread of Jewish mysticism and the rise of Jewish religious revivalist movements; the impact of French Enlightenment on the rise of modern Jewish thought; the formation of Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jewish identity; and the revolutionary upheavals in Netherlands, Britain, and France that triggered the process of emancipation that bolstered Jewish integration into the fabric of European society.

AREA OF CONCENTRATION: Europe, Middle East

TEACHING METHOD: Combined lectures and interactive discussions

EVALUATION METHOD: Students’ grades will be based on three 2-page long response papers, final 9-page long research paper and active participation in class and group discussions (discussion and response papers: 40 percent; midterm: 30 percent; final: 30 percent)

TENTATIVE READING LIST: Readings available on Canvas

GRADING BASIS: ANC only (no P/N option)

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: Yohanan is the Crown Family Professor of Jewish Studies in History Department. He published more than one hundred articles and six books focusing on the economic, military, religious, cultural, literary, and political aspects of Jews in East Europe from tenth through twenty-first century. He is a Fellow at Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute and a Visiting Professor at Free Ukrainian University in Munich. Yohanan taught in Krakow, Moscow, Kiev, Jerusalem, Lviv, Warsaw, and Boston.