Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern
History 492-0-20

EARLY MODERN EUROPEAN JEWS: DOCUMENTS AND NARRATIVES

Day/Time: T 5:00-7:50
Office Address: Harris Hall Room 317
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Maximum Enrollment: 15

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a part of the two-quarter course designed for the Jewish Studies cluster graduate students and graduate students in the Humanities, particularly in History, Philosophy, and Religious Studies, to introduce them to the field of Jewish studies, methods, historical narratives and a plethora of primary sources (in translation). Using chronicles, legal texts, literary works, mystical and liturgical writings, epistles, autobiographies, and scientific and philosophical treatises, as well as material, visual, and artistic texts this course focuses on Jews in urban centers in Europe and Ottoman Empire between the 1450s and the 1780s. The course trains students to identify, explore, question, compare, and integrate primary sources of different genre within a broader picture of Jewish political, social, economic, religious, and cultural endeavors. Students will explore and analyze some of the major scholarly debates of contemporary Jewish historical writing, including the relationships between Jews and mercantile elites in early modern Europe; the rise of print and its role in intellectual exchange; clerical, political, and popular anti-Judaism; Jews’ economic and political roles in Christian and Islamic territories; the relationship of Jewish history and Jewish memory; and the role of millenarianism and messianic religious movements in shaping shared cultural spaces of Jews and Christians.

AREA OF CONCENTRATION: Europe

EVALUATION METHOD: Grades will be based on three page long analytical papers (analyzing a document), final 16-18 page long analytical paper and active participation in class discussions and book presentations.

TENTATIVE READING LIST:

1. Students are supposed to purchase a paperback edition of the three books
   a. Jonathan Israel, European Jewry in the Era of Mercantilism, 9781874774426
   b. Dean Phillip Bell, Jews in the Early Modern World, 9780742545182
   c. David Ruderman, Early Modern Jewry, 9780691152882

2. Students will read one major primary source (in translation) and one secondary source (usually, a monograph) from the assigned lists below.

3. Additional primary sources would be distributed by the instructor and also available on the internet at the website of Early Modern Workshop: Sources in Jewish History.

INSTRUCTOR PROFILE: Yohanan is the Crown Family Professor of Jewish Studies in History Department. He authored six books and taught at different universities including Harvard University, University of Warsaw, and Hebrew University, Jerusalem.