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. For research students the requirements as outlined by the History Department pertain.

2. Final Essay or Oral Exam: The final essay [ca 1200 words] or an 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  25%+25%
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. 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 Book Centre. The rest of the readings will be posted on Blackboard.

Calendar:

Week 1
September 3, 2013  Introduction  JS/MK

Readings

Enlightenment: Moses Mendelssohn and Immanuel Kant  MK

Readings


**Week 2**
September 10, 2013  **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 Reinharz, Jehuda (eds.): *The Jew in the Modern World*, pp. 114-144


**Week 3**
September 17, 2013  **The Rothschild Family**  JS

**Readings**

_Heinrich Heine_  MK

**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**
September 24, 2013  **Karl Marx**  MK

**Readings**
Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” (1844) (+Lasalle/Bernstein)
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/

**Benjamin Disraeli**  JS

**Readings**

**Week 5**
October 1, 2013  **Jewish Salons in Berlin: the emancipation of women**  MK

**Readings**

Hannah Arendt, Rahel Varnhagen : the life of a Jewish Woman; translated by Richard and Clara Winston, 74
[chapters: Jewess and Schlehmil pp.3-25 and One does not escape Jewishness pp.216-228]


**Giacomo Meyerbeer and Richard Wagner**  MK

**Readings**
http://users.belgacom.net/wagnerlibrary/prose/wagjuda.htm


Week 6  
October 8, 2013  Wissenschaft des Judentums (Science of Judaism) MK

Readings  

Abraham Geiger and liberal Judaism; the challenge of the nineteenth century. Compiled with a biographical introd. by Max Wiener. Translation from the German by Ernst J. Schlochauer. Philadelphia, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1962  
A Series of 34 Lectures, Breslau 1865. pp.149-157, pp.265-269, pp.283-293

Mordecai Kaplan JS

Readings  

Week 7  
October 15, 2013  Emile Durkheim and Alfred Dreyfus MK/JS

Readings  


Readings  

Making Sense of the Rennes Verdict: The Military Dimension of the Dreyfus Affair  
Week 8  
October 22, 2013  
**Theodor Herzl & Zionism**  

**Readings**  
Theodor Herzl. *The Jewish State*. Translated from the German by Sylvie D'Avigdor, This edition published in 1946 by the American Zionist Emergency Council,  


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Week 9  
October 29, 2013  
**Sigmund Freud**  

**Readings**  


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Week 10  
November 5, 2013  
**Cesare Lombroso and the Science of Crime**  

**Readings**  


**Albert Einstein, Fritz Haber and “Jewish” Science**

**Readings**


**Week 11**
**November 12, 2013**

**Readings**

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

**Walther Rathenau and Rosa Luxemburg**

**Readings**

[http://fax.libs.uga.edu/HN449xR2/#](http://fax.libs.uga.edu/HN449xR2/#)


Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven J. Zipperstein. Foreword Isaiah Berlin. Peter Halban
London 1986

pp.419-437

Week 12
November 19, 2013
Saul Bellow

Readings “The Bellarosa Connection” in Saul Bellow, Collected Stories, New York: Viking
Penguin, 2001, pp. 35-89

Primo Levi

Readings
Primo Levi, Survival in Auschwitz. The Nazi Assault on Humanity. Translated by Stuart

Down among the Dead Men: Levi and Dante in Hell. Lynn M. Gunzberg. In: Modern

Week 13
November 26, 2013
Responses to the Holocaust: Secular and Theological

Readings:
Hannah Arendt. Eichmann in Jerusalem. An exchange of letters between Gershon Scholem
and Hannah Arendt. The Jew as Pariah. pp.240-551

Hannah Arendt. The Jew as pariah : Jewish identity and politics in the modern age / Hannah

Theodor W. Adorno. Can One Live after Auschwitz? A Philosophical Reader. Ed. by Rolf
pp.391-426.


Amos Funkenstein, “Theological Responses to the Holocaust” in Perceptions of Jewish
Week 14
December 3, 2013

The “Jewish Mind”?
Is there Secular Judaism?

JS/MK

Readings

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