Course Description
This course explores the history and culture of Jews in Eastern Europe. Focusing on the Jewish societies in the Russian and Austrian Empires, the course seeks to map the Jewish experience from the late 1700s until the present through topics such as secularization, urbanization, migration, antisemitism, political movements, and war. We study the destruction of the Jewish societies in Eastern Europe during the Holocaust as well as Jewish memory and renewal in Eastern Europe since the end of Communism.

Course Goals
• Examine the cultures of Jews in Eastern Europe as well as the historical forces that transformed these societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
• Explore a variety of primary source materials and discuss their use as historical evidence.
• Write analytical, thesis-driven essays based on close reading of the course materials.

Required Course Materials
• Israel J. Singer, *The Brothers Ashkenazi* (Orig. 1936, New York: Other Press, 2010).

• Readings marked with * are available in the Course Reader. It can be purchased at Austin TXBooks, 2116 Guadalupe, across from the Harry Ransom Center.
• Material marked with # are available on-line through *The YIVO Encyclopedia of the Jews of Eastern Europe*. The encyclopedia can be accessed using this link: http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/
• Readings marked with @ are available through Blackboard.

All readings and other course materials are required

Assignments and Grading
Attendance and Participation 25%
Midterm (Oct 15) 20%
Essay Ashkenazi (Oct 31) 20%
Grynberg Essay (Nov 21) 10%
Take-Home Final Exam (Dec 6-13) 25%
Course Policies

Use of Electronic Equipment
The use of electronic equipment incl. laptops, net books, iPads, phones, MP3 players among others is not allowed during class. Failure to adhere to the course policy regarding the use of electronic equipment will be penalized.

Attendance and Participation
Lectures and class discussions are a significant part of this course. Therefore, attendance and participation are required. You are expected to have done the readings before you come to class. This will be essential for your ability to participate in discussion, group work, and occasional short writing exercises in class.

Although this course is lecture-based, in reality, the discussion and debate of ideas is central to every meeting. All viewpoints and perspectives are welcome as long as they meet the following criteria: they are delivered in a respectful manner and they are informed by the course materials. In sessions devoted entirely to discussion of books or films, your participation grade depends on your having done the readings before class as well as your ability to engage with the material and with your fellow students.

Make sure you have access to the text of the documents assigned in the course reader. You might be using them in class and it is important that you have the text in front of you.

You are expected to be on time for class. If you are consistently late or leave class early, this will affect your course grade. If you have any concerns about this, please contact me in the beginning of term.

If you are not comfortable speaking in class, think about other ways you might engage the material. For example, you can visit me during office hours to discuss readings and assignments.

Students with Disabilities
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (Video Phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd. It is essential that you inform Services for Students with Disabilities and me in the beginning of term so we can make appropriate accommodations.

Academic Dishonesty
Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another; submitting the same paper, or substantially similar papers, to meet requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned; depriving another student of necessary course materials; or interfering with another student’s work. Any act of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course and referral to Student Judicial Services.
Submission of Essays and Exams

- Instructions for essays and exams will be posted on BB.
- All written assignments can only be submitted in hard copy. **No email attachment of any written assignment will be accepted.**
- Essays are due on the dates listed on the syllabus. The penalty for late submissions is 3% per calendar day.

Schedule of Classes

**Week 1**

**Aug 29**  **Introduction: Topics, Readings, and Assignments**

**Week 2**

**Sep 3**  **What is Jewish Eastern Europe?**

**Sep 5**  **The World of East European Jews**


**Week 3**

**Sep 10**  **The State and the Jews**

*C.W. von Dohm, “Concerning the Amelioration of the Civil Status of the Jews” (1781)*

*J.D. Michaelis, “Arguments Against Dohm” (1782)

**Sep 12**  **The Habsburg Empire**

# “Galicia,” and “Bohemia and Moravia,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*

*Joseph II, “Edict of Tolerance” (1782)*

*Joseph II, “Edict of Tolerance for the Jews of Galicia” (1789)*

**Week 4**

**Sep 17**  **The Russian Empire**

# “Russia: Russian Empire,” & “Pale of Settlement,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*

*Alexander I, “Statutes Concerning the Organization of Jews” (1804)*

*Nicholas I, “Statutes Regarding the Military Service of Jews” (1827)*

*Nicholas I, “Delineation of the Pale of Settlement” (1835)*

*Maskilim to the Governors of the Pale, “A Jewish Program for Russification” (1840)*

*Alexander III, “The May Laws” (1882)*
Sep 19  
**Haskalah – the Jewish Enlightenment**  
# “Haskalah,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*
*O.A. Rabinowich, “Russian Must Be Our Mother Tongue” (1861)*  
*Society for the Promotion of Culture Among Jews, “Program” (1864)*  
*I.D. Levinsohn, “Yiddish is a Corrupt Jargon” (1828)*  
*P. Smolenskin, “Hebrew—Our National Fortress” (1868)*  
*J.L. Gordon, “Awake My People” (1866)*  

**Week 5**

Sep 24  
**Hasidism**  
# “Hasidism,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*
*S. Maimon, “The New Hasidim” (1793)*  
*Rabbinical Leaders of Vilna, “Excommunication of the Hasidim” (1772)*  
*B.M. Ettinger, “How I Became a Hasid” (1850)*

Sep 26  
**Acculturation and Traditionalism**  
# “Assimilation,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*
*J.L. Gordon, “For Whom Do I Toil?” (1871)*  
*J.L. Gordon, “The Tip of the Yud” (1875)*  
*P. Wengeroff, “European Culture Destroyed My Family” (1909)*  
*I.J. Reines, “The Modern Yeshivah of Lida” (1907)*

**Week 6**

Oct 1  
**Antisemitism**  
In-Class Film and Discussion: *The Longest Hatred* (1993)

Oct 3  
**Pogroms**  
# “Pogroms,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*
*N. Tchaykovsky, “The Massacre of Jews at Kishinev” (1903)*  
*Haim Bialik, “In the City of Slaughter,” (1903)*  
# “Babel, Isaac,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*
@Isaac Babel, “Story of My Dovecote” (on BB)

**Week 7**

Oct 8  
**Migration and Urbanization**  
Oct 10  Modern Jewish Politics
# “Bund,” in The YIVO Encyclopedia
*The Bund, “Decisions on the Nationality Question” (1899-1910)
*The BILU, “Manifesto” (1882)
*Leo Pinsker, “Auto-Emancipation” (1882)

Week 8

Oct 15 Midterm (in class)

Oct 17 Modern Jewish Culture: Sholem Aleichem’s Tevye
*M.M. Sforim, “My Soul Desired Yiddish” (1862)
# “Aleichem, Sholem” in YIVO Encyclopedia

Week 9

Oct 22 Old and New Worlds on the Screen: “East and West” (1923)
# “Cinema,” in The YIVO Encyclopedia

Oct 24 World War I
# “World War I,” in The YIVO Encyclopedia
# “Rapoport, Shlome Zaynl,” (Ansky), in The YIVO Encyclopedia

Week 10

Oct 29 The Russian Revolution and the Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism
*J. Stalin, “The Jews Are Not a Nation” (1913)
*The Provisional Government, “Emancipation by the March Revolution” (1917)
*Yevsektia, “The Liquidation of Bourgeois Jewish Institutions” (1918)
*A Group of Jewish Soldiers in the Red Army, “Appeal to Jewish Workers and Toilers” (1920)

Oct 31 Discussion of The Brothers Ashkenazi (essay due in class)
Week 11

Nov 5  Soviet Utopia
# “Birobidzhan,” in *YIVO Encyclopedia*
In-Class Film Excerpt and Discussion: “Seekers of Happiness” (USSR, 1934)

Nov 7  Zionist Utopia
In-Class Film Excerpt and Discussion: “Land of Promise,” (Palestine, 1935)
*M. Nordau, “Jewry of Muscle” (1903)*
*D. Frankel, “Kibbutz Hakhsharah: A Memoir” (1935)*
*H. Hazaz, “The Sermon” (1942)*

Week 12

Nov 12 The Holocaust in Eastern Europe
# “Holocaust: An Overview,” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*
# “Ghettos” & “Life in the Ghettos” in *The YIVO Encyclopedia*

Nov 14 War of Annihilation – 1941 and After

Week 13

Nov 19 Discussion of *The Jewish War and The Victory*
Henryk Grynberg, *The Jewish War* (all)

Nov 21 New Beginnings, Homelands Old and New (essay due in class)
Henryk Grynberg, *The Victory* (all)

Week 14

Nov 26 1950s – Stalinism and antisemitism
Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence*, 144-195

Nov 28 Thanksgiving Holiday – No Class
Week 15

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Jewish Life in Eastern Europe Today – Memory and Renewal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 5</td>
<td>Last class – reflections and instructions for take-home final</td>
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<td>Final Exam (will be posted on BB on Dec 6 and is due a week later)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 13</td>
<td>Take-Home Final Exam due in my office by 5 pm.</td>
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Reading Primary Sources: A Brief Guide

TIP: Most readings marked with * are primary sources.

How to approach a primary source?

Author

• Who was the author?
• When was it written? (historical context)

Purpose or Message

• Why was the document produced and why has it survived?
• Is the author simply providing information or trying to lead the audience to a particular conclusion?
• What kind of evidence does the author introduce to support a thesis or a claim in the source? Why was this evidence chosen?

Audience

• Who was the intended audience for this document?

Point of View

• All authors have biases, prejudices, and assumptions that influence their perspective or point of view!
• What background factors might influence the author’s point of view?
• Is the author trustworthy? How do you know?

Tone and Language

• What is the tone of the source? What is the author’s attitude toward the subject?
• Is there a single tone employed throughout the document or does it vary from part to part?

Significance

• How does the source help explain the event or topic being explored? Could the event or issue be explained as fully without the document?
• Does the source offer unique insights or alternative information about the topic?
• Is the explanation or interpretation in this document different from others?
• What does it bring to light about a certain historical period or event?