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**HIST 1976R S01**

**Early Modern Globalization: Jewish Economic Activity, 1500-1800**

Spring 2014

Prof. Adam Teller

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What can the experience of a minority group like the Jews teach us about the roots of globalization? What were the economic, political, and cultural conditions that allowed early modern Jewish merchants to create economic networks stretching from India to the New World? We will answer these questions by examining the connections and interactions between four major Jewish centers: Ottoman Jewry in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Port Jews of Amsterdam and London, Polish-Jewish estate managers in Ukraine, and the Court Jews of central Europe. We will see how European expansion exploited - and was exploited by - these Jewish entrepreneurs.

Over the course of the semester students will be expected to write three response papers (1,500-2,000 words each) on major monographs in the field. In addition, students will write a research paper (4,000-5,000 words) on a topic to be determined. It will be due by 5/20.

Each topic in the syllabus will be covered in the week. Classes will combine a frontal lecture with open discussions of the week’s readings and primary sources in English translation. Students will be expected to begin each week ready to discuss that week’s readings in class. Active participation in class discussions will form part of the final grade for the course.

No prior knowledge of Jewish, European or economic history is required.

Course Goals and Objectives

By introducing students to the basic themes of early modern Jewish economic history in the widest possible context, this course will :

1. Situate the history of the Jews within a broader history of the early

modern world.

1. Encourage reflection and critical comparison of a range of methodological

approaches to historical research in the fields not only of economic, but also of social and cultural history.

1. Give the student the tools he or she needs to write a research paper in this

field.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. Identify the key issues in the study of early modern Jewish history,

particularly in the economic realm.

1. Read and critically analyze historical writing on early modern economic

history from different schools of historical research.

1. Write a research paper, identifying a suitable research question, and

constructing a logical argument to answer it based on a combination of primary and secondary sources.

*Grading*

1. *Class Participation 10%*
2. *Three Response Papers: 20% each = 60%*
3. *Research Paper 30%*

Readings

All the readings for the course are scanned and can be found on OCRA: Course password:

**EMG2014**

**Response Papers**

The response papers are on the following books:

1. Francesca Trivellato, ***The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period***, New Haven 2009

**Due Date: 2/20 -12:00pm**

2. Werner Sombart, *Jews and Modern Capitalism*, Glencoe Ill. 1951

**Due Date: 3/14 -12:00pm**

3. Moshe Rosman, *The Lords’ Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth During the 18th Century*, Cambridge Mass. 1990

**Due Date: 4/4 -12:00pm**

These books can all be purchased at the Brown Bookstore and will be put on reserve in the library.

The papers should be 1,500-2,000 words in length and should summarize the main arguments made in the study, showing how they are constructed and briefly pointing out major strengths and weaknesses.

**Research Paper**

One of the main goals of the course is to help students improve their skills in preparing and writing a research paper. We will devote a good deal of class discussion to this issue, examining it from a number of different viewpoints. I will provide students with a bibliography on which to base their research paper. Those who would prefer to write on a topic of their own choosing are encouraged to do so. I will meet with them separately to ensure that the topic is feasible, and to help them plan their work. All students are encouraged to contact me either by e-mail or during office hours to discuss their papers or any other issues arising from the course. **Due Date: 5/20 – 5pm.**

Contact

I can best be contacted by e-mail ([adam\_teller@brown.edu](mailto:adam_teller@brown.edu)).

My office: #301 in the Jewish Studies building,

163 George St. (corner of Brook)

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00-12:00 (and by appointment)

**TOPICS**

**1/27** **1. Introduction: Networks, Global, Jewish, and Other**

Reading:

* Albert-Laszlo Barabasi, *Linked: The New Science of Networks*, Cambridge

Mass. 2002, pp. 41-64, 199-217

* Dean Phillip Bell, *Jews in the Early Modern World*, Lanham 2008, pp. 35-92

Recommended Reading:

* Carlo M. Cipolla, *Between Two Cultures: An Introduction to*

*Economic History*, New York 1991, pp. 1-14

**2/3 2. Settling Eastern Europe**

Reading:

* Douglass C. North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, Princeton

2005, pp. 1-80

* Adam Teller, “Jews in the Polish Lithuanian Economy, 1453-1795”

(Unpublished Manuscript. On *Canvas*)

**2/10 3. Between East and West: Jewish Settlement in the Ottoman**

**Empire and in India**

Reading:

* Walter Zenner, *Minorities in the Middle: A Cross-Cultural Analysis*, New

York 1995, xi-xv, 1-26

* Yaron ben Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans*, Tubingen 2008, pp. 318-

350

**2/17 No Classes**

**2/20 First Response Paper Due: 12:00pm**

**2/24 4. Micro-Networks and Macro-Networks in Early Modern**

**Italy**

Reading:

* Stefanie Siegmund, *The Medici State and the Ghetto of Florence: The*

*Construction of an Early Modern Community*, Stanford 2006, pp. 292-331

* Benjamin Arbel, “Jews in International Trade: The Emergence of the

Levantines and the Ponentines”, in: R. Davis, B. Ravid (eds.), *The Jews of*

*Early Modern Venice*, Baltimore 2001, pp. 73-96

**3/3 5. The Jews and the Atlantic Economy**

Reading:

* Jonathan Israel, “The Sephardi Contribution to Economic Life and

Colonization in Europe and the New World (16th-18th Centuries)”, in:

Haim Beinart (ed.), *Moreshet Sepharad: The Sephardi Legacy*, II, Jerusalem

1992, pp. 365-398

* Seymour Drescher, “Jews and New Christians in the Atlantic Slave Trade”,

in: P. Bernardini, N. Fiering (eds.), *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to*

*the West*, New York-Oxford 2001, pp. 439-470

**3/10 6. In the New World**

Reading:

Jonathan Israel, *Diasporas within a Diaspora: Jews, Crypto-Jews and the World*

*Maritime Empires (1540-1740)*, Leiden 2002, pp. 97-123

* Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654-1820*, Baltimore

1995, pp. 4-51

**3/14 Second Response Paper Due: 12:00pm**

**3/17 7. Religion and Economy**

Reading:

Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, New York 1958,

48-78, 155-183, 192-204, 258-284

**3/24 Spring Break: No Classes**

**3/31 8. Jewish Women’s Economic Activity**

Reading:

* Natalie Zemon Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century*

*Lives*, Cambridge Mass. 1997, pp. 5-62

**4/4 Third Response Paper Due: 12:00pm**

**4/7 9. Polish-Lithuanian Jewry in the Service of the Magnates**

Reading:

* Gershon D. Hundert, *The Jews in a Polish Private Town: The Case of Opatów*

*in the Eighteenth Century*, Baltimore 1991, pp. 46-68

* Moshe Rosman, *The Lords’ Jews: Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-*

*Lithuanian Commonwealth During the 18th Century*, Cambridge Mass. 1990, pp. 106-142

**4/14, 4/21 No Classes: Jewish Holiday**

**4/17, 4/24 Consultations on Final Papers**

**4/28 10. The Court Jews of the Holy Roman Empire: Center of the Jewish**

**Global Economy**

Reading:

* Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism*, London 1998, pp.

101-118

* Selma Stern, *The Court Jew*, Philadelphia 1950, pp. 15-60

**5/5 11. Issues of Reform**: **Debates on the ‘Jewish Question’: London,**

**Paris, and Warsaw, 1753-1792**

Reading:

* Gershon D. Hundert, *Jews in Poland-Lithuania in the Eighteenth Century: A*

*Genealogy of Modernity*, Berkeley 2004, pp. 211-231

* Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews*, New York 1968,

pp.

**5/20 Research Paper Due: 5:00pm**