



The Ketubah: A Marriage Contract, a Work of Art, a Sign of Partnership, and the Financial Basis for Jewish Family Life

Money, Power, Sex, and Love: The Modern Jewish Family in Europe and America

JUDS1722-S01

Undergraduate Seminar, Spring 2014

Prof. Adam Teller

Syllabus

In the popular imagination, Jewish society survives because it puts the family at its center. However, this was by no means always the case. In different times and places, the family played a range of roles both affective and financial. The family was also an arena for the wielding of power by Jews. This was sometimes in the realm of sexual politics, but just as often in the relations between Jews and non-Jews. Since family life was very much under the control of Jewish women, the family was also the place in which women were able to wield power and respond to the patriarchal demands of the Jewish, rabbinic elite. Examining the family will thus allow us to examine the limits of the elite's control and construct a new, often surprising picture of how Jewish society actually functioned.

These are the issues at the heart of this seminar. Through discussions of primary sources (in translation) and modern research, we will use the tools of gender analysis to examine the history of the Jewish family from the mid-seventeenth century until today.

Topics discussed include: Jewish law and the family, women and the politics of the family economy, sex and the erotic, women's spirituality, the bourgeois Jewish family in imperial Germany, Jewish family life before the Holocaust, and changes in the status

of women and the role of the Jewish family in Israel and the contemporary USA.

This seminar will involve critical reading of primary sources in translation and class discussions of major historiographical issues. *No prior background in Jewish studies is necessary.* Students will be expected to come to class able to discuss in detail the historical literature prepared for that meeting and to apply their insights to class analyses of primary sources.

All the readings are scanned and available on OCRA. The password: MPSSL2014 (i.e. the acronym of the course title).

Over the course of the semester, students will be expected to write two 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.

Course Goals

1. To survey the major developments in the structure and functioning of the Jewish family in the modern era.
2. To explore the nature of gender relations in Jewish society during that period.
3. To situate these developments in the broader sweep of Jewish and European history.
4. To introduce students to the basic theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of gender.

Course Objectives

This course should give students the critical skills to:

1. Identify and assess those social and cultural forces at work in Jewish society that determine the nature of the Jewish family.
2. Read primary historical sources dealing with issues of gender in Jewish culture and society.
3. Identify and critique the major trends in modern Jewish historiography dealing with the history of women and the family.

Response Papers

Students will be expected to write papers of 1,500-2,000 words on the two following monographs.

- Iris Parush, *Reading Jewish Women: Marginality and Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Eastern European Jewish Society*, Hanover 2004
- Marion A. Kaplan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany*, New York 1991

The books themselves are available in the Brown Bookstore and will be put on reserve in the library. The due dates are:

1. Parush, *Reading Jewish Women* – **10/3**, 12:00pm
2. Kaplan, *Making of the Jewish Middle Class* – **10/29**, 12:00pm

Guiding questions to help preparing the papers will be distributed ahead of time.

In addition, students will be expected to read Philip Roth's novella, *Goodbye Columbus* by the last class (12/9):

Philip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus - And Five Short Stories*, Houghton Mifflin: Boston 1994, pp. 1-136.

It will be available in the Brown Bookstore and on reserve at the library.

Research Paper

Students will receive a topic and basic bibliography in consultation with me. They will be expected to compile a full bibliography and paper outline (by **11/18**), which will be discussed in class. They will submit the final version by **12/15**.

Grading

1. Class Participation 15%
2. Two Response Papers: 20% each = 40%
3. Research paper: Bibliography and First Draft: 15%
4. Final Paper: 30%

A Jewish Wedding in the Shtetl



Topics and Calendar

1) Methodological and Historical Background

9/4: Class

Source

- Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography* (trans. J. Clark Murray), Illinois 2001, pp. 59-78

Reading

- Joan Kelly, *Women, Theory and History: The Essays of Joan Kelly*, Chicago-London 1984, pp. 110-155

9/9: Class

Reading

- Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*, New York 1999, pp. 28-50, 230-235

- Moshe Rosman, "A Prolegomenon to the Study of Jewish Cultural History," *Jewish Studies: An Internet Journal* 1 (2002), 109-122

<http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/1-2002/Rosman.pdf>

2) The "Traditional" Jewish Family in Europe

9/11: Class

Source

- *The Life of Gluckel of Hameln, 1646-1724, Written by Herself* (trans. and ed. Beth-Zion Abrahams), London 1962, pp. 32-41

Reading

- Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, New York 1993, pp. 3-25, 113-124, 255-264, 313-316

9/16: Class

Reading

- Jacob Goldberg, "Jewish Marriage in Eighteenth Century Poland", *Polin* 10 (1997): 3-39

3) Extramarital Sex and Eroticism

9/18: Class

Source

- Ezekiel Landau, Responsum #27 (trans. A. Teller).

Reading

- David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*, New York 1992, pp. 60-85, 252-259

9/23: Class

Source

- Matt Goldish (ed.), *Jewish Questions: Responsa on Sephardic Life in the Early Modern Period*, Princeton 2008, pp. 125-158

Reading

- Yaron Ben-Naeh, "Moshko the Jew and his Gay Friends: Same-Sex Sexual Relations in Ottoman Jewish Society", *Journal of Early Modern History* 9 (2005):

79-105

9/25: No Class. Rosh Hashannah.

4) The Woman's Spiritual Life

9/30: Class

Reading

- Susan Starr Sered, *Women as Ritual Experts: The Religious Lives of Elderly Jewish Women in Jerusalem*, New York 1992, pp. 3-48, 142-151

10/2: Class

Source

- Tracy Guren Klirs (ed.), *The Merit of Our Mothers: A Bilingual Anthology of Jewish Women's Prayers*, Cincinnati 1992, pp. 12-45

Reading

- Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs: Listening to the Prayers of Early Modern Jewish Women*, Boston 1998, pp. 3-50

10/3 First Response Paper (on Parush, Reading Women) Due, 12:00pm

5) The Economic Role Of The Jewish Family in the 18th Century

10/7: Class

Source

- The Ruling of the Holy Council at Mir, 1751 (trans. A. Teller)

Reading

- Natalie Zemon Davis, "Religion and Capitalism Once Again: Jewish Merchant Culture in the Seventeenth Century" *Representations* 59 (1997): 56-84

10/9: No Class. Sukkot.

10/14: Class

Source

- *The Life of Gluckel of Hameln, 1646-1724, Written by Herself* (trans. and ed. Beth-Zion Abrahams), London 1962, pp. 74-105

Reading

- Debra Kaplan, "Women and Worth: Female Access to Property in Early Modern Urban Jewish Communities", *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 55 (2010), pp. 1-21

6) The German Jewish Woman in the Age of Enlightenment

10/21: Class

Source

- From an Order of the King of Prussia to the Commissars for Jewish Affairs, 1712 (Trans. A. Teller)

Reading

- Deborah Sadie Hertz, "Intermarriage in the Berlin Salons," *Central European History* 16/4 (1983): 303-346

10/23: Class

Source

- Selection from: Herz Homberg, *Imrei Shefer*, Vienna 1806 (trans. A. Teller)

Reading

- Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, New York 1993, pp. 151-182, 260-275

7) Ideological Approaches to Women in the Early 19th Century: Hasidism and Haskalah

10/28: Class

Source

- *In Praise of the Baal Shem Tov: The Earliest Collection of Legends about the Founder of Hasidism* (trans. and eds. Dan Ben-Amos and Alan Mintz), Philadelphia 1983, pp. 94-99

Reading

- Nehemia Polen "Miriam's Dance: Radical Egalitarianism in Hasidic Thought", *Modern Judaism* 12 (1992): 1-21

- Ada Rapoport-Albert, "On Women in Hasidism: S.A. Horodecky and the Maid of Ludmir Tradition" in: Ada Rapoport-Albert and Steven J. Zipperstein (eds.), *Jewish History: Essays in Honour of Chimen Abramsky*, London 1988, pp. 495-525

10/29 Second Response Paper (on Kaplan, Making of the Jewish Middle Class)
Due, 12:00pm

10/30: Class

Source

- Selections from: M.A. Ginzburg, *Aviezer*, Vilna 1864 (trans. A. Teller)

Reading

- David Biale, "Eros and Enlightenment: Love against Marriage in the East European Jewish Enlightenment", *Polin* 1 (1986): 49-67

8) The Bourgeois Revolution in Jewish Life in 19th Century Germany

11/4: Class

Reading

- Julius Carlebach, "Family Structure and the Position of Jewish Women", in: Werner E. Mosse, Arnold Paucker, Reinhard Rürup (eds.), *Revolution and Evolution: 1848 in German Jewish History*, Tübingen 1981, pp. 157-188 (Read also the response by Marian Kaplan, *ibid.*, pp. 189-204)

11/4: Initial Consultations on Paper Topics

11/6: Class

Source

- Monika Richarz (ed.), *Jewish Life in Germany: Memoirs from Three Centuries*, Bloomington 1991, pp. 1-40

Reading

- Paula E. Hyman, "The Modern Jewish Family: Image and Reality", in: David Kraemer (ed.), *The Jewish Family: Metaphor and Memory*, New York-Oxford 1989, pp. 179-193

9) The Jewish Family in 19th Century Eastern Europe

11/11: Class

Source

- Pauline Wengeroff, *Rememberings: The World of a Russian-Jewish Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (trans. Henny Wenkart), Bethesda 2000, pp. 153-213

Reading

- Shaul Stampfer, "Gender Differentiation and Education of the Jewish Woman in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe", *Polin* 7 (1992): 63-87

11/11: Bibliographical Consultations

11/13: No Class

11/18: Class

Reading

- ChaeRan Y. Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia*, Hanover 2002, pp. 11-75

- Moshe Rosman, "The History of Jewish Women in Early Modern Poland: An Assessment", *Polin* 18 (2005): 25-56

11/18: Consultations on Paper Outlines

10) The Promise of Something New: Zionism, Israel and the New Jewish Woman

11/20: Class

Source

- Marke Raider (ed.), *The Plough Woman: Records of the Pioneer Women of Palestine*, Hanover 2001, pp. 110-123

Reading

- David Biale, *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*, New York 1992, pp. 176-203

- Deborah S. Bernstein, "In Search of a New Female Identity: Pioneering Women in Prestate Israeli Society," *Shofar* 9/4 (1991): 78-91

11/25: Class **Creating a Research Paper: Research and Writing Techniques**

All participants will present their projects and draft papers for discussion in class

before writing.

11) Imminent Collapse? Jewish Youth and Family in Interwar Poland

12/2: Class

Reading

- Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars*, Indiana 1983, pp. 11-83

12/5: Class

Source

- Jeffrey Shandler (ed.), *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland Before the Holocaust*, New Haven-London 2002, pp.

Reading

- Alina Cala, "The Social Consciousness of Young Jews in Interwar Poland," *Polin* 8 (1994), pp. 42-65.

13) 'Adam and Eve on Delancey Street': The Sexual Politics of Postwar American Jewry

12/9: Class

Source

- Philip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus - And Five Short Stories*, Houghton Mifflin: Boston 1994, pp. 1-136

- Isaac Rosenfeld, "Adam and Eve on Delancey St," in: Mark Shechner (ed.), *Preserving the Hunger: An Isaac Rosenfeld Reader*, Detroit 1988, pp. 146-151

Reading

- Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women*, Seattle 1995, pp. 93-133

12/15 Research Paper due at 12:00pm