

Stanford University Department of History
Spring quarter 2010
History 287 E/ 387 E

Jewish Intellectuals and the Crisis of Modernity

Instructor: Arie M. Dubnov

Monday, 1:15 pm - 3:05 pm/ makeup classes: Friday, 10:00-12:00 (Room TBA)
260-002 (Pigott Hall)

Contact: dubnov@stanford.edu
Phone: (650) 723-1585
Office: 200-125 (Lane Hall)

Course Aim and Description

The course looks at intellectual responses of Jewish political thinkers to the age of extremes. We shall read from the writings of Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, and Isaiah Berlin. We shall examine their analyses of enlightenment, nationalism, socialism, and totalitarianism, their life stories, and their direct and indirect role in creating a transatlantic political discourse in postwar years. We will try to ask ourselves to what extent were their political and philosophical writings designed as a response to the maladies of the twentieth century, and to what extent did their Jewishness notify their writings, if at all. By doing so we shall be able to contextualize historically the fundamental features of Jewish intellectual activity after 1945.

*No prior knowledge of political science, philosophy and/or Jewish studies are required.

Course Requirements

General note: The course is a colloquium combining undergraduate and graduate students. Requirements differ according to the student's level. Bibliographical items marked with [∇] in the list below are to be read by *all* course participants; [α] items are for undergrad students; and [Ω] refers to items that should be read by graduate students.

*** *Please bring the primary texts with you to the class for our meetings.***

Students are expected to read all the sources and secondary literature according to their stage of study before the session and actively participate in class discussion.

The assignments of the course are as follows:

- i. **"Agenda Setting":** *Each graduate student* will be responsible for "agenda setting" (5-7 mins.) at least once during the term. In this oral presentation the student will:
 - a. Provide a short biographical portrait of the intellectual we are dealing with.
 - b. Summarize the main points of interest in the readings of that session, and will propose interesting questions and points for consideration and further discussion by the class.

The “agenda setting” will be accompanied by a short (3-4 pages) report summarizing the central arguments of the presentation, and should include a personal critical statement as well.

** Undergrad students are warmly encouraged to experience themselves with this as well, but are not formally obliged to do so as part of the course requirements.*

- ii. **Book Review:** each student will choose one book from the additional secondary readings list (see last section of this syllabus) and will write a short (3-4 pages) book review.
ALL book reviews must be submitted by **Monday, May 17, 2010**. Bring printout to class
- iii. **Final Paper:** A 15-25 pages long analytical essay. Subjects of the final essay should be discussed and coordinated in advance with the course instructor.
Final paper due midnight of **Friday, June 4, 2010**. Please send papers by e-mail.

Grading will be done as follows:

Undergrad Students (287 E):		Graduate Students (387E):	
Attendance and class participation:	25%	Attendance and class participation:	10%
Book Review:	25%	Book Review:	20%
Final Paper:	50%	“Agenda Setting”	20%
		Final Paper:	50%

- ❖ **Attendance:** Due to the rescheduling of two classes, attendance is not mandatory in ALL classes. Nonetheless, attendance in less than 8 out of the 10 meetings of the colloquium will affect grades.

Course Sessions and Reading List¹

* General recommendation: students are warmly encouraged to make use of the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* which is available online at <http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>. It offers excellent entries on individual thinkers and theoretical concepts we encounter during the reading and discussion.

1. Introduction: the Myth of the Non-Jewish Jew (29 March)

No prior reading required

2. Theodor Adorno, part I: Dialectic of Enlightenment (5 April)

Sources:

- [∇] Horkheimer, Max, and Adorno, Theodor W., *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1996).
- [∇] Adorno, Theodor W., "The Actuality of Philosophy," *Telos* 31 (Spring 1977), pp. 120-33; reprinted in Adorno, Theodor W., *The Adorno Reader*, Edited by O'Connor, Brian (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 23-39.

Secondary literature:

- [Ω] Rabinbach, Anson, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), chap. 5 ("The Cunning of Unreason").

****Please note - Class will NOT meet on Mon. 12 April.***

¹ Glossary: [∇] items that should be read by *all* course participants; [α] items are for undergrad students; and [Ω] refers to items that should be read by graduate students.

3. Theodor Adorno, part II: the Frankfurt School in America (19 April)

Sources:

[∇] Marcuse, Herbert, "Aggressiveness in Advanced Industrial Society (1967)," *Negations; Essays in Critical Theory*, (Boston,: Beacon Press, 1968) – Reprint available online at <http://www.wbenjamin.org/marcuse.html>
Fromm, Erich, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Avon Books, 1969), chaps 1 & 7.

Secondary literature:

Jay, Martin, *The Dialectical Imagination: History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute of Social Research, 1923-1950*, 2d ed., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). - Available to Stanford-affiliated users at: ACLS Humanities E-Book <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.00152> :
[Ω] – read the whole book.
[α] – chaps. 5-6 (The Frankfurt Institutes Analysis of Nazism and Critique of Mass Culture)
[Ω] Vannini, Phillip, "Adorno's Legacy: On Critical Theory, Cultural Studies, and the Global Political Economy of Britney Spears Inc.," in *Illuminations: The Critical Theory Project* [website] (May 2002), at <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/faculty/kellner/Illumina%20Folder/adornolegacy.htm>

****Please note - Class will NOT meet on Mon. 26 April.***

4. Hannah Arendt, part I: Explaining Totalitarianism (Friday, 30 April, 10:00-12:00/ Room TBA)

Sources:

[∇]Arendt, Hannah, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, 1966).

Secondary literature:

Gleason, Abbott, *Totalitarianism: The Inner History of the Cold War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), chaps. 3-4.
Herf, Jeffrey, "Post-Totalitarian Narratives in Germany: Reflections on Two Dictatorships after 1945 and 1989," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9 (2008), 161-186.

5. Hannah Arendt, part II: The Jew as Pariah (3 May)

Sources:

[V]Arendt, Hannah, "Zionism Reconsidered", "Statesman, Scientist, Builder", and "Answers to questions submitted by Samuel Grafton," in Arendt, *The Jew as Pariah : Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*, Edited by Feldman, Ron H. (New York: Grove Press, 1978), 343-374, 402-407, & 472-522.

Arendt, Hannah, *Between Past and Future, Six Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1968):

[Ω] – read the whole book.

[α] – read the essay "What Is Freedom?," in *Between Past and Future*, pp.143-171.

Secondary literature:

[Ω] Aschheim, Steven E., *Culture and Catastrophe: German and Jewish Confrontations with National Socialism and Other Crises* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), chap. 7 ("Small Forays, Grand Theories and Deep Origins: Current Trends in the Historiography of the Holocaust")

[Ω] Wolin, Richard, "The Ambivalence of German-Jewish Identity: Hannah Arendt in Jerusalem " *History and Memory* 8 (1996), 9-34.

****Please note - Class will NOT meet on Mon. 10 May.***

Deadline for submitting Book Reviews: 17 May.

6. Leo Strauss, part I: Athens or Jerusalem, Modernity or Antiquity? (17 May)

Sources:

Strauss, Leo, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965):

[Ω] – read the whole book.

[α] – read the first lecture.

[∇] Strauss, Leo, *Jerusalem and Athens: Some Preliminary Reflections*, Frank Cohen *Public Lectures in Judaic Affairs, 1967* (New York: City College, 1967).

[Ω] Bloom, Allan David, "Interpretive Essay," in Plato, *the Republic* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 305-436.

Secondary literature:

[Ω] Deutsch, Kenneth L., "Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime," in Deutsch, Kenneth L., and Murley, John A., eds., *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 1999), pp. 51-68.

[∇] Devigne, Robert, "Strauss and 'Straussianism': From the Ancients to the Moderns?," *Political Studies* 57 (2009), 592-616.

7. Leo Strauss, part II: Why We Remain Jews? (Friday, 21 May, 10:00-12:00/Room TBA)

Sources:

[∇] Strauss, Leo, "Why We Remain Jews: Can Jewish Faith and History Still Speak to Us? (1962)" in *Leo Strauss: Political Philosopher and Jewish Thinker*, Edited by Deutsch, Kenneth L. and Nicgorski, Walter (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), pp. 43-80.

*The same essay included also in Strauss, *Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity : Essays and Lectures in Modern Jewish Thought*, Edited by Green, Kenneth Hart (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997).

[∇] Strauss, Leo, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York,: Schocken Books, 1965), pp. 1-52 (preface to the English translation and chapter 1).

Secondary literature:

[Ω] Smith, Steven B., *Reading Leo Strauss: Politics, Philosophy, Judaism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), chaps. 1 & 8.

[∇] Luz, Ehud, "How to Read the Bible According to Leo Strauss," *Modern Judaism* 25 (2005), 264-284.

8. Isaiah Berlin, part I: Bifurcating the Concept of Liberty (24 May)

Sources:

- Berlin, Isaiah, *Four Essays on Liberty* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969):
[Ω] – read the whole book.
[α] – read the essay "Two Concepts of Liberty," on pp. 126-165.
- [∇] Berlin, Isaiah, "The Counter-Enlightenment," in *The Proper Study of Mankind: An Anthology of Essays*, eds. Hardy, Henry and Hausheer, Roger (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 243-268.

Secondary literature:

- [∇] Taylor, Charles, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty?," in *The Idea of Freedom: Essays in Honour of Isaiah Berlin*, ed. Ryan, Alan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 175-194.
- [Ω] Gray, John, *Isaiah Berlin* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), chaps. 2 & 6 ("Pluralism", "Agonistic Liberalism".)
- [Ω] Reed, Jamie, "From Logical Positivism to 'Metaphysical Rationalism': Isaiah Berlin on the 'Fallacy of Reduction' " *History of Political Thought* 29 (2008), 109-131.

9. Isaiah Berlin, part II: Jewish Emancipation and its Discontents (Friday, 28 May, 10:00-12:00/Room TBA)

Sources:

- [∇] Berlin, Isaiah, "Jewish Slavery and Emancipation," in *The Power of Ideas*, ed. Hardy, Henry (London: Pimlico, 2001), 162-185 & 195-204.
- [∇] Berlin, Isaiah, "Benjamin Disraeli, Karl Marx, and the Search for Identity," in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, ed. Hardy, Henry (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 252-286.

Secondary literature:

- [∇] Dubnov, Arie, "Between Liberalism and Jewish Nationalism: Young Isaiah Berlin on the Road Towards Diaspora Zionism," *Modern Intellectual History* 4 (2007), 303-326.
- Honneth, Axel, "Negative Freedom and Cultural Belonging: An Unhealthy Tension in the Political Philosophy of Isaiah Berlin," *Social Research* 66 (1999), 1063-1077.
- Margalit, Avishai, "Isaiah Berlin: Prince of the Exiles," in *Views in Review: Politics and Culture in the State of the Jews* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1998), 323-336.

**10. (Very) Tentative Conclusion: Was there a distinctively
Jewish Intellectual Response/Contribution to the Crisis of
Modernity?
[Cancelled due to Memorial Day]**

Sternhell, Zeev, *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), introduction and chaps. 7-8.

Birnbaum, Pierre, *Geography of Hope: Exile, the Enlightenment, Disassimilation*, Translated by Mandell, Charlotte *Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008), conclusion.

Deutscher, Isaac, "The Non-Jewish Jew," in Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*, Edited by Deutscher, Tamara (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

Additional recommended secondary literature:

* each student will choose one book from this list (see p. 2 above) and will write a short (3-4 pages) book review. **ALL book reviews must be submitted by MAY 17, 2010**

1) Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt school:

- Wheatland, Thomas, *The Frankfurt School in Exile* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).
- Sherman, David, *Sartre and Adorno : The Dialectics of Subjectivity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2007).
- Rush, Fred Leland, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Critical Theory* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- Kohlenbach, Margarete, and Geuss, Raymond, eds., *The Early Frankfurt School and Religion* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
- Horowitz, Asher, *Ethics at a Standstill : History and Subjectivity in Levinas and the Frankfurt School* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 2008).
- Richter, Gerhard, *Thought-Images : Frankfurt School Writers' Reflections from Damaged Life* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2007).
- Scheuerman, William E., *Frankfurt School Perspectives on Globalization, Democracy, and the Law* (New York: Routledge, 2008).
- Worrell, Mark P., *Dialectic of Solidarity : Labor, Antisemitism, and the Frankfurt School* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2008).
- Bottomore, T. B., *The Frankfurt School and Its Critics*, Rev. ed (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002).
- Nealon, Jeffrey T., and Irr, Caren, *Rethinking the Frankfurt School : Alternative Legacies of Cultural Critique* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002).
- Wolin, Richard, *The Frankfurt School Revisited : And Other Essays on Politics and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

2) Hannah Arendt:

- Kristeva, Julia, and Collins, Frank, *Hannah Arendt : Life Is a Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).
- Swift, Simon, *Hannah Arendt* (London: Routledge, 2009).
- Benhabib, Seyla, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996).
- Yakira, Elhanan, *Post-Zionism, Post-Holocaust: Three Essays on Denial, Forgetting, and the Delegitimation of Israel*, Translated by Swirsky, Michael (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- Young-Bruehl, Elisabeth, *Why Arendt Matters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
- Wolin, Richard, *Heidegger's Children : Hannah Arendt, Karl Löwith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- Hayden, Patrick, *Political Evil in a Global Age : Hannah Arendt and International Theory* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2009).

Lang, Anthony F., and Williams, John, *Hannah Arendt and International Relations : Readings across the Lines*, 1st Palgrave Macmillan pbk. ed (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Parekh, Serena, *Hannah Arendt and the Challenge of Modernity : A Phenomenology of Human Rights* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

3) Leo Strauss and 'Straussianism':

Aschheim, Steven E., *Beyond the Border : The German-Jewish Legacy Abroad* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Minowitz, Peter, *Straussophobia : Defending Leo Strauss and Straussians against Shadia Drury and Other Accusers* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2009).

Norton, Anne, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

Norton, Anne, *Leo Strauss and the Politics of American Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004)

Fleischacker, Samuel, *Heidegger's Jewish Followers : Essays on Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, Hans Jonas, and Emmanuel Levinas* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 2008).

Meier, Heinrich, *Leo Strauss and the Theologico-Political Problem*, Translated by Brainard, Marcus (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Deutsch, Kenneth L., and Murley, John A., eds. *Leo Strauss, the Straussians, and the American Regime* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 1999).

Sheppard, Eugene R., *Leo Strauss and the Politics of Exile: The Making of a Political Philosopher* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2006).

Tanguay, Daniel, *Leo Strauss : An Intellectual Biography*, 1st English ed (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007).

4) Isaiah Berlin:

Coles, Norman, *Human Nature and Human Values: Interpreting Isaiah Berlin* (Bexhill on Sea: Egerton House, 2004).

Gray, John, *Isaiah Berlin* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996).

Crowder, George, and Hardy, Henry eds., *The One and the Many: Reading Isaiah Berlin* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus, 2007).

Birnbaum, Pierre, *Geography of Hope: Exile, the Enlightenment, Disassimilation*, Translated by Mandell, Charlotte *Stanford Studies in Jewish History and Culture* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2008).

Polanowska-Sygułska, Beata, and Berlin, Isaiah, *Unfinished Dialogue* (Amherst: Prometheus, 2006).

Collini, Stefan, *Absent Minds: Intellectuals in Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Galston, William A., *Liberal Pluralism: The Implications of Value Pluralism for Political Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Cocks, Joan, *Passion and Paradox: Intellectuals Confront the National Question* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Levy, Jacob T., *The Multiculturalism of Fear* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Garrard, Graeme, *Counter-Enlightenments : From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2006).