

Brown University
Program in Judaic Studies

Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History, Politics & Government

JUDS 0980S – Spring Semester – 2009

Research Seminar, Thurs. 4:00-6:20

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 10:30-11:30 AM; Thursday 3:00-3:45 PM; or by appointment (through e-mail)

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Seminar Description & Goals

The purposes of this seminar are twofold: 1- to survey and analyze the central concepts, principles, values and institutions within the Jewish tradition and Jewish history – from Biblical times to the contemporary period – that are related to the question of "power/lessness", including political, social, and economic power; 2- to have each student develop analytical tools to carry out research on one specific "power/lessness" topic (thematic research), or how power in all its manifestations was viewed and (where relevant) also used within a particular historical period/place (contextual research).

The central questions that this seminar will address: What does Jewish history, as well as the normative religio-legal tradition, have to say about power relationships within the Jewish polity – between "branches" of government, as well as between governor/s and governed? What about power relationships vis-à-vis sovereign Gentile rulers when no Jewish State exists? Is the Jewish approach to the question of political power consistent over time or mutable depending on circumstances? What is the place of opposition to authority in the Jewish heritage? What types of war (and military practices) are legitimate and which aren't? What other types of "Jewish Power" have been in evidence over the past centuries in Jewish history, and how do they relate to political power? Are power relationships in the State of Israel today consonant with, or contradictory to, the Jewish heritage?

The course has no formal prerequisite. However, a rudimentary acquaintance with Jewish history is advisable. Knowledge of Hebrew is not required but lack of such knowledge will of necessity narrow somewhat the research topics from which you can choose.

Seminar Requirements

1. **Attendance & Participation:** The seminar is based in significant part on class discussion and presentations. Thus, class attendance is mandatory and each student's class participation will also be taken into account in the final grading. **10% of final grade**

2. **Reading/s Presentation in Class:** Each student is required to present a short (10-15 minute) presentation in class on one/two readings and accompanying questions (see below), to be

followed by class questions/discussion that the student presenter will lead (with the lecturer's backup). Each presenter is also required to add one additional discussion question (to be first emailed to the lecturer for approval). These presentation/discussions will take place during weeks 3-8 (in week 2, as "practice", we shall all discuss the questions together without a specific student giving a presentation; students are encouraged to bring an additional discussion to class). Depending on the number of students registered for the course, we could have one, two or even three such presentation per meeting. The lecturer will inform the class by email as to each presenter's topic and date, after the two-week "shopping period" is over.

15% of final grade

3. Research Paper: a- seminar study proposal; b- oral class presentation; c- final paper:

By **Feb. 19** (at the latest), you are to choose a seminar topic after discussion with the lecturer, preferably during office hours. You are then required to submit a formal proposal (maximum 500 words) by **March 11**, explaining what precisely you plan to study (concept, place, period, thinkers, etc.) accompanied by a preliminary list of between 5-10 sources (primary and/or secondary), with a one or two sentence explanation regarding the relevance of each source to your topic (the list and explanations are not included in the 500 word count).

You will then be given a date for the oral presentation of your study in class (**April 2, 16, 23, 30**), that should include most of your findings and conclusions. The length of the oral presentation will depend on the number of students in the course, varying from 20-40 minutes, in each case to be followed by class discussion.

For those presenting April 2, 16 and 23, the final paper is due May 4. For presenters on April 30, the paper is due **May 12**. If you have a preference or a problem with any specific presentation or paper due date, please notify the lecturer in advance so that he can assign dates that are convenient for you.

The length of the research paper and the number of sources cited will depend on the student's year in college (obviously, the paper subject chosen should also reflect the length sought; the lecturer will suggest narrowing or widening the topic when he feels that is necessary). The following are *suggested* and not mandatory page lengths and number of sources, but do indicate a "ballpark" estimation of what is sought. Students who wish to do *more* than this are welcome but only if the increased length actually adds something, i.e. the paper is not artificially extended. Pages = double-spaced, 12 font, 1 inch margins on all sides. The suggested page length below does not include title page and bibliography list, but does include footnotes or endnotes, as well as tables, figures etc. (when relevant).

Freshmen: 10-12 pages (8-12 sources)

Sophomores: 12-15 pages (12-15 sources)

Juniors: 15-20 pages (15-18 sources)

Seniors: 20-25 pages (20+ sources)

All paper submissions (proposals and final paper) are to be sent to the lecturer only by email (not printed out), as a WORD 2003 (or RTF) attachment – not WORD 2007.

See below for more detailed instructions. **Written Seminar proposal: 10% of final grade**

Oral presentation: 15% of final grade

Written assignment: 50% of final grade

There will be no class meeting on April 9 (First Day of Passover); there WILL be a class on April 16 (Eighth Day of Passover) but accommodations will be made for anyone celebrating the holiday (they will not be assigned an oral presentation). The **makeup class** will be on **April 30** during the Reading Period. This seminar will have no exam.

Course Topics, Readings, and Accompanying Discussion Questions (with class discussion dates)

Note: The "answers" to the discussion questions are not necessarily "dichotomous" (either/or; black or white). In several instances, the answer could well be variations of "it depends" (on the period; the thinker; the situation; the challenge/threat; etc.). Indeed, we are not necessarily looking for the "correct" answer as much as a well-grounded (in the readings, logic, historical facts, etc.) argument. The lecturer will also present a "mini-lecture" in each class session.

Jan. 22: Introduction - What do we mean by "Power"? "Jewish"? "History"? Other Basic Concepts in the Jewish Political Tradition

Bernard Susser & Eliezer Don-Yehiya, "Prolegomena to Jewish Political Theory," in Daniel Elazar (ed.) Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), pp. 117-138.

Daniel Elazar, "Introduction: The Jewish Political Tradition," in Kinship and Consent..., *ibid.*, pp. xv-xxvi.

Daniel Elazar, Covenant & Polity in Biblical Israel (NJ: Transaction Books, 1995), pp. 385-395. [These pages schematically survey the major Jewish political thinkers; as such this reading can constitute a source for a research paper based on one of these personalities.]

Menachem Elon, Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles, vol. 1 (Philadelphia & Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 1-5.

Joseph Nye, Jr., Soft Power (NY: Public Affairs, 2005), pp. 5-18:

http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=sFNfYvNtw5AC&dq=soft+power+nye&printsec=fro ntcover&source=web&ots=7pSYj989Op&sig=xDjc4tq_HZnu5ZTL5UW8G6BvIzE&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=4&ct=result#PPP1,M1

"Authority," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (the whole text):

<http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/authority/>

Jan. 29: Basic Survey of Jewish History until the Modern Period Focusing on Power & Powerlessness

Ruth Wisse, Jews and Power (NY: Schocken Books, 2007), pp. 3-78.

David Biale, Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History (NY: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 10-102.

Menachem Elon, Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles, vol. 1 (Philadelphia & Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 6-45.

Student Presentation Questions:

- 1- What are the main theses and supporting points of Wisse and Biale?
- 2- How do these two authors differ in their treatment of Power in Jewish History?
- 3- What are the main points of agreement (if any)?
- 4- What critiques can be addressed to their treatment of Power/lessness in Jewish History?
- 5- Does Elon support or contradict their main theses?
- 6- Is the overall thrust of Wisse and Biale in agreement or disagreement with Elazar (the previous section)? In what way/s?

Feb. 5: Basic Survey of Political Power & Powerlessness in Jewish History in the Modern Period (18th century – 1948)

Ruth Wisse, Jews and Power (NY: Schocken Books, 2007), pp. 79-131; 142-154; 173-184.

David Biale, Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History (NY: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 103-176; 206-210.

Eli Lederhendler, "Modern Jewish Politics," in Jack Wertheimer (ed.) The Modern Jewish Experience: A Reader's Guide (NY: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 181-188.

Menachem Elon, Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles, vol. 4 (Philadelphia & Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 1576-1588.

Chayim Nachman Bialik, "In the City of Slaughter," in Israel Efros (ed.), Complete Poetic Works of Hayyim Nahman Bialik (New York, 1948): 129-43 (Vol. I):

<http://www.history.umd.edu/Faculty/BCooperman/NewCity/Slaughter.html>

Yehuda Bauer, They Chose Life: Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1973), pp. 15-59.

Yisrael Gutman, "Reflections on Jewish Resistance under the Nazi German Occupation," in Peter Y. Medding (ed.), Jews and Violence: Images, Ideologies, Realities (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 109-125.

Yechiam Weitz, "Was Israel Kastner a Hero? Israel Kastner and the Problematics of Rescuing Hungarian Jewry during the Holocaust," in Menachem Mor (ed.) Crisis & Reaction: The Hero in Jewish History (Omaha, Nebraska: Creighton University Press, 1995), pp. 269-278.

Tom Segev, The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), chapters 1, 3, 4, 24 (pp. 15-34; 67-81; 82-110; 421-445).

Student Presentation Questions:

1- *What are the main theses and supporting points of Wisse and Biale regarding Jewish Power in the modern period outside of Israel?*

2- *What are the main theses and supporting points of Wisse and Biale regarding Jewish Power within the State of Israel, including its relationship with the Arab world?*

3- *Overall, are they in agreement or disagreement regarding questions 1 and/or 2?*

4- *While most Jewish historians divide Jewish history between pre-18th century and post-18th century (Emancipation etc.), this does not necessarily mean that such a division is relevant or correct regarding Jewish political history in general, and regarding Jewish "power & powerlessness" specifically. Do you agree with this course's division of Jewish history into pre-"modern" and "modern" with the 18th century as the dividing line from the standpoint of power and powerlessness? Explain your own position, based either on personal knowledge and/or some/all of the readings.*

5- *There are many who argue that the Holocaust is unique in Jewish history. As a disaster, perhaps. However, given everything you have read up to now in this course, would you say that the Holocaust is also "unique" from the perspective of Jewish Power & Powerlessness? Explain.*

6- *a) The relationship of the Zionist leadership in Palestine and later Israel to the Holocaust (during and after) has been marked by ambivalence and duality. Explain this statement from the perspective of Power and Powerlessness. b) Given the overall situation in the 1930s and 1940s, if you were in the Zionist leadership would and/or could you have done things differently regarding the European Holocaust? Explain.*

Feb. 12: Sovereignty – Forms of Jewish National Government and Internal Power Relationships

Daniel Elazar, "Covenant as the Basis of the Jewish Political Tradition," in Daniel Elazar (ed.) Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), pp. 9-46.

Daniel Elazar, Covenant & Polity in Biblical Israel (NJ: Transaction Books, 1995), pp. 193-212; 277-292; 295-317.

David Polish, Give Us A King: Legal-Religious Sources of Jewish Sovereignty (NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1989), pp. 8-32; or David Polish, "Rabbinic Views on Kingship – A Study in Jewish Sovereignty," Jewish Political Studies Review, vol. 3, nos. 1-2 (1991), pp. 67-90.

Aviezer Ravitzky, Religion and State in Jewish Philosophy: Models of Unity, Division, Collision and Subordination (Jerusalem: Israel Democracy Institute, 2002), pp. 85-121 ("Conflict and Contradiction: Rabbi Yitzchal Abrabanel").

Stuart Cohen, The Three Crowns: Structures of Communal Politics in Early Rabbinic Jewry (Cambridge & NY: Cambridge U Press, 1990), pp. 7-178.

Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar & Yair Loberbaum (eds.), The Jewish Political Tradition, Vol. 1 (Authority) (New Haven: Yale U Press, 2000), pp. 109-116; 120-126; 126-132; 143-147; 150-155.

Menachem Elon, Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles (Philadelphia & Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 54-59 (vol. 1); 481-485 (vol. 2).

Student Presentation Questions:

1- Does Cohen's "Three Crowns" strike you as universally applicable to all of Jewish political history? Explain.

2- The same question, but this time regarding Elazar's "Covenant Idea".

3- "If a concept can explain everything, it explains nothing." Does this well known aphorism fit the concepts of "Three Crowns" and "Covenant"? If so, explain how and also what you would suggest to narrow them somewhat. If not, explain what political regime phenomena they do not cover.

4- The Jewish Tradition has had a love-hate relationship with the idea of Kingship/ Monarchy. A) Explain and provide examples – both empirically and philosophically/ theologically – from the readings (not only or necessarily from this section of this course). B) How do commentators and others involved with the issue of Jewish Monarchy try to square this circle?

Feb. 19: Autonomy – Types of Jewish Communal Polities and their Relationship with the Gentile Sovereign

Daniel Elazar, "The Kehilla," in Daniel Elazar (ed.) Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), pp. 233-276. [Also found in Sam Lehman-Wilzig & Bernard Susser (eds.) Public Life in Israel and the Diaspora (Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1981), pp. 23-63.]

Menachem Elon, "On Power and Authority: The *Halakhic* Stance of the Traditional Community and Its Contemporary Implications," in Daniel Elazar (ed.) Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), pp. 293-315.

Menachem Elon, Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles (Philadelphia & Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 60-74 (vol. 1); pp. 486-493, 666-677, 679-730 (vol. 2).

Gerald J. Blidstein, "Individual and Community in the Middle Ages: *Halakhic Theory*," in Daniel Elazar (ed.) Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses (NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1997), pp. 327-369.

Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar & Yair Loberbaum (eds.), The Jewish Political Tradition, Vol. 1 (Authority) (New Haven: Yale U Press, 2000), pp. 381-386; 397-405; 415-418; 419-424; 431-436; 443-450.

Student Presentation Questions:

1- From the standpoint of "political regime" and internal power relationships between governors and governed, was there any sort of common denominator throughout all the major Jewish kehillot (communities) in the Middle Ages and early modern period?

2- Were the power relationships between different types of kehilla leaders, as well as between them and the public, a continuation of internal Biblical political relationships (in principle if not in exact nomenclature), or was the kehilla regime something new in Jewish history? Whatever your answer, how did the halakhic decisors deal with this question?

3- Were there proto-democratic elements in the politics of the kehilla? If so, what aspects were proto-democratic and which were not? If not, how do you explain away those elements that at first glance seem to have democratic tendencies?

4- "The Law of the Land is the Law". Did this tend to contradict (or at least complicate) internal Jewish kehilla autonomy, or rather did it complement (or at least reinforce) such politico-legal autonomy? Explain.

5- Jewish lay leadership in the Middle Ages was a fact without much of a philosophical basis. What were the intellectual (halakhic, philosophical etc.) devices used to legitimize its existence?

6- Does lay leadership undercut the concept of Three Crowns? Explain.

Feb. 26: Challenging Authority – Argument, Protest, Revolt, Rebellion in Jewish History and Thought

Michael Walzer, Exodus and Revolution (NY: Basic Books, 1986), pp. 21-40.

Nachman Ben-Yehuda, Political Assassinations by Jews: A Rhetorical Device for Justice (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1993), pp. 79-106; 117-124; 413-422.

Sam Lehman-Wilzig, "Am K'shey Oref: Oppositionism in the Jewish Political Tradition," JUDAISM: A Quarterly Journal, vol. 40, #1 (Winter 1991), pp. 16-38: http://profslw.com/wp-content/uploads/academic/13_am_kshe_oref.pdf

Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar & Yair Loberbaum (eds.), The Jewish Political Tradition, Vol. 1 (Authority) (New Haven: Yale U Press, 2000), pp. 309-320; 323-334; 355-361; 365-378.

Student Presentation Questions:

1- What does Walzer's analysis of the Egypt story suggest regarding Judaism's approach to powerlessness?

2- In your opinion, do the Walzer and Ben-Yehuda readings "agree" with Lehman-Wilzig's division of Jewish normative legitimacy between Argument & Protest on the one hand, and Rebellion & Revolt on the other?

3- To what extent do the sources brought in The Jewish Political Tradition support and/or undercut Lehman-Wilzig's analysis? Explain.

4- Are there intrinsic differences between the way Judaism and the Jews related to internal power relationships within the Galut Jewish Kehilla on the one hand, and to the external Gentile government on the other hand?

5- Maimonides is both revered and feared by large sections of traditional Jewry. There may be several reasons for this. Based on what he did, describe some of these reasons and explain how they are related to the issue of Jewish "political" power.

March 5: War & Self-Defense vs. Martyrdom & Pacifism in the Jewish Tradition

Monroe Rosenthal & Isaac Mozeson, Wars of the Jews (NY: Hippocrene Books, 1990), pp. 27-61. [A sketchy but useful intro to war in the Bible.]

Michael J. Broyde, "Just Wars, Just Battles and Just Conduct in Jewish Law: Jewish Law is Not a Suicide Pact!" in Lawrence Schiffman and Joel B. Wolowelsky (eds.), War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition (NJ: Yeshiva University Press & KTAV Publishing House, 2007), pp. 1-43.

Michael Walzer, "Commanded and Permitted Wars," in Michael Walzer (ed.), Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 149-168.

Aviezer Ravitzky, "Prohibited Wars," in Michael Walzer (ed.), Law, Politics, and Morality in Judaism (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 169-181.

Stuart Cohen, "The Quest for a Corpus of Jewish Military Ethics in Modern Israel," Journal of Jewish History, vol. 26, #1 (2007), pp. 35-42; 45-53; 55-66.

Stuart Cohen, Israel and its Army: From Cohesion to Collusion (NY: Routledge, 2008), pp. 136-154. [Note: The official "Spirit of the IDF" document will be handed out in class the previous week, as the basis for understanding this reading.]

[You may also read the Arye Edrei reading from the last section of this course that is relevant to this section as well.]

Student Presentation Questions:

1- Broyde notes: "...the Jewish tradition does not impose on its adherents any intrinsic limitations on the Halakhah of war...". A- Does this correspond to the Halakhic development in modern Israel of the "Law of Warfare" as Cohen describes this discourse? B- Does this contradict the "Spirit of the IDF" document and Cohen's analysis of acceptable Jewish warfare practice?

2- In your opinion (based in large part on what we have learned so far in this course), is Broyde's statement compatible with other elements of Jewish political morality, either individual or collective? Explain.

3- Walzer and Ravitzky together employ a tri-partite, normative categorization of war types. Do these categories mesh with the analyses of Broyde and/or Cohen? Explain.

4- Given the overall thrust of Jewish history and thought, would you say that overall Judaism is pacific or bellicose"? [In theory, the answer could be "it depends on...". If that is what you think, then list the "dependent variables".]

March 12: Beyond Jewish Politics & Religion – Economic, Social and Cultural Power

David Biale, Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History (NY: Schocken Books, 1986), pp. 177-205.

Vivian B. Mann & Richard I. Cohen (eds.) From Court Jews to the Rothschilds (Munich & New York: Prestel-Verlag and The Jewish Museum, NY, 1996), pp. 11-43.

Salo Baron, Arcadius Kahan and others, Economic History of the Jews, ed. Nachum Gross (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), pp. 211-228.

Sam Lehman-Wilzig, "The House of Rothschild: Prototype of the Transnational Organization," Jewish Social Studies, vol. XL, #3-4 (Summer-Fall, 1978), pp. 251-270:

<http://proflw.com/wp-content/uploads/academic/43.pdf>

- Seymour Martin Lipset & Earl Raab, Jews and the New American Scene (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), pp. 9-28; 75-110; 138-146.
- Paul Breines, Tough Jews: Political Fantasies and the Moral Dilemma of American Jewry (USA: Basic Books, 1990), pp. 71-121.
- Michael Berkowitz, "Crime and Redemption? American Jewish Gangsters, Violence, and the Fight against Nazism," in Peter Y. Medding (ed.), Jews and Violence: Images, Ideologies, Realities (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 95-105.
- Charles Murray, "Jewish Genius," Commentary Magazine (April 2007), pp. 29-35:
https://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewpdf.cfm?article_id=10855. See too the July-August issue (pp. 3-15): "Letters from Readers" (a fascinating exchange between readers and Murray regarding his article):
https://www.commentarymagazine.com/viewpdf.cfm?article_id=10855

Scan the following lists:

- 1) <http://www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/Jews-In-The-Media-Hollywood.htm>
- 2) <http://www.simpletoremember.com/vitals/JewishNobelPrizeWinners.htm>
- 3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Jewish_scientists
- 4) <http://thesolomonproject.org/book/byName.php>

Student Presentation Questions:

- 1- In the opinion of (some of) the authors above, and in your opinion, what are the factors behind Jewish "hyper-representation" in the fields of media, science, and other economic-social-cultural areas of life? What are the consequences?
- 2- In the modern world, can a strong Jewish economic, social and intellectual "presence" constitute an adequate substitute for traditional political power? Explain.
- 3- Are there any contemporary parallels to the Court Jews of the Middle Ages and early Modern Period? Explain.
- 4- In the 20th century, does the appearance of Jewish gangsters (and boxers) constitute a disproof of the Jewish stereotype? Explain.
- 5- Jews are always asking: "Is it good for the Jews?" Let's ask (and try to answer) this question regarding the "new image" of the "Tough Jew" in the post-Holocaust 20th century (whether from Israel or in Diaspora).

March 19: Modern "Dilemmas" – Jewish Power within a Secular Jewish State

- Gideon Shimoni, The Zionist Ideology (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England & Brandeis University Press, 1995), pp. 244(bottom)-252; 263(top)-266.
- Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar & Yair Loberbaum (eds.), The Jewish Political Tradition, Vol. 1 (Authority) (New Haven: Yale U Press, 2000), pp. 464-479.
- Menachem Elon, Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles, vol. 4 (Philadelphia & Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994), pp. 1596-1606; 1612-1618; 1623-1627; 1652-1660; 1690-1692; 1729-1739; 1839-1860; 1898-1917.
- Ehud Luz, "The Moral Price of Sovereignty: The Dispute About Use of Military Power Within Zionism," Modern Judaism, vol. 7, #1 (1987), pp. 51-98.
- Eliezer Don-Yehiye, "The Book and the Sword: The Nationalist Yeshivot and Political Radicalism in Israel", in Martin E. Marty, R. Scott Appleby, Nancy T. Ammerman, Robert Eric Frykenberg, Samuel C. Heilman & James Piscatori (Eds.) Accounting for Fundamentalisms: The Dynamic Character of Movements (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 264-274 (mid-chapter).

Eli Holzer, "Attitudes Towards the Use of Military Force in Ideological Currents in Religious Zionism," in Lawrence Schiffman and Joel B. Wolowelsky (eds.), War and Peace in the Jewish Tradition (NJ: Yeshiva University Press & KTAV Publishing House, 2007), pp. 341-413.

Arye Edrei, "Divine Spirit and Physical Power: Rabbi Shlomo Goren and the Military Ethic of the Israel Defense Forces," Theoretical Inquiries in Law, vol. 7, #1 (Jan. 2006), pp. 255-97.

Gabriel Sheffer, "Israeli-Diaspora Relations in Comparative Perspective," in Michael N. Barnett (ed.), Israel in Comparative Perspective (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 53-83.

Student Presentation Questions:

1- *"There is no possibility of reconciling the various 20th century religious Zionist approaches to the issue of national/military use of force." Do you agree or disagree with this statement, based on Holzer's survey? If you agree, which of these approach/es seems to be the most solidly grounded in traditional Jewish Halakhic thought as propounded through the ages? If you disagree, what are the specific circumstances in which agreement could be found among (almost) all the approaches noted by Holzer?*

2- *Return once again to the Broyde and Cohen readings in the March 5th class. Both authors are religiously observant Jews. Where would you place their analyses and arguments in Holzer's survey?*

3- *Luz offers a wide-ranging survey of the secular Zionist debate regarding the use of military power. Other authors in this section deal with the issue from the Religious Zionist perspective. Analyze and discuss the differences (and similarities, if any) between the two approaches, taking into account internal variations within each camp. This question relates to military power and not to "Messianism and power".*

4- *Based mainly on the Elon readings, would you say that the use of Jewish Law within the secular State of Israel is a continuation of historical patterns and principles, or a significant deviation from it? Explain.*

5- *Conversely, does the acceptance of and full cooperation with the secular Jewish State by the (non-ultra) Orthodox constitute a novum or a continuation of past patterns? If your answer is "continuation", from what period? (Provide examples). If a novum, how do they legitimize this theologically and halakhically?*

6- *In your opinion, does the existence of a sovereign Jewish state (Israel) add to or detract from Jewish "power" in Diaspora? What should the "power" relationship be between these two world Jewish foci?*

April 2, 16, 23, 30: Student Oral Presentations on their Research Study

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Oral Presentation & Research Paper Guidelines

Topic:

The research paper can be on almost any topic, conditional on the lecturer's approval. However, it cannot be on a subject that will be covered in-depth during the class meetings. Some general possibilities:

1- Analyzing a specific concept related to "power" in the Jewish tradition, over a relatively long period of time but NOT necessarily over ALL of Jewish history.

2- Choosing a specific period in Jewish history or a specific "place" (not necessarily one local community; it can be a region such as "Ashkenaz" or medieval Spain or North Africa), and discussing the actual power relationships between the Jews and Gentiles, as well as among the Jews themselves (within their communities).

3- Selecting an important Jewish thinker who had significant things to say about "Jewish power" broadly interpreted. Alternatively, selecting two contemporary thinkers who disagreed on the subject.

4- Studying the practical "power politics" (and writings, if any) of a specific Jewish leader in history, in light of Jewish tradition and thought.

Note: The above types of subjects belong properly to the Humanities (philosophy, history, etc.). Students with a solid Social Science background may choose a more "empirical" type of study, using social scientific methodology (e.g. survey questionnaire; in-depth interviewing; focus groups; etc.). For example:

5- How is "Jewish Power" perceived normatively/ethically by Jews of different stripes today? Is there a perceived difference between Jewish Power employed in Diaspora and by Israel?

6- Ditto – but by contemporary Gentiles?

7- How do contemporary Jews remember and evaluate Jewish Power/lessness during various points of Jewish history? Does this type of "remembrance" affect their beliefs or actions in any way?

Note: These types of social science research questions are best addressed from a comparative perspective, i.e. comparing the research question between different groups (e.g. Reform, Conservative, Orthodox, non-affiliated; Israelis vs. Americans; Holocaust survivors or war veterans vs. younger generation without military or personal anti-semitic victimization; etc.)

Technical Aspects:

The research paper must be typed, double space, 12 font (for the text; a bit more for headlines etc.) – preferably Ariel or Times New Roman or **Verdana**. See "Seminar Requirements" section (parag. 3) at the start of this syllabus for the paper's word length and number of sources.

Any standard reference style (footnotes/endnotes; bibliography; etc.) is acceptable as long as it is employed consistently throughout the paper.

The paper will also be graded on "composition": organization and flow of the text, grammar, spelling, punctuation. The lecturer does not expect you to write like George Will but general sloppiness will lead to grade reduction.

Grading:

Beyond the technical elements noted above, the two main criteria for grading this paper are:

1- Comprehensive use of source material, along with the ability to evaluate which sources are the most relevant and useful. In other words, simply reading and citing reams of sources is not good scholarship if many of them don't add much to the general argument of the paper! Students are encouraged to use a mixture of academic journal articles and scholarly books. On the other hand, a non-scholarly source or two (e.g. highbrow magazines such as *The Nation* or *Commentary*; or even a *New York Times Magazine* article) is legitimate as well, if there is nothing of scholarly note written on the specific point. Obviously, any type of *primary* source material relevant to the topic is acceptable (newspaper caricatures; TV shows; rabbinic response; etc.).

2- Critical and creative thought. These are actually two different criteria. The first involves the ability to analyze the strength of each source's argument or evidence offered. Don't hesitate to critique a source when you feel that it is warranted by the evidence or even based on your personal logic! The second is your ability to make "original" points not found in the sources. Obviously, the lecturer does not expect you to make any significant "breakthroughs" in this paper and is not

looking for potential PhDs here. On the other hand, a paper that does a good job of finding, surveying and synthesizing the materials, but does not attempt to make an interesting "personal statement", will receive no higher than a B+. Again, this is not "Einstein originality" but rather an attempt on the part of the student to "add something new" to what we know – even if the "statement" is somewhat speculative (in which case the caveats should be made clear as well).

Oral Presentation:

Your presentation in class is not about "what I intend to do in my research" but rather must include your *actual* research findings – based on at least part of the evidence (if you have not finished all the reading and/or field work) – and tentative personal conclusions. The presentation should have the following sections with approximately the following times (assuming a 30 minute presentation – you might actually get less or more depending on the number of students in the course; these time units are suggestions and not mandatory):

- 1- The research question and why it is important or interesting (2-3 minutes).
- 2- The sources used and why specifically them; problems in finding or analyzing them; important differences of opinion between sources, if any (3-5 minutes).
- 3- [*For social science studies; not relevant to humanities research*] What are the research hypotheses? The methodology/ies used? Why it/them and not others? (3-4 minutes)
- 4- The results of your research – the evidence and conclusions (10-15 minutes)
- 5- The ramifications of your research: is it in dis/agreement with conventional wisdom and scholarship? with what we learned in the course (lectures and readings)? does it shed new light on the subject and/or raise new problems/questions? (3-5 minutes)
- 6- Future research: what still needs to be done on this topic? what type of further research can you suggest? based on which sources or methodology? (2-3 minutes)

You may use a PowerPoint slide presentation (or other A/V equipment) but this is NOT required. You may use notes but are forbidden to simply read word for word from a printed presentation. The lecturer does not expect your verbal presentation to be "polished", but you are expected to prepare adequately. If you have a bona fide, objective problem with talking in front of a group, please discuss this with the lecturer as soon as possible. But simple "stage fright" is natural – that's not enough of an "excuse". Your presentation will not be uploaded to YouTube or placed on FaceBook for all the world to see...

Feedback:

Each presentation will be followed by a class discussion, in which the other students are encouraged to offer constructive criticism, to help the presenter improve the study towards its final text version. Thus, you are not to send in your written paper at the same time as the oral presentation. In the final paper the lecturer will look for corrections/elaborations/additions based on class feedback. The lecturer too may offer his feedback in class – but only after the student audience has had its say.

Due Dates:

See above on the second page of this syllabus.

Notes:

1) Students are encouraged to discuss with the lecturer any problem or question during the course of researching and/or writing the paper – either during office hours or by email (during the Spring Break the lecturer will not be on campus and might not have constant access to email). The lecturer

does not expect students at this early stage of their academic career to be able to resolve all research issues. On the other hand, the lecturer is not willing to offer a list of readings on a silver platter to a student, without being satisfied that s/he has first made a serious attempt to find relevant sources.

2) Given the previous paragraph, the lecturer will NOT permit "corrections" to be made to a paper, nor is he willing to read "parts" of the paper in the "work-in-progress" stage. The final paper will be read only once – and the student will receive detailed feedback.