

History of Secular Humanistic Judaism – I and II

SHJ 501 – SHJ 502

May 2010

Syllabus

International Institute
for Secular Humanistic Judaism

Faculty: Rabbi Adam Chalom, Ph.D.

Course Description

How did Jewish life become so diverse today? Who were the first Jews to connect with Jewish culture independent of religion? And how did they lead to Secular Humanistic Judaism? These courses are a review of the major personalities who laid the foundation of a Secular Humanistic Judaism during the past three hundred years.

Required Texts

- Cousens, Bonnie ed. *Beyond Tradition: The Struggle for a New Jewish Identity*. Available from IISHJ.
- Gitelman, Zvi ed. *Religion or Ethnicity: Jewish Identities in Evolution* (Rutgers University Press, 2009). Available from <http://rutgerspress.rutgers.edu>.
- Hecht, Jennifer Michael. *Doubt: A History- The Great Doubters and Their Legacy of Innovation from Socrates and Jesus to Thomas Jefferson and Emily Dickinson*.
- Kogel & Katz, eds. *Judaism in a Secular Age: An Anthology of Secular Humanistic Jewish Thought*. Available from IISHJ.
- Levy, Karen ed. *The Early Modern European Roots of Secular Humanistic Judaism*. Available from IISHJ
- Malkin, Yaakov. *Epicurus and Apikorsim: The Influence of the Greek Epicurus and Jewish Apikorsim on Judaism*. Available from IISHJ.
- Muraskin, Bennett. *Humanist Readings in Jewish Folklore*. Available from IISHJ.
- Coursepack I and Coursepack II – prepared by IISHJ, distributed in PDF format

Assignments

1) Pre-Class: Choose your two favorite contributors to *Judaism in a Secular Age: an Anthology of Secular Humanistic Jewish Thought* and prepare a 10 minute discussion on each contributor.

2) SHJ 501 Paper: Students should complete one 10-20 page paper (12 point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor, related to material covered in SHJ 501 (units 1 through 10 below).

3) SHJ 502 Paper: Students should complete one 10-20 page paper (12 point font, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) on a topic to be determined in consultation with the instructor, related to material covered in SHJ 502 (units 11 through 20 below).

Readings

SHJ 501 – History of Secular Humanistic Judaism I

1. What are “Roots”?

Bauer, Yehuda. “Introduction” in Kogel & Katz, *Judaism in a Secular Age*.

Levy ed., *Roots of Secular Humanistic Judaism*, pp4-44.

Gregory Kaplan, “An Intellectual History of Secularism” – available online at

http://jbooks.com/secularculture/G_Kaplan.htm.

Barry Kosmin, “The New Order of the Ages” – available online at

<http://jbooks.com/secularculture/Kosmin.htm>.

Paul Shane, “Philosophical Roots of Secular Jewishness/Judaism” – available online at

<http://jbooks.com/secularculture/Shane.htm>.

2. Roots of Secular Humanistic Judaism in “Jewish Tradition”

Gitelman ed., *Religion or Ethnicity*, pp5-37

Biblical Books: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes

Pirke Avot, chapters 1-5 – available online at

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/680283/jewish/Ethics-of-the-Fathers.htm.

Yaakov Malkin, “Song of Songs: A Secular Masterpiece” – available online at

http://jbooks.com/secularculture/Malkin_Songs.htm.

3. The Apikoros and “Folk Tradition”

Malkin, *Epicurus and Apikorsim*, all

Muraskin, *Humanist Readings*, all

Levy ed., *Roots of Secular Humanistic Judaism*, pp62-80

Coursepack: Rabbinic Sources on the Apikoros and Aher/Elisha ben Avuyah

4. Jewish Philosophy and Medieval/Renaissance Judaism

Hecht, *Doubt: A History*, Chapter 2.

David Biale, "Not in the Heavens: the Premodern Roots of Jewish Secularism" *Contemplate* 2009 (p4-12). Available online <http://www.culturaljudaism.org/pdf/Biale.pdf>.

Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, "Knowledge" {*Sefer Ha-Madda*} – De'ot Ch. 1, 2; Teshuvot ch. 5 - http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/904958/jewish/Sefer-Madda.htm (read primary text - Chabad commentary optional/read at own risk).

Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, Chapter 31 – see pp. 326-327 of *A Maimonides Reader* ed. Isidore Twersky (Behrman House, 1972) – pages available online at.

<http://books.google.com/books?id=gpmH0BtxBmcC&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22a+maimonides+reader%22&cd=1#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

Coursepack: Philo, "On the Creation" 1-3; Selections of Medieval Spanish Jewish Poetry and Immanuel of Rome.

5. Spinoza

Gitelman ed., *Religion or Ethnicity*, pp38-66

Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, entry on "Spinoza"

Egon Friedler, "Heine: Father of Secular Judaism" – available online at

<http://jbooks.com/secularculture/Friedler.htm>.

Coursepack: Excommunication of Baruch Spinoza

6. Enlightenment/Haskala

Hecht, *Doubt: A History*, Ch. 7-8

Dawidowicz, Lucy. *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe*

(Syracuse University Press, 1996), p113-119, 145-147, 160-168. Available online at

<http://books.google.com/books?id=zMfwAsJrFV8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22the+golden+tradition%22&cd=2#v=onepage&q=&f=false>

Locke, John. *Two Treatises of Government* (London, 1688), sections 149-151 (in Chapter XIII) – available online at <http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext05/trgov10.txt> - search the page for "Sec. 149" to find it quickly.

Mendelssohn, Moses. *Jerusalem* (excerpt) – available online at

http://people.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/363_Transp/MendelssohnJerusalem.html.

Paine, Thomas. *The Age of Reason* (1793-4) Chapters 1-3, 17. Available online at

<http://www.thomaspaine.org/Archives/AOR1.html>.

The Jewish Encyclopedia, entry on "Solomon Maimon" – available online at

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=82&letter=M>

Coursepack: Naphtali Wessely, "Words of Peace and Truth;" Y.L. Gordon, "Awake My People;" David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, selection.

7. Emancipation and the Reform Movement

Cousens ed., *Beyond Tradition*, pp21-62

Gitelman ed., *Religion or Ethnicity*, pp104-130

Coursepack: "A Jewish Program of Russification;" Summary of Rabbinical Conferences; Pittsburgh Platforms of Reform Judaism: 1885 and 1999.

8. Wissenschaft des Judentums and modern Jewish Studies

Dawidowicz, *The Golden Tradition*, pp232-242. Available online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=zMfwAsJrFV8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22the+golden+tradition%22&cd=2#v=onepage&q=&f=false>
Coursepack: Immanuel Wolf, “On the Concept of a Science of Judaism”.

9. Yiddishists and Jewish Socialists

Cousens ed., *Beyond Tradition*, pp83-104
Levy ed., *Roots of Secular Humanistic Judaism*, pp47-61
Dawidowicz, *The Golden Tradition*, p411-422, 426-434. Available online at <http://books.google.com/books?id=zMfwAsJrFV8C&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22the+golden+tradition%22&cd=2#v=onepage&q=&f=false>
Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” – available at <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>.
Coursepack: Selected Socialist Yiddish Poets; Rosa Luxemburg, “No Room in My Heart for Jewish Suffering”.

10. Jewish Nationalism: Yiddishism, Cultural Autonomy, Modern Jewish Literature

Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp53-95
Coursepack: The Bund, “Decisions on the Nationality Question”.

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11. Cosmopolitanism and Universalism

Cousens ed., *Beyond Tradition*, p119-142
Gitelman ed., *Religion or Ethnicity*, pp90-103
Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp143-218
Coursepack: Felix Adler, “Challenge of Ethical Culture”

12. Reconstructionism and “Jewish Civilization”

Cousens ed., *Beyond Tradition*, pp63-82
Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp32-40

13. Zionism pre-1948

Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp11-27, 100-142
Coursepack: Avraham Shlonsky, “Amal {Toil}”

14. Zionism/Israel post-1948

Cousens, ed. *Beyond Tradition*, pp105-118
Gitelman ed., *Religion or Ethnicity*, pp147-170, 221-238
Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp299-364
Coursepack: Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, Selected Israeli poetry.

15. Secular Jewish Identities in Europe and America

Gitelman ed., *Religion or Ethnicity*, pp67-89, 131-146, 239-285.
Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp282-298
Jewish Currents May-June 2009 – articles by April Rosenblum and Lawrence Bush - available online at http://jewishcurrents.org/archive/JC_June.pdf

16. Modern Jewish Thought

Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp28-31

Coursepack: Jacob Glatsteyn, “Without Jews”; Primo Levi “In the Beginning”; Franz Kafka, “My Father’s Bourgeois Judaism”; Franz Rosenzweig, “Jewish Learning and the Return to Judaism”.

17. Humanist Philosophy: Ancient and Modern

Hecht, *Doubt: A History*, Introduction, Chapters 1, 3-6.

Epicurus, letter to Menoeceus – available online at <http://www.epicurus.net/en/menoceus.html> or at <http://classics.mit.edu/Epicurus/menoec.html>.

18. Humanist Philosophy: Ancient and Modern

Hecht, *Doubt: A History*, Chapters 9-10

Bertrand Russell, “Why I am Not a Christian” – available online at <http://www.positiveatheism.org/hist/russell0.htm>.

Coursepack: John Stuart Mill, *Utilitarianism* (selections) ; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (selections); Ayn Rand, *The Fountainhead* (selection); Jean Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Human Emotions* (selections); Robert Ingersoll, quotations; Humanist Manifestos (1933, 2003); Fred Edwards, “What is Humanism”.

19. Building a Movement: Secular Jewishness

Kogel & Katz, *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp260-281

“Responses” in *Jewish Currents* May-June 2009, pp56-69. Available online at http://jewishcurrents.org/archive/JC_June.pdf.

Hershl Hartman, “Towards a True Alliance of Humanistic and Secular Jews” – available online at <http://www.csjo.org/pages/essays/essayalliance.htm>.

Bennett Muraskin, “So You Want to be a Secular Humanist Jew” – available online at <http://www.csjo.org/pages/essays/essaysoyouwanttobe.htm>.

Morris Rosenfeld, “Secular Jewishness: What’s Jewish About it?” – available online at <http://www.csjo.org/pages/essays/essaywhatsjewish.htm>.

Coursepack: “Does Jewish Secularism Have a Future? Our Discussion Continues” and “Letters” from *Jewish Currents* Autumn 2009.

20. Building a Movement: Humanistic Judaism

Cousens ed., *Beyond Tradition*, pp153-184

Gitelman ed., *Religion or Ethnicity*, pp286-302

Kogel & Katz eds., *Judaism in a Secular Age*, pp221-259

“Judaism: The Atheist Rabbi” *Time* Jan. 29, 1965. Available online at

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,839200,00.html>.

Adam Chalom, “Humanistic Judaism and Sherwin Wine: The “Other Wing” of the Secular Jewish Movement” *Jewish Currents* May-June 2009, pp51-55 – available online at

http://jewishcurrents.org/archive/JC_June.pdf.

Sherwin Wine, “Reflections” in *A Life of Courage: Sherwin Wine and Humanistic Judaism*, pp277-310.