



Center for Urban History
of East Central Europe

Connecting (to) Histories: Engaging with the Urban Pasts and Displaying Jewish Heritage

**8th Summer School
July 10 – August 4, 2017**

VLADYSLAVA MOSKALETS

SYLLABUS

**"SOCIAL HISTORY OF THE JEWS: KEY ISSUES, METHODS, AND RESEARCH
POSSIBILITIES"**

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Social History of the Jews: Key Issues, Methods, and Research Possibilities

Syllabus

The field of social history has achieved the edge of its popularity in 1950-1980s. It was strongly connected with other disciplines, such as economics, demography, sociology, and allowed historians to reach a much wider range of research themes. Since the 1960s, the social history of the Jewish people became important and influential part of the studies. Historians were exploring the possibilities to study Jewish community with new tools and integrating different representatives of Jewish community – workers, women, immigrants, criminals - in a research. Since 1990s historians of Jewish past shifted their interest to cultural studies. However, in the last years, we can see an economic turn, which signifies the search for a new way to conduct a research of Jewish life, combining social and cultural history and offering a more broad view on what is social. This course aims to show the development of the Jewish social history as the field, giving an overview of the research issues and methods which may be useful for a historian. Five seminar lectures will include discussions on the latest major texts in social history as well as the work with primary sources.

1. Social history of the Jews: history of development

The lecture will trace the emergence of Jewish social history field and its main stages as well as general principles and methods. We will overview the most important research issues in the field trying to understand the process in general historiographical context. We will follow the dialog between cultural and social history of the Jews and understand the future options for development of the field.

Literature:

Todd M. Endelman "In Defense of Jewish Social History," in *Jewish Social Studies*, New Series, Vol.

7, No. 3 (Spring - Summer, 2001), pp. 52-67

C. Conrad, "Social History" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, ed. Neil H. Smelser, Paul B Baltes (Amsterdam, 2001), vol. 21, 1429914306.

2. Methodological issues: economic history

In this lecture we will explore the recent economic turn in Jewish history and growing interest in the topic. We will analyze the difference between economic history from the 1970s and the newest studies in the field. Particularly, we will focus on the recent historiography on Jewish international trading networks as the example, of new economic historic study.

Literature:

Rebecca Kobrin and Adam Teller, "Introduction," in *Purchasing power: the economics of modern Jewish history* (Philadelphia: Penn, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), pp. 1-27

Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Plumes: Ostrich Feathers, Jews, and a Lost World of Global Commerce* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008) (selected chapters)

3. Methodological issues: demography and family history

In this lecture, we will overview range of methods, including qualitative and quantitative, used to research Jewish family. We will focus on the structure of the Jewish family in Eastern Europe, marriage patterns and use of the statistical data which helps to overcome the stereotypes about a Jewish family.

Literature:

Jacob Goldberg "Jewish Marriage in Eighteenth-Century Poland," in *Jews in Early Modern Poland, Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, Volume 10, pp.

Shaul Stampfer "Love and Family Life among East European Jewry in the Modern Period," in *Families, Rabbis and Education Traditional Jewish Society in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe*

(Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2014)

4. **Methodological issues: ego-documents as social history source**

In this lecture we will explore the importance of closer look in social history as a way to challenge some generalizations or understand historical processes, such as acculturation more deeply, at the same time understanding the limits of ego-documents. We will read the excerpts of Dov-Ber of Bolechow as a source for the economic and social history of early modern Europe.

Literature:

The Memoirs of Ber of Bolechow, 1723-1805. Translated from the original Hebrew MS., with an introduction, notes and a map by Dr. M. Vishnitzer (London : Oxford University Press, 1922) (excerpts)

Gershon David Hundert "Bandits in Bolechów: Eighteenth-Century Jewish Memoirs in Context," in *Jewish History*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 2008, pp. 373-385

5. **Methodological issues: gender studies**

In this lecture we will look how gender approach is helpful for researching social aspects of the life of Jewish communities. Specific attention will be dedicated to the changes in gender roles in modern Jewish society. We will explore the case of German philanthropist and suffragette Berta Pappenheim as an example of how to struggle against white women slavery and philanthropy was a way of empowerment of middle-class Jewish women.

Literature:

Paula Hyman. "Gender and the Shaping of Modern Jewish Identities." *Jewish Social Studies* 8, no. 2 (2002): 153-161.