

Political Science 652  
The Jewish Political Tradition: Ideas and Experiences

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“Classic” Jewish literature (Bible, Talmud) contains no systematic, comprehensive works of political thought, but concepts and values in that literature have informed the political thinking and behavior of Jews for several thousand years. Jews have experienced politics both as a sovereign people and a dispersed minority. This course explores political ideas in Jewish sources and how they have played out under conditions of sovereignty and dispersion. We study Jewish political organization and communal life, political stratagems and ideology, probing the influence of environment, leadership, and inherited and borrowed ideas. We shall place the Jewish political experience in the larger context of minority and diaspora politics. The geographic focus of the course ranges from ancient and modern Israel, to Eastern Europe and the United States, with some reference to medieval Spain and modern Western Europe. Some comparisons will be made with other ethnic groups.

Requirements include two ten-page papers analyzing clusters of readings, an oral presentation, and a take-home final essay. The first paper will be due on Tuesday, February 20 and the second on Tuesday, March 27.

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Office hours are Tuesdays, 4:15-6:00 and by appointment.

A course pack will be available at Accucopy on William Street. Recommended for purchase is Zvi Gitelman, ed., The Quest for Utopia: Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions Through the Ages (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1992), paperback.

I. The Politics of an Ethno-Religious Culture

1. Zvi Gitelman, “Comparative Politics and the Jewish Political Experience,” in Gitelman, ed., The Quest for Utopia: Jewish Political Ideas and Institutions Through the Ages, 3-16.
2. Daniel Elazar, “Covenant as the Basis of the Jewish Political Tradition,” in Daniel Elazar, ed., Kinship and Consent (University Press of America, 1983) 21-56.
3. Steven Grosby, “The Biblical ‘Nation’ as a Problem for Philosophy,” Hebraic Political Studies, 1, 1 (Fall 2005), 7-23.

II. What is the Ideal Form of Government?

1. Bible. Selections from Deuteronomy and II Samuel in Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar and Yair Lorberbaum, eds, The Jewish

- Political Tradition [JPT-1], v. I (Yale University Press, 2000), 132-133, 120-126, 136-165, 109-126, 128-132.
2. Maimonides, Laws of Judges and Kings, in JPT-1, 143-147.
  3. Yoram Hazony, "Does the Bible Have a Political Teaching?" Hebraic Political Studies, 1,2 (Winter 2006), 137-161.
  4. Gerald Blidstein, "The Monarchic Imperative in Rabbinic Perspective," AJS Review, v. 7-8 (1982-83), 15-39.
  5. B. Netanyahu, Don Isaac Abravanel, Statesman and Philosopher (Jewish Publication Society, 1953) 150-194.
  6. Leo Strauss, "On Abravanel's Philosophical Tendency and Political Teaching," in J.B. Trend, and H. Loewe, Isaac Abravanel, Cambridge University Press, 1937.
  7. Milton Konvitz, Judaism and the American Idea (Cornell University Press, ch. 3 (69-90) and ch. 6 (161-180)).

### III. Leadership

1. Stuart Cohen, "Kings, Priests and Prophets: Patterns of Constitutional Discourse and Constitutional Conflict in Ancient Israel," The Quest for Utopia, 17-40.
2. Aaron Wildavsky, The Nursing Father: Moses as a Political Leader (University of Alabama Press, 1984), 17-26, 123-233.
3. JPT-1 on Kings, Prophets and Priests. Pps. 116-120, 199-243, 244-71, 285-6, 289-93, 299-306.
4. Michael Walzer, Menachem Lorberbaum, Noam Zohar and Ari Ackerman, eds. The Jewish Political Tradition, V. 2: Membership (Yale, 2003, pb) [JPT-2], 109-113, 124-131.

### IV. Community, Consent and Coercion

1. Shmuel A. Arthur Cygielman, Jewish Autonomy in Poland and Lithuania Until 1648 (1997), 47-99.
2. Gerald Blidstein, "Individual and Community in the Middle Ages: Halakhic Theory," in Elazar, Kinship and Consent, 215-256.
3. JPT-1, 381-86, 399-401, 420-09.

### V. Liberalism, Multiculturalism and the Jews

1. Paula Hyman, "Was there a 'Jewish Politics' in Western and Central Europe?" Quest for Utopia, 105-18.
2. Introduction to David Biale, Michael Galchinsky and Susannah Heschel, eds., Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism (University of California Press, 1998).
3. Geoffrey Levey, "The Liberalism of American Jews—Has it Been Explained?" British Journal of Political Science, 26 (1966), 369-401.
4. Geoffrey Levey, "Toward a Theory of Disproportionate American Liberalism," in Peter Medding, ed., Values, Interests and Identity: Studies in Contemporary Jewry, XI (1995), 64-85.

## VI. Stratagems of Survival

1. Bible. Book (Scroll) of Esther.
2. JPT-1, 431-50.
3. Menasseh Ben Israel, "How Profitable the Nation of the Jews Are;" "The Appointment of Samson Wertheimer;" Joseph II, "Edict of Tolerance;" and Moses Mendelssohn, "Response to Dohm," in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., The Jew in the Modern World (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford University Press, 1995), pps. 10-13, 18-20, 36-40, 44-47.

## VII. Emancipation and Jewish Politics in Western and Central Europe

1. Pierre Birnbaum and Ira Katznelson, "Emancipation and the Liberal Offer," in Birnbaum and Katznelson, Paths of Emancipation (Princeton University Press, 1995) 3-36.
2. Dominique Schnapper and Sylvie Strudel, "Ethnicity and the Jewish Vote: The French Case," in Robert Wistrich, ed., The Jewish World Since 1945 (Routledge, 1995), 231-48.
3. Andras Kovacs, "Jews and Politics in Hungary," in Values, Interests and Identity 50-63.
4. Geoffrey Alderman, "The Political Conservatism of the Jews in Britain," in *ibid.*, 101-16.
5. Geoffrey Alderman, "Jewish Political Attitudes and Voting Patterns in England," in Wistrich, The Jewish World, 249-268.

## VIII. Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe

1. Lucy Dawidowicz, The Golden Tradition (Shocken/Syracuse), 69-81.
2. Eli Lederhandler, The Road to Modern Jewish Politics (Oxford University Press, 1989), 8, 11-68, 133-157.
3. Louis Greenberg, The Jews in Russia V.II (Yale University Press, 1951) 138-159.
4. Jonathan Frankel, "Modern Jewish Politics East and West (1840-1939)," in Quest for Utopia, 81-104.

## IX. Secularization, Socialism, Communism

1. Karl Marx, On the Jewish Question (any edition)
2. J.L. Talmon, The Myth of the Nation and the Vision of Revolution (University of California Press, 1981) 169-177, 194-234.
3. Zvi Gitelman, A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present (Indiana University Press, second edition, 2001), 59-114.
4. Andre Gerrits, "Antisemitism and Anticommunism: The Myth of 'Judeo-Communism' in Eastern Europe," East European Jewish Affairs, 25, 1 (Summer 1995), 49-72.

5. Ben Adir, "But the World Does Move," and I.N. Steinberg, "For a Folkist Movement," in Joseph Leftwich, ed., The Way We Think (Yoseloff, 1969) v. 1, 106-19.
6. Daniel Blatman, "The Bund in Poland, 1935-1939," in Polin, 9 (1996), 58-82.

#### X. Zionism

1. Arthur Hertzberg, ed., The Zionist Idea, 14-100, 116-40, 178-230, 247-77, 314-67, 411-31, 557-70.

#### XII. The Holocaust and Jewish Political Failure

1. Henry Feingold, "Did American Jewry do Enough During the Holocaust?" (B.J. Rudolph Lecture, Syracuse University, 1985) 1-33.
2. Richard Breitman and Alan Kraut, American Refugee Policy and European Jewry 1933-1945, 80-111.
3. David Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews (Pantheon, 1984), 311-340.
4. Pamela Shatzkes, Holocaust and Rescue (Palgrave, 2002), 9-24, 216-39.
5. Irving Abella and Frank Bialystok, "Canada," in David Wyman, ed., The World Reacts to the Holocaust (Johns Hopkins, 1991) 749-781.
6. Andrzej Kunert, ed., Poles-Jews 1939-1945 (Warsaw: Instytut Dziedzictwa Narodowego, 2001), selections.
7. Yisrael Gutman, "The Attitude of the Poles to the Mass Deportations of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto in the Summer of 1942," in Rescue Attempts During the Holocaust (Yad Vashem, 1977) 399-422.
8. Czeslaw Milosz, "A Poor Pole Looks at the Ghetto" (1943).
9. David Engel, In the Shadow of Auschwitz: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1939-1942 (University of North Carolina, 1987) 203-13.
10. Yoav Gelber, "Zionist Policy and the Fate of European Jewry," in Michael Marrus, ed., The Nazi Holocaust, 8. Bystanders to the Holocaust (Meckler, 1989) 538-79.

#### XII. Israel as a Jewish State and an Ethnic Democracy

1. Daniel Elazar, "Israel as a Jewish State," Jewish Political Studies Review II, 3-4 (Fall 1990), 3-54.
2. Alan Dowty, "Jewish Political Traditions and Contemporary Israeli Politics," in *ibid.*, 55-84.
3. Yoav Peled, "Ethnic Democracy and the Legal Construction of Citizenship: Arab Citizens of the Jewish State," American Political Science Review 86, 2 (June 1992), pp. 432-443.
4. Sami Smooha, "Ethnic Democracy: Israel as an Archetype," Israel Studies, 2, 2 (Fall 1997), 198-241.
5. "Gentile Citizens of a Jewish State," in Walzer, et al, JPT-2, 522-561.