Syllabus

CHRIS. HEBRAISM IN MEDIEVAL & EARLY MODERN EUROPE - 39064

Last update 19-02-2014

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: History

Academic year: 2

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Aya Elyada

Coordinator Email: aya.elyada@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday, 12:00-13:00

Teaching Staff:
Dr. Aya Elyada
**Course/Module description:**
The course will explore the cultural and intellectual phenomenon of Christian Hebraism – the engagement of Christian scholars with the Hebrew language, as well as with other fields within Jewish Studies, such as Aramaic, rabbinical literature, Kabbalah, Yiddish, and Jewish history. After discussing its important medieval predecessors, we will examine this phenomenon during the Renaissance and Reformation, and into the 17th century. We will examine the various currents of Christian Hebraism; the identity of the Hebraists and their motivations to get involved with Jewish languages and texts; their attitudes toward the Jewish religion and culture; and the implication of this genre for the development of Christian scholarship, Christian-Jewish relations in medieval and early modern Europe, and the emergence of Jewish Studies in a later period.

**Course/Module aims:**
The course aims to introduce the students to the phenomenon of Christian Hebraism from the late Middle Ages and up to the beginning of the 17th century. It seeks to explore Christian Hebraism against the backdrop of various historical and cultural backgrounds, and to point out continuity and change in its development throughout the centuries.

**Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:**
- Explain the changes in Christian-Jewish polemic with the rise of the Mendicant orders
- Analyze how Nicholas of Lyra used Jewish sources in his Old Testament interpretation
- Describe the accusations raised against the Talmud in the 13th-14th centuries
- Explain Christian Kabbalah against the backdrop of renaissance culture
- Explain the main arguments in the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn Affair and the historical significance of this episode
- Assess and explain the impact of the Protestant Reformation on the evolution of Christian Hebraism
- Assess and explain the impact of the Catholic Reformation on the evolution of Christian Hebraism
- Analyze the reasons behind the rise of Christian ethnographic writing on Jews and Judaism and the genre's ideological framework
- Analyze the reasons behind the rise of Christian Yiddishism and the genre's ideological framework
- Critically assess and analyze the relations between Christian Hebraism and Philosemitism in the early modern period
Attendance requirements (%): 88%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: This seminar includes the reading and analysis of primary sources and secondary literature, and is dedicated mainly to students' discussions in class. In addition, students will present papers from the secondary literature to the class, as well as their own projects. The course also includes guidance in writing the final papers, and 1-2 guest lectures.

Course/Module Content:
1. Christian-Jewish relations in medieval Europe; 12th-century Christian Hebraism; the rise of the Mendicant orders and the turning point of the 13th century
2. Nicholas of Lyra and Old Testament interpretation
3. Anti-Jewish polemic and the war against the Talmud
4. Renaissance and Humanism; Christian Humanism
5. Christian Kabbalah
6. Christian Humanism and Old Testament interpretation; the Reuchlin-Pfefferkorn Affair
7. The Protestant Reformation
8. Protestant Hebraism in 16th-century Germany
9. The Council of Trent and 16th-century Catholic Hebraism
10. Christian Ethnographies
11. Christian Yiddishism
12. Christian Hebraism and Philosemitism in the early modern period

Required Reading:
Jerome Friedman, The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia, Athens, OH 1983, Introduction, Ch. 1 (esp. 12-24), Ch. 15
Frank E. Manuel, The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes, Cambridge, Mass. 1992, Ch. 1
Salo W. Baron, “Ghetto and Emancipation: Shall We Revise the Traditional View?” (1928), reprint in Leo W. Schwarz (ed.), The Menorah Treasury, Philadelphia 1964, 50-63
Aryeh Grabois, "The Hebraica Veritas and Jewish Christian Intellectual Relations in the 12th Century", Speculum 50 (1975) 613-634


Deeana Copeland Klepper, "Nicholas of Lyra and Franciscan Interest in Hebrew Scholarship", in Philip Krey and Lesley Smith (eds.), Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture, Leiden 2000, 289-311


Chaim Wirszubski, Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism, Jerusalem 1989, esp. 3-9 (Ch. 1), 161-169 (Ch. 14)

Jerome Friedman, The Most Ancient Testimony: Sixteenth-Century Christian-Hebraica in the Age of Renaissance Nostalgia, Athens, OH 1983, Ch. 4: Johannes Reuchlin

Joseph Dan, "The Kabbalah of Johannes Reuchlin and Its Historical Significance", in Joseph Dan (ed.), The Christian Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Books & Their Christian...


Daniel Menager, "Erasmus, the Intellectuals, and the Reuchlin Affair", in Erika Rummel (ed.), Biblical humanism and scholasticism in the age of Erasmus, Leiden 2008, Ch. 39-54

Heiko A Oberman, "Discovery of Hebrew and Discrimination Against the Jews: the "Veritas Hebraica" as Double-Edged Sword in Renaissance and Reformation", in Andrew C. Fix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (eds.), Germania illustrata; Essays on Early Modern Germany Presented to Gerald Strauss, Kirksville 1992, 19-34


David H. Price, Johannes Reuchlin and the Campaign to Destroy Jewish Books, Oxford 2011, Ch. 1, 4

Deena Aranoff, "Elijah Levita: A Jewish Hebraist", Jewish History 23 (2009), 17-40


Jerome Friedman, "Sebastian Mnster, the Jewish Mission, and Protestant Antisemitism", Archiv fr Reformationsgeschichte 70 (1979), 238-259


Fausto Parente, "The Index, the Holy Office, the Condemnation of the Talmud and Publication of Clement VIII's Index", in Gigliola Fragnito (ed.), Church Censorship and Culture in Early Modern Italy, Cambridge, UK 2001, 163-193
Yaacov Deutsch, Judaism in Christian Eyes: Early Modern Description of Jews and Judaism, New York 2012, Ch. 3
Aya Elyada, A Goy Who Speaks Yiddish: Christians and the Jewish Language in Early Modern Germany, Stanford, CA 2012, Introduction; Ch. 4
Adam Sutcliffe, Judaism and Enlightenment, NY 2003, Ch. 1
Shmuel Ettinger, "The Beginnings of the Change in the Attitude of European Society Towards the Jews", Scripta Hierosolymitana 7 (1961), 193-219

Additional Reading Material:
Deeana Copeland Klepper, The Insight of Unbelievers: Nicholas of Lyra and Christian Reading of Jewish Text in the Later Middle Ages, Philadelphia 2007
Erika Rummel, The Case Against Johann Reuchlin: Religious and Social Controversy in Sixteenth-Century Germany, Toronto 2002

Course/Module evaluation:
End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 10 %
Participation in Tutorials 20 %
Project work 70 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %