MODERN JUDAIC THOUGHT (I): RELIGION AND LIBERAL SOCIETY
Phi 435/Rel 435
Fall 2011
T: 3:30-6:15; HL 214
Zachary Braiterman

office hours: W 1:00-2:00, 509 HL
or by appt.:
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In this class, we will examine the encounter between religion and secularism that lies at the origins of modern Jewish thought and the creation of liberal culture in 19th century Germany. At the heart of the course are the impact of Emancipation, Enlightenment, and Romanticism on Judaism. Starting with Spinoza’s Theologico-Political Treatise, Mendelssohn’s “What is Enlightenment?” and Jerusalem, the course will conclude with Herman Cohen’s monumental The Religion of Reason. Along the way, we will examine the emergence of Reform Judaism and Modern Orthodox Judaism in works by Abraham Geiger and S.R. Hirsch. We will also dip into Heinrich Graetz’s magisterial The History of the Jews. Thematic emphasis goes to [1] reason, the imagination, and sentiment as defining features of modern religion, [2] the "essence of Judaism" and the dynamics of historical change, [3] politics and ethics, and [4] poetry and the aesthetics of ritual and ceremonial law.

Required Texts:
    Spinoza, A Theologico-Political Treatise
    Mendelssohn, Jerusalem
    Geiger, Abraham Geiger and Liberal Judaism
    Cohen, Religion of Reason
    COURSE READER (#1003 available at Campus Copies @ Marshall Sq. Mall)

Course Requirements:
    Class participation
    Weekly Critiques (1 page) (required, but not for credit) (due Tues.)
    Mid-term paper (5 pages)
    Final paper (10 pages)

Readings:

8/30 introduction (no assignment)

9/6 selections from Stuart Hampshire, Spinoza in COURSE READER
    Spinoza, A Theologico-Political Treatise, preface, chps. 1-2
9/13 Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, chps. 3-5
Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, chps. 6-7

Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, chps. 16-20

9/27 What is Enlightenment –Kant and Mendelssohn in COURSE READER
Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, section I

10/4 Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*, section II


Geiger, *Abraham Geiger and Liberal Judaism*, pp.87-137

**** FIRST PAPER DUE ****


11/1 Hirsch, *The 19 Letters* in COURSE READER
Hirsch, “Religion Allied to Progress” in COURSE READER

11/8 Graetz, “The Structure of Jewish History” in COURSE READER

11/15 Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, introduction (i.e. the author’s introduction, not the translator’s!!!) (i.e. the introduction that precedes chapter 1 on God’s uniqueness)
Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, chp. 8

11/22 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING


12/6 Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, chp. 16
Cohen, *Religion of Reason*, 17

**** FINAL PAPER DUE ON LAST DAY OF EXAMS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION, 501 HL ****