MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT: “GOD,” “WORLD,” AND “PERSON”

RELI/JSP/PHI 435
Fall 2013
T 3:30-6:15, Bowne 110
zbraiter@syr.edu
Zachary Braiterman

office: 509 HL, x5719
hours: by appt.

God, World, and Person—in this course, we critically explore core philosophical concepts and dynamics in the philosophical writings of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, two of the most important Jewish philosophers/philosophers of Judaism of the 20th century. In this class, we will historically identify and critically assess claims regarding personal experience (sex, death, relation, dialogue), social identity (community, society, politics), and religious experience (the encounter with God, the performance of ritual, textual interpretation). Particular attention goes to human subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and to the role of art and imagination in relation to religion and reason, and to the emergence of Judaism in the modern period.

texts:

Martin Buber On Judaism
Martin Buber I and Thou
Franz Rosenzweig, The Star of Redemption
Franz Rosenzweig, On Jewish Learning
Course Reader (#1002 at The Copy Centers @ Marshall Sq. Mall)

requirements:
weekly 1 page reading-critiques
class attendance and participation
1 five page paper
1 ten-twelve page paper

readings:

INTRODUCTION

8/27 Introduction to class (no assignment)

EARLY BUBER

9/3 “Address on Jewish Art” “Jewish Artists” in COURSE READER
selections from The Legend of the Baal Shem in COURSE READER
Asher Biemann “Aesthetic Education in Martin Buber: Jewish Renaissance and the
Artist” TBA
Biemann, “The Problem of Tradition and Reform in Jewish Renaissance and
Renaissancism” TBA
9/10  Crisis and Renewal: *On Judaism*, pp.3-21, 34-55
Zionism: *On Judaism*, pp.56-78 and Seltzer pp.626-42
Paul Mendes-Flohr, “Fin de Siècle Orientalism, the Ostjuden, and the Aesthetics of
Jewish Self-Affirmation” TBA

9/17  “Jewish Religiosity” and “Myth in Judaism” in *On Judaism*
Letter from Gustav Landauer to Buber, TBA
Paul Mendes-Flohr, selections from Mysticism and Dialogue TBA
Braiterman, selections from *Shape of Revelation*, chp 2 TBA

MARTIN BUBER AND FRANZ ROSENZWEIG: EARLY 1920s

9/24  *I and Thou*, prt. 1
*I and Thou*, prt. 2

10/1  *I and Thou*, prt. 3
Critique of Buber: Letter from Rosenzweig to Buber in Rivka Horowitz, *Buber's
Way to I and Thou* and Steven Katz, "Martin Buber's Epistemology" in
COURSE READER
Braiterman, selections from *Shape of Revelation*, chp3 TBA

10/8  *Star of Redemption*, INTRODUCTION
*Star of Redemption*, prt I: pp.34-5, 38-40, 41-2, 53-57, 60-1, 62-4,
70-3, 76-82, 83-90 (GOD, WORLD, "MAN")

10/15 *Star of Redemption*, prt. II, bk. 1: pp.112-16, 124-34, 150-5 (CREATION)
*Star of Redemption*, prt. II, bk. 2: pp.156-64, 167-88, 198-204 (REVELATION)

**** 1st PAPER DUE TODAY ****

(REDEMPTION)
Selection from Martin Kavka, *Jewish Messianism and the History of Philosophy*,
TBA

10/29  *Star of Redemption*, prt. III, bk. 1 (THE FIRE: JUDAISM)
*Star of Redemption*, prt. III, bk. 3 & Conclusion (THE STAR) (THE GATE)
TEACHING & LAW

11/5  Buber, "Herut" in On Judaism, pp.149-74  
Rosenzweig, “Revelation and Law” “The Builders,” The Commandments: Divine or Human?” in On Jewish Learning  
Rosenzweig, “Towards a Renaissance of Jewish Learning,” “Upon Opening the Jüdisches Lehrhaus” in On Jewish Learning

11/12  Buber, “The Person of Today and the Bible,” “The Language of Botschaft,” “On Word Choice in Translating the Bible” in COURSE READER  
Rosenzweig, Jehudah Halevi Afterword in COURSE READER

RESPONSE TO CRITICS

11/19  Siegfried Kracauer, selections from The Mass Ornament in COURSE READER  
Leo Strauss, preface to Spinoza’s Critique of Religion, from Jewish Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity in COURSE READER

12/3  Braunstein, Shape of Revelation, TBA  
Rosenzweig, “The Eternal” in COURSE READER  
Martin Buber, "Dialogue" in Between Man and Man in COURSE READER

FINAL PAPER DUE LAST DAY OF EXAMINATION PERIOD @ 501 HL