

Music/Jewish Studies 236 (Bascom Course, Communications B)  
Jewish Composers in the Early Modern--Modern Periods  
Fall, 2008  
Professor Jeanne Swack  
jswack@wisc.edu  
Office: Humanities 5535, 263-1969  
Office Hours: Tuesday 2-3 pm and by appointment.

## Syllabus

This course has two main objectives:

1. To study the role of the Jewish artist (in this case, composers and musicians) in Europe, the U.S, and elsewhere from the end of the sixteenth century to the present. Through this study we may consider the place that Jews occupied in the various societies and eras under discussion. To this end we must consider the place of the Jew in the larger society in which he or she lived: Were they accepted as full members of society? Could they remain practicing Jews and be active as composers and musicians? Were they expected to assimilate? Convert? Did they face discrimination, and if so, what form did it take? Did being Jewish affect their careers as composers? Was there something about their music that was specifically Jewish, or was it indistinguishable from the music of non-Jewish composers? Did the music fulfill any religious function? What was the reaction of the larger society to this music and to the composers themselves? How was Jewish nationalism expressed musically?

2. This course, as a Bascom course, is designed to teach critical reasoning, critical reading, writing, research, and communication skills. To this end, there will be regular writing assignments. Each student is expected to produce a writing portfolio of eight assignments (this is common to all Bascom courses, as is the total number of required pages). These will be divided into 2 essays (one ca. 4 pages and one ca. 8 pages including bibliography) requiring some library research and use of bibliographic tools, and 4 briefer essays or informal assignments (1-3 pages) in which you will discuss critically the readings and/or music assigned in class for that topic. Your listening journal (see below) and in-class exercises will count as the seventh and eighth assignments. During some classes I intend to concentrate on writing, including peer review of student papers and oral presentations. We will also study issues common to the conducting and presenting of research, such as paper organization, library and research skills, assessment of materials, and documentation. For each of the two longer essays, the students will present a draft, revise it, and have an individual conference with one of the Writing Fellows after the Writing Fellow has read the first draft. These essays will also be discussed in class.

The 8-page paper will constitute the final project for the course. For this paper, you will develop your own research topic. You must discuss your topic with me before proceeding. Some possible topics: a fuller treatment of any topic or composer discussed in this course, a composer not explored in this course (such as Kurt Weill, Paul Dessau,

John Zorn, Betty Olivero, Aaron Jay Kernis, many other choices), Jewish contributions to the development of jazz, liturgical composers, the klezmer revival, Jewish emigré composers during the Third Reich, etc.). We have some very interesting recordings of more music composed by Theresienstadt composers (including a children's opera), some fascinating examples of other compositions for the synagogue from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as a Passover oratorio by Dessau composed during the early years of the Third Reich (see me for this item if you are interested in writing on it). Please feel free to consult with the instructor at any point in the preparation of any of your writing assignments. As an excellent resource, please see the new series of recordings of music by Jewish composers in the US under the auspices of the Milken Archive (on the Naxos label).

Listening journal: I will be giving you listening assignments throughout the semester, and we will also be listening to music in class. In conjunction with the listening I would like you to keep a listening journal. I would prefer that you use a loose-leaf notebook for this purpose (or some other system with pages you can remove and put back later). In this journal I would like you to record your listening and your reactions to the assigned pieces, according to guidelines I will give you. No formal training in music is required for this. However, if you are a music major I expect that your remarks will be of a more technical nature. I will be collecting these journals from time to time.

There is no specific general textbook for this course. Rather, we will rely upon readings that will be available as PDF files on the Web as well as recordings of specific works or excerpts. Additional reserve material will be held in the Reserve section of Mills Music Library (basement of Memorial Library, behind the recordings desk). I have ordered one recommended but not required textbook: Rubin and Baron. *Music in Jewish History and Culture*. Although I did not absolutely list this book as required in the University Bookstore (another book I had ordered turned out to be out of print), this book is a guide to the history of Jewish music from ancient times to the present, and also will help you to arrive at a paper topic. I highly encourage you to buy it. The other readings and the required listening are available as course reserves via MyUW. There will be some readings to be done in the library as well.

#### Grading:

Listening journal: 10% (conscientiously carried-out journals, with all the required listening done, will earn a grade of A)

Final paper: 25%

4-page paper: 15%

4 short papers: 40% in aggregate; not all will receive a letter grade from the instructor  
Classroom participation and presentations: 10%.

Attendance at this class is required and attendance will be taken at each class. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences. After that your grade will be reduced by one step (A to AB, AB to B, etc.) for each additional unexcused absence. If you are ill, please provide documentation (ditto for family emergencies; if there are special circumstances please speak with me).

All late papers will be downgraded one step per day late (an A will go down to an AB, etc.). This may be waived by the instructor for a legitimate, documented excuse (illness, death in the family, or on special arrangement). E-mailing papers at midnight will not be an option!

Schedule (subject to alteration if necessary). More detailed handouts including specifics about the listening, required readings, questions to consider, and specific assignments will be distributed during the course of the semester.

Week 1, Sept. 3, 5

Introduction. **Listening: Salamone Rossi, selections from *Hashirim asher l'Shlomo***

Week 2, Sept. 8, 10, 12

Rossi, cont., Jewish musicians in Italy and Amsterdam in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Listening: Rossi, cont., two pieces from the Sephardic congregation in Amsterdam by Abraham Caceres, Music for the Dedication of the Siena Synagogue in 1786. This week will include a tour of Mills Music Library.**

Week 3, Sept. 15, 17, 19, **The Enlightenment and Emancipation, the entry of Jews into larger society in Germany** Jewish composers and musicians in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. 1: the rise of the Jewish virtuoso and composer in Germany, Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn, Ignaz Moscheles

**Listening: Felix Mendelssohn, excerpt from *Elijah***

Sept. 15: Assignment 1: brief essay due on Rossi and his *Hashirim asher l'Shlomo*.

Week 4, Sept. 22, 24, 26

Jewish composers and musicians in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. cont.

**Assignment 2: Précis due on article on Felix Mendelssohn. These will be presented in class in a “mini-seminar” on Sept. 24 and 26.**

**Listening: Felix Mendelssohn, excerpt from *Elijah* cont., Fanny Mendelssohn, piano cycle *Das Jahr*, “Januar,” “Februar” (January, February)**

Week 5, Sept. 29, Oct. 3 (no class on Oct. 1 due to Rosh Hashanah)

Jewish composers and musicians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century 2: Grand Opera in France, Meyerbeer, Offenbach, Halévy. This week will include an intensive session on research methods and documentation.

**Listening: Halévy's *La Juive* (The Jewish Woman), excerpt**

Week 6, October 6, 8, 10

Jewish composers in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. 3: The beginnings of “composed” music for the synagogue, Sulzer's *Schir Tzion*, Lewandowski, Anti-Semitic reactions to Jewish composers and musicians: the writings of Richard Wagner, *Das Judentum in der Musik* (“Jewishness in Music”)

**Listening: historical recordings of the Reform community in Berlin made just prior to Hitler's ascension to power, modern recordings of Lewandowski, Sulzer.**

**Assignment 3: Oct. 10, brief essay due on Halévy's *La Juive*.**

Week 7, October 13, 15, 17

Wagner cont., Jewish composers at the turn of the century in Vienna:

Mahler

**Listening: Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder*, Symphony No. 1 in D major, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement**

Week 8, October 20, 22, 24

The St. Petersburg School of Jewish composers at the turn of the century (possible guest lecture), The rise of the musical avant-garde: Arnold Schoenberg and the founding of the Second Viennese School

**Listening: Excerpts from St. Petersburg Composers, Excerpt from Schoenberg: *Pierrot lunaire*, *A Survivor from Warsaw*, excerpt from *Moses und Aron***

**Assignment 4a, Oct. 20, polished 1st draft of essay due on anti-Semitism and Richard Wagner due to be turned in to Writing Fellow. You will then arrange a time during Week 10 to meet with the Writing Fellow to discuss your paper. By “polished first draft”, I mean a draft of your paper that you have already worked on and revised yourself, not your “first writing down” of your thoughts. Make it as “good as you can write it yourself” before handing the paper to the Writing Fellow.**

Week 9, October 27, 29, 31

Schoenberg cont., The Second World War, “Entartete Musik” (“degenerate music”), the banning of music by Jewish composers.

Week 10, Nov. 3, 5, 7

Nov. 7: Library Research Session.

Jewish composers at Theresienstadt

**Listening: Viktor Ullmann: *Der Kaiser von Atlantis***

Week 11, Nov. 10, 12, 14

**Nov. 10: Assignment 4b. Nov. 10 final copy of essay on anti-Semitism and Richard Wagner due.**

Theresienstadt cont., Jewish Nationalism in Europe: Bloch, Milhaud

**Listening: Bloch: *Schelomo*; Milhaud, *Création du monde*, additional work TBA.**

**Assignment 5a. Nov. 14, Preliminary bibliography and topic for final paper due.**

Week 12, Nov. 17, 19, 21

Jewish composers in the US 1:

Musical theater and jazz, Gerwshin

**Listening: Excerpts from Yiddish theater TBA, Gershwin: *Porgy and Bess* (some of this will be done on video in class)**

**Assignment 6: Nov. 21, essay on Jewish composers during the Nazi period due.**

Week 13, Nov. 24, 26 (no class Nov. 28 due to Thanksgiving break)

Jewish composers in the US 2:

Bernstein, Copland

**Listening: Bernstein: “Chichester” Psalms; Copland: “Vitebsk”, excerpt from *Appalachian Spring*.**

**Nov. 26: Assignment 5b, polished first draft due of final project to Writing Fellow. You will then arrange a time during Week 15 to meet with the Writing Fellow to discuss your paper.**

Week 14, Dec. 1, 3, 5

Copland, cont., Contemporary Jewish composers in the US, Reich

**Listening: Copland cont.; Steve Reich: *The Cave, Tehillim***

Week 15, Dec. 8, 10, 12

Contemporary Jewish composers in the US cont., the music of Osvaldo Golijov

**Listening: Golijov: *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*, Starer: *K’li zemer* (excerpt); Schoenfield: *Klezmer Rondos* (excerpt)**

**Assignment 5c. Final paper due on Dec. 16 at 12:25 (our scheduled final exam time). I would like to have your entire writing portfolio and listening journal turned in at this time.**

Please save ALL drafts (drafts turned in either to me or Writing Fellow) to turn in in your portfolio at the end of the course. For papers with drafts turned in, I would also like them with the final version of the paper.