

Odessa National University

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History of Jewish Thought after Maimonides till 19th Century



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Description

The course focuses on the history of Jewish thought in the late Middle Ages and in modern times. Different philosophical schools that have emerged in the Jewish communities in Spain, the Mediterranean countries, Central and Eastern Europe are considered as components of a single intellectual process that elaborated the central questions of human existence. Special attention is paid to the development of Jewish thought in Eastern Europe in the context of the dissemination of ideas of the European Enlightenment and classical German philosophy as well as in the context of internal Jewish cultural processes such as the spread of the Kabbalah and the formation of the Hasidic movement.

Course Length and Composition – 10 lectures (20 academic hours)

Evaluation: Differentiated credit

Part 1. Medieval Jewish Philosophy after Maimonides.

1. Paths of development of Jewish thought after Maimonides

- *Disputes over the works of Maimonides: main arguments of the critics.*
- *Radical followers of Maimonides. Ibn Tibbone's family and their school.*
- Development of the Maimonides' approach to Scripture*
 - *Trying to harmonize the tradition and philosophy of Maimonides (Shem Tov Falaquera).*
 - *The theory of double truth by Yitzhak Albalag.*

2. "Faith and Reason": Jewish philosophy of XIV-XV centuries.

- *Changes in Aristotelianism. Gersonides and his "The Wars of the Lord"*
- *Jewish philosophy and Christian scholasticism*
- *Anti-Aristotelianism of Hasdai Crescas. "The Light of the Lord": its aims and structure. Hasdai Crescas versus Maimonides and Gersonides.*
- *The question of determinism and free will.*
- *Updating the question of the relationship of faith and reason in Jewish philosophy in the XV. (Shimon b. Tzemach Duran, Abraham Bibago).*
- *Development of dogma of Judaism based upon the philosophy of Maimonides (Yosef Albo).*
- *The Apology of Aristotelianism by Eliyahu Delmedigo.*
- *Political Philosophy of Isaac Abravanel.*

Part 2. Modern Jewish Philosophy

1. Jewish philosophy at the turn of Modernity

- Historical and cultural context
- The paradigm of medieval Jewish philosophy and its impact on modern Jewish thought

- European Renaissance and Jewish thought
- Kabbalah and its impact on modern Jewish thought
- Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (Maharal of Prague), his doctrine and his place in the history of the Jewish thought.

2. Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza

- The philosophy of Spinoza in the light of medieval Jewish philosophy
- Religion and State
- Spinoza's approach to Judaism and Christianity
- Criticism of the theocracy
- The essence of prophecy
- Spinoza's approach to the interpretation of Scripture, and his criticism of the approach of Maimonides
- The place of Spinoza in the history of the Jewish thought

3. Moshe (Moses), Mendelssohn

- The ideas of the European Enlightenment and the birth of Haskalah.
- The main stages in the life and works of Mendelssohn
- The idea of emancipation: the place of Jewry in modern European state
- Religion and state, religion and metaphysics
- "Religion of the reason" and "historical" religions
- "Jerusalem": the essence of the Judaism and its historical role
- Approach to Christianity: between tolerance and criticism
- Mendelssohn and Lessing, Mendelssohn and Spinoza

2. Hasidism as the phenomenon of Jewish thought

- The emergence and expansion of Hasidism: Galicia, Podolia, Volhynia
- Sources of Hasidism and its theological grounds
- Hasidim and misnagdim, Hasidism and Haskalah

- Cultural and historical consequence of the expansion of Hasidism in Ukraine
- The impact of Hasidism on the development of Jewish Thought

3. Kantians and their concept of Judaism (2 hours)

- Religion in Kant's philosophy, his approach to Judaism
- Shlomo (Solomon) Maimon: philosophy and Judaism. Maimon's autobiography
- The concept of Judaism of Shaul Asher

4. Apology Judaism with Hegelian position (2 hours)

- Hegel's philosophy of religion. Hegel about the place Judaism in the history
- The program of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*
- New concepts of Judaism influenced by Hegel and Schelling

5. Rabbi Nachman Krohmal from Zholkva (2 hours)

- Galician Jewry. Life and works of Rabbi Nachman Krohmal.
- "The Guide of the Perplexed the Time" and its structure
- Rabbi Nachman Krohmal and the ideas of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*
- Rabbi Nachman Krohmal's approach to history
- The influence of Hegel
- The role of the Jewish people in history
- Rabbi Nachman Krohmal's approach to Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah

6. Formation of various religious and ideological trends in Jewish culture in the second half of XIX century (4 hours)

- Reformism and its founders
- Conservative movement in Judaism
- Neo-orthodoxy: the difference of positions and justifications of lifestyles
- Socialism and Zionism and their impact on Jewish Thought

Sources:

- Б. Спиноза. *Богословско-политический трактат*. Минск, 1998 (или: Москва-Харьков, 1998).
- И. Кант. *Религия в пределах только разума // Трактаты*. СПб.: «Наука», 1996. С. 259-424.
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- Шимшон-Рафаэль Гирш. Жизнь по Торе: избранные статьи / [перевод с иврита Э. Ратнера](#). Иерусалим: «Амана», 1990.
- Moses Mendelssohn. [Jerusalem and other Jewish writings / translated and edited by Alfred Jospe](#) New York: Schocken Books, 1969.
- [The autobiography of Solomon Maimon / with an essay on Maimon's philosophy by Hugo Bergman ; \[translated from the German, with additions and notes, by J. Clark Murra\]](#) London : East and West Library, 1954.
- Nachman Krochmal. [Führer der Verwirrten der Zeit](#). Hamburg: F. Meiner, 2012.

Исследования.

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- History of Jewish Philosophy / edited by Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman. London ; New York : Routledge, 1997
- Klein-Braslavy, Sara. "Without any doubt": Gersonides on Method and Knowledge / translated [from the Hebrew and French] and ed. by Lenn J .Schramm. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Feldman, Seymour. Gersonides: Judaism within the Limits of Reason. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010.
- Wolfson, H. A. *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle.* Cambridge, Mass., 1929
- Kellner, M. Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought: from Maimonides to Abravanel. Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1986
- Harvey, W.Z. Physics and Metaphysics in Hasdai Crescas. Amsterdam: Gieben, 1998.
- Bokser, Ben Zion. The Maharal: The Mystical Philosophy of Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague. Northvale, N.J.: J. Aronson, 1994.
- Hasidism: Continuity or Innovation? / edited by Bezalel Safran Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, Center for Jewish Studies, 1988
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- Boteach, Shmuel. Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge: basic concepts of Hasidic Thought. Northvale, N.J.: J. Aronson, c1996
- Rotenstreich, N. Jewish Philosophy in Modern Times. NY: Holt, Rinehart&Winston, 1988
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- The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion, and Culture / Eds. by Judith R. Baskin, Kenneth Seeskin. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- Levy, Z. From Spinoza to Lévinas: Hermeneutical, Ethical, and Political Issues in Modern and Contemporary Jewish Philosophy. New York: Peter Lang, 2009.
- Schweid, E. A History of Modern Jewish Religious Philosophy. V. 1-4. Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 2001-2006 (in Hebrew).
- Schweid, E. The Idea of Modern Jewish Culture / translated by Amnon Hadary ; edited by Leonard Levin. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008

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- Harvey, W.Z. "Crescas versus Maimonides on Knowledge and Pleasure" // *A Straight Path: Studies in Medieval Philosophy and Culture* / ed. R. Link-Salinger, Washington 1988, pp. 113-123
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