

THE JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY OF AMERICA
LIST COLLEGE OF JEWISH STUDIES

Fall 1987

Prof. David G. Roskies

Lit. 3153x Jewish Responses to Catastrophe

3 Sept. Liturgy and Memory

Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 1-3, 24-28, 34, 38-39, 78, 94, 98, 100

Secondary Sources: Yerushalmi, chaps. 1-2
Roskies, chap. 1

10 Sept. Women, God and History

Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 4-21

Secondary Sources: Mintz, pp. 22-41, chap. 2

Writing Assignment: How and why are women privileged in these ancient texts?

17 Sept. The Politics of Jewish Survival

Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 22-23, 29-33, 35-37

Secondary Sources: Halkin-Hartman, pp. 47-51, 67-83
Chazan, chap. 4

Writing Assignment: Compare the politics of Jewish survival in the medieval Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities.

1 Oct. The Rhetoric of Modern Prophecy

Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 40-47

Secondary Sources: Roskies, chap. 3
Mintz, pp. 141-54

Writing Assignment: What rhetorical means are used by Mendele, the Bund, the Hebrew Writers' Union and the speaker in Bialik's poem to move their respective audiences to action?

- 22 Oct. Speech and the Psychology of Violence
Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 49-60
Secondary Sources: Roskies, chaps. 6-7
Ostow, "The Jewish Response to Crisis"
Writing Assignment: How do the survivors of catastrophe use speech to "work through" the trauma?
- 29 Oct. The Shtetl as Kehillah Kedoshah
Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 48, 61-63
Secondary Sources: Roskies, chap. 5
Writing Assignment: How does the new communal covenant replace the one of old?
- 3 Nov. The Poetics of Violence
Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 64-70
Secondary Sources: Roskies, chap. 4
Writing Assignment: What role do sacred mountains play in the apocalyptic response to catastrophe?
- 5 Nov. The Nazi Ghetto as Kehillah Kedoshah
Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 71-77
Secondary Sources: Roskies, chap. 8
Writing Assignment: Compare the opposing views on Jewish autonomy in the Warsaw ghetto.
- 12 Nov. Holocaust: Birth of an Archetype
Primary Sources: Anthology, chaps. XVI, XVIII
Secondary Sources: Roskies, chap. 9
Writing Assignment: What are the parts that stand for the whole and when does that whole defy analogy?

19 Nov. Messianism as a Response to Catastrophe
Primary Sources: Anthology, secs. 89-90, 95-97
Secondary Sources: Scholem, "Toward an Understanding of the Messianic Idea ~~in~~ in Judaism," "The Messianic Idea in Kabbalism"
Writing Assignment: How is messianism related to catastrophe in the modern era?

3 Dec. Iconography
Primary Sources: The Book of Alfred Kantor Spiegelman, Maus: A Survivor's Tale
Secondary Sources: Roskies, chap. 10
Adam Gopnik, "Comics and Catastrophe"
Writing Assignment: Is representational art commensurate with the Holocaust?

8 Dec. Student Presentations

Course Requirements

Ten 2-page writing assignments due each week.

8 Dec. Compose a liturgy for Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikkaron or create a Third Seder incorporating new sounds and images of catastrophe.

Texts

- Anthology - The Literature of Destruction: Jewish Responses to Catastrophe, ed. David G. Roskies (xeroxed).
- Chazan - Robert Chazan, European Jewry and the First Crusade (Univ. of California Press, 1987), on reserve.
- Gopnik - Adam Gopnik, "Comics and Catastrophe," The New Republic, 22 June 1987 (xeroxed).
- Halkin - Crisis and Leadership: Epistles of Maimonides, ed. Abraham Halkin, discussions by David Hartman (Jewish Publication Society, 1985), on reserve.

- Kantor - The Book of Alfred Kantor (NY, 1971), on reserve NC 139 K3 A43.
- Mintz - Alan Mintz, Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature (Columbia Univ. Press, 1984), on reserve.
- Ostow - Mortimer Ostow, "The Jewish Response to Crisis," in Judaism and Psychoanalysis (NY, 1982), on reserve BM 538 P73 J83.
- Roskies - David G. Roskies, Against the Apocalypse: Responses to Catastrophe in Modern Jewish Culture (Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), on reserve or \$9.95 at Book Forum.
- Scholem - Gershom Scholem, The Messianic Idea in Judaism and Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality (Schocken, 1971), on reserve.
- Spiegelman - Art Spiegelman, Maus: A Survivor's Tale (Pantheon, 1986), on reserve or \$8.95 at Book Forum.
- Yerushalmi - Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory (Univ. of Washington Press, 1982), on reserve.