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SYLLABUS

Humanities-Literature 297R.

Title of the Course:

Survey of Jewish-German and German- Jewish Literature in German from 1200 to 1820.

Objectives:

The main objective of this interdisciplinary course is to develop an understanding of Jewish German and German Jewish literature from the German Middle Ages up to the Jewish Enlightenment. All the prescribed texts are in translation. Nevertheless with each text, we will discuss the source of its linguistic form. During the Middle Ages, the center of Ashkenazi Jewry in Central Europe was the Rhineland, particularly Trier (1066), Speyer(1084), Worms(1034), Mainz(1096), Cologne(70 a.D.), Regensburg(1020), and Frankfurt on Main(1204). In these regions Judaism reached a cultural climax between the 11th and the 13th century. In the Middle Ages, the literary languages of the Jews differed from those of their surrounding German-speaking countries. The crossing and fusion of various dialects, caused by voluntary and more often forced wanderings in the German territories, played an important part. Therefore, the language adopted from the German environment was subject to continuous transformations in the Jewish milieu where it was exposed to a syntax derived from Hebrew and to other specific influences.

The interpretation of Jewish German and German Jewish literary texts spanning from 1200 to 1820 will serve to highlight the position of the

Jewish communities within the complex field of Jewish Christian relations. European Jews integrated into Christian societies that assimilated, expelled, emancipated or destroyed them. It is true that the walls of the medieval ghetto which were to isolate the Jew from the world outside were built by social and cultural forces from without and from within. Nevertheless, however thick the walls, the cultural contact was never completely broken.

Content:

In order to grasp better this complex field, we will read Jewish German and German Jewish literature and poetry also as fictional interpretations of historical events, while autobiographies will place the focus on the individual Jewish perception of important periods of Jewish history in the Rhineland and across Germany. Besides studying the Holy Scriptures and reading devotional books, the Jews of the Medieval ghetti also sang songs, recited poems, told tales and listened to them, asked riddles, in the language which the people understood. In the ghetto, too, mothers rocked their children to sleep, lovers gave word to their emotions, sorrows were borne and dear one mourned in a language that was spoken and understood. Thus, what came into being is a Jewish German and German Jewish literature of partly or wholly wordly character, which developed by means of oral tradition from one generation to another.

As part of the Jewish German and German Jewish cultural legacy, we will analyze the contribution of Jewish art as well as music.

The following themes are presented and analyzed:

Class 1-3 Introduction of the first Jewish communities in the Rhineland and the foundations on Jewish Christian relations.

Class 4-16 Required readings:

The Jews of Germany by Ruth Gay

Ducus Horant

King Artus A Hebrew Arthurian Romance of 1273 by C. Leviant, Assen 1969.

Ma'ase Buch Book of Jewish Tales and Legends by Moses Gaster. Translated from the Judeo-German. Philadelphia, 1934.

Kuhbuch The book of fables. By Mosche Ben Elieser Wallich. Berlin 1926.

Bovo Buch: by Elijah Levita A Romance of the arly 16th Century. Tanslated by Jerry Christopher Smith, Cornell University.

Class 17-19 Social tensions. Physical Separation. Badge. Ghetti in the West. Ritual murder accusation; impact of the Reformation.

Reading: The full text of Martin Luther (1483-1546) *The Jews and Their Lies* (1543)

The Rabbi of Bacharach by Heinrich Heine.

Class 17-19 A Woman's World Gluckel of Hameln

Required readings:

The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln Schocken New York 1932. (selected pages)

Class 20-28 Philosophers and poets during the period of the Jewish Enlightenment.

Required readings:

Rescue of the Jews (Rettung der Juden) by Moses Mendelssohn. Writings on Religion and the Enlightenment.

Salomon Maimon's Life Story (Lebensgeschichte) narrated by Salomon Maimon to Karl Philipp Moritz. (Berlin 1792). Insel Verlag 1984.

The Jewish Salons in old Berlin (Die juedischen Salons im alten Berlin) by Deborah Hertz. Frankfurt am Main, Hain 1991.

At all times the student is bound inside and outside of class by the Oxford Colle Honour Code. Any presumable violation of the Honour Code will be brought to the Honour Council. Material, which has been transcribed or translated by a computer program, and downloaded from a web-site, is considered a case of plagiarism, if the student does not document fully.

Written assignments and exams:

Four five page analytical papers on assigned topics.

One Final Exam covering all class readings, lectures, and discussions.

Grading:

Grading reflects the interaction of the different requirements and assignments of the course. The final course grade is based on the equal percentual contribution from the various assignments:

Participation and presentation in class:	20%
Four five page analytical papers (15% each)	60%
Final exam	20%