Jewish Genealogy and Family History Course
for BA or MA students
- 2-Semester (1-year) Program ©

Academic Guidelines – 2nd Semester ©

Wider Topics & Practical Aspects

(a) Wider Topics [approximately 1/2 of 2nd semester lecture time]

- Jewish Demography for JG
  - Overview of historical demography
  - Dispersion of the Jewish communities post-1st Temple
  - Early development of the Diaspora
  - Formation of major groupings of Jews
  - Migrational patterns in medieval and pre-modern times
  - Modern shifts in Jewish demographics, especially since 1880’s
  - Statistics - over time and place
  - Distribution - over time and place
  - Birthrates (fertility) and lifespans (expectancy) - over time and place
  - Effects of plagues, warfare, pogroms
  - Migration as challenge to genealogical memory
  - Acculturation, conversion/assimilation
  - Affiliation/denial of Jewish origins in the modern world
  - Impacts on Jewish families and communities

Bibliography:

DellaPergola (2001)
DellaPergola (2002)
DellaPergola, Rebhun, Tolts, (2005)
Foa (2000)
Gilbert (1993)
Hundert (1999)
McEvedy (1972)
McEvedy (1982)
Wagner, Klauzinska (2007)
The Shoah and JG

- Holocaust research, focussing on basic historical questions.
  - Overall outline and processes involved
    - Pre-War Nazi threat in Germany and Austria
      - Fear, persecution, dislocation
      - Increased emigration
    - During War, following Nazi invasions of Poland and other countries
      - Deportations to concentration camps
      - Systematic liquidation of communities, in situ and in death camps
  - Problematics of identifying victims and their names
    - Changing of names or their pronunciation
    - Concealed identities and hiding (leading to the adoption of gentile names and nicknames)
    - Round-ups and deportations (during which names were misspelled, distorted).
  - Memorialization - Yad Vashem/US Holocaust Memorial Museum/other Holocaust museums
  - Construction of the major databases to recover names of victims and survivors ("Dapei-Ed" – Pages of Testimony; use of deportations lists; immediate post-war lists of survivors; listings made since the mid-1990s for restitution purposes)
  - Additional sources
    - International Tracing Service - ITS (Bad Arolsen)
    - “Yizkor” Books; necrologies; local histories commemorating Jewish communities (growing phenomenon in Germany and western European countries; often include necrologies)
  - Restitution and other claims employing JG
  - Use of databases as primary sources/raw material for JG research projects

Bibliography

DellaPergola (1996)
Gilbert (1982)
Gutman (1990)
Lestchinsky (1948).
McEvedy (1982)
Michman [2010]

Genetics and JG

- “Relatedness” of different Jewish ethnic groups
- Uses of DNA for JG
- Existence of a Jewish Haplotype?
  - Y-DNA in paternal line
  - MitDNA in matrilineal lines
- Ashkenazi and Sephardic DNA
- Cohanic and Levitic identities
- African tribes and other groups (Lemba, Abayudaya tribes)
- Jewish genetic traits, medical conditions and hereditary diseases
Bibliography:

Boster, Gaulin (1998)
Entine (2007)
Levy-Coffman (2005)

➢ Rabbinical Genealogy

- Centrality in JG
- “Jewish aristocracy” = Leading rabbinical families (Ashkenazi/Sephardi)
- Survey of rabbinic sources and literature (e.g. Sherira Gaon, Maimonides, Ha-Meiri, recording their personal lineages)
- Genealogies of eminent rabbis and scholars
- Chassidic dynasties
- Fictive/“constructed” rabbinical trees
- Rabbinical lineages in contention
- Rabbinical anthologies, compendia, encyclopedias as sources

Bibliography:

Friedman (1997)
Friedman in Sack, Mokotoff (2004), pp. 77-89
Rosenstein (1990)

➢ Myths, Legends, Polemics and Abuses in JG

- Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman myths (descendancies from the gods)
- Biblical genealogies (descendancies from men); king lists, royal pedigrees
- Priestly lineage (Eleazar and Itamar, non-Aaronites)
- Claimed descendence from the House of David
- The Rashi Legend
- Contested lineages (e.g., Luria, Vilna Gaon)
- Manipulation of lines for political and other purposes (status, legitimisation, inheritance)
- “Aristocratic” origins (e.g., Spanish origins of Ashkenazi families)
- Self-attributed trees/ self-aggrandisement

Bibliography:

Einsiedler (1992)
Franklin (2005)
Friedman (1997)
Rosenstein (1990)
Rosenstein (2006)
Schellekens (2003)
Schellekens (2006) on Biblical genealogy
Schellekens (2006) on the House of David
Wilson (1977)
(b) **Practical matters** [approximately 1/2 of 2\textsuperscript{nd} semester lecture time]

- **JG Ethics and Standards**
  
  i. **Ethics**
  
  - Use of data/information in the public domain
  - Use of data conveyed by living informants
  - Privacy issues
  - Holocaust issues
  - Legal issues
  - Copyright issues
  - Plagiarism, Fraud

  **Bibliography:**
  
  Kallmann (2008)
  Sobel (2007)
  Swift (2000)

  ii. **Standards**

  - Genealogical standards in general
  - Citation of evidence
  - Admissible evidence, supporting evidence, - as against probability, hypothesis, speculation
  - Recording of Names, Places and Dates
  - Recordings of generations (Jacobi’s Absolute Generations Scale)
  - Transliteration systems (Hebrew, Yiddish, Arabic, etc.)

  **Bibliography:**
  
  BCG Standards Manual
  Mills (2007)
  Mokotoff (2008)
  Rapaport (2009)

- **Oral History**

  - Importance contribution of Oral History and its potential for JG
  - Theory and practice
  - Conducting an interview to maximize JG information retrieval
  - Construction of questionnaire
  - Interviewing techniques:
    - Preparation of interview (maximizing data on informant, etc.)
    - equipment;
    - frequent problems:
      - reliability/tendentiousness
      - impact of personal relations
    - techniques for the revival of memory
- Legal permission from informant
- Means of collecting documents, pictures etc.
- Differentiating between Oral History ("primary information") and Family Lore ("bobbe mayses")
- Critical evaluation of the narrative and its reliability; verification/corroboration
- Interpretation of the narrative
- Indirect information on historical context - social environment, traditions and customs, political motivations, patterns of acculturation etc.
- Identification of Oral History archives appropriate for given research project (e.g. for modern Jewry, the Oral History Division at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem at: http://icj.huji.ac.il/archives_ohd.asp; for Central Europe research, the Centropa archive at www.centropa.org. for Holocaust research, the USC Shoah Foundation at http://college.usc.edu/vhi

Bibliography:

Henige (1971)
Epstein, Lewit, Mendelsohn (1994)
Thompson (2000)

➢ Research Strategies and Methodologies

- Working with JG information explosion
  o Effective strategies and methodologies
  o Integrating/merging datasets
  o Synthesis – creating new knowledge from existing data
- Original research
  o Research plans
  o Research questions
  o Working hypotheses
- Problematics in primary sources
  o Accuracy of sources
  o Special problems with censuses – including “fixing” of censuses; uncensused populations, compatibility of census data
- Critical use of sources (direct vs. indirect evidence; inaccurate names, ages, etc. etc.)
- Essential skills
  o Language skills
  o Research skills, including archival skills
  o Data organisational skills

Bibliography

Gladstone (2004)
Kurzweil (1980)
Klauzinska (2009)
- Jewish JG Records
  - Vital records (including Mohel books)
  - Rabbinical Courts records (including Ketubot, gittin)
  - Synagogue records, minute books
  - Community Registers (Pinkasim), minutes of synagogues, communal societies
  - Burial Society records (hevra kadisha)
  - Special sources (Memor books, Prenumeraten)
  - Montefiore Censuses in Palestine, Egypt
  - Shoah records (including Yad Vashem, etc, Bad Arolsen etc.)
  - Jewish Agency records
  - Hebrew Immigration Aid Society (HIAS) and Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) records

Bibliography:

- Jewish Cemeteries and Necrologies
  i. Gravestones
     - Cemeteries as bridge to generations past and their re-construction
     - Burial practices in cemeteries (family plots, separation of men and women, infants, suicides, bastards, prostitutes, etc.)
     - Reading stones in Hebrew:
       o Names (male, female)
       o Dates (Jewish calendar)
       o Conventional abbreviations (׳פ,׳נ,׳ת,׳נ,׳צ,׳ב,׳ה, ודומהו)
       o Standard phrases
       o Symbols on gravestones (Kohanim, Levi'im, scholars, trades, etc.)
       o Painted stones
  - Differing traditions where relevant (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, etc.)
  - Physical problems
    o Broken, weathered stones
    o Wooden stones
    o Ancient cemeteries
    o Untended, razed cemeteries from modern era
    o Unearthed, re-located cemeteries
  - Limitations of tombstone information
  
  ii. Auxiliary sources
      - Utilization in conjunction with other sources:
        o Cemetery registers and other burial records
        o Online cemetery records JewishGen, etc.
        o Necrologies in various forms (Yizkor books, etc.)
      - Merging incomplete data from stones and other records
      - [Practical exercise – visit a traditional Jewish cemetery]

Bibliography:

Krajewska (1993)
Menachemson (2007)
Reiner, *Tarbitz*
Sachs and Blatt (2004)
Schafer (1991)
Schwartzman (1993)

➢ JG in Cyberspace – Techniques and Technologies

- Search engines
- JewishGen, in its various aspects
- SephardicGen and its resources
- JRI-Poland and SIG’s
- Other Jewish sites on the Web
- JG Software (*Ilanot*, Dorotree, My Heritage, etc.) – advantages/disadvantages of different systems (static, dynamic, interactive)

➢ Additional Sources and Resources

- Archives (primary sources) – overview by regions
- Civil and religious vital records
- Public records, printed sources (secondary sources) - among others, immigration, naturalisation, military, death/burial records
- Censuses - Russian “Revisions”; European, US and other national censuses.
- Notarial records of early Spain and Italy
- LDS collections/ Family History Library Catalog
- Databases (Ellis Island) Shipping records
- Name changing records, etc

Bibliography

➢ Auxiliary Tools

- Maps, gazetteers
- Local histories
- City and business directories
- (Jewish) newspapers (many languages)
- Libraries, reference works, guidebooks to sources
- Online people finders
- Bibliographies
- Language translating devices
- Date Converters

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➢ “Hands on” computer lab and library session

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