

Modern Jewish Thought

Jewish Studies 433-002 | Sociology 496-004 | 3 credits

Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30–3:45 pm

Prof. Chad Alan Goldberg

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How do Jews fit into the modern world? After the French Revolution, there were basically two answers available: forward toward emancipation, reform, and assimilation, or backward toward tradition. But from the 1870s onward, rising antisemitism sowed doubts about the viability of both answers and led to a proliferation of Jewish identity strategies as new answers to the “Jewish question” were proposed. The course will introduce students to some of the major answers debated by Jewish intellectuals, contextualize their ideas historically, and consider whether and how they remain relevant to the present. These new answers included revolutionary universalistic utopias (socialism and Communism), various forms of Jewish nationalism, hyphenated identities, cultural pluralism or multiculturalism, and cosmopolitanism. Readings include Marx, Luxemburg, Trotsky, Pinsker, Herzl, Ahad Ha-Am, Dubnow, Medem, Kallen, Freud, Horkheimer and Adorno, and Arendt.