



FACULTY OF ARTS
CHARLES UNIVERSITY
IN PRAGUE



PRAGUE JEWISH STUDIES

JEWISH PRAGUE - Architecture, Fine Art and Music

2012

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Course Description:

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ אֱלִילִים וּפְסֵל וּמַצֵּבָה לְאַתְקִימוֹ לְךָ
וְאִבֹן נִשְׁכָּזִית לֹא תַחֲנוּךְ בְּאַרְצְכֶם לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת
צִלְתָּהּ כִּי יֵאָמֵר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

‘Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.’ (Ex. 20:4, see: Dt. 5:8, Lev. 26:1) – The third commandment prohibiting the construction of ‘idols’ is the most important sentence in the European history of Art, because people have been constantly provoked to understand art differently, to redefine and disagree on what the visual culture should be like and how it relates to the word and the truth. The ban on images has been constantly broken since the incident of the golden calf. In Prague, the legendary Rabbi Loew has broken this commandment by creating the monster Golem from the Moldau clay.

This course will explore what might be meant by 'Jewish' and 'art' separately and together - their intersections, challenges and contradictions with the written culture and the Christian majority. How the visual arts have been understood across the Jewish experience will be surveyed via significant representative works reflecting different approaches to the question of ‘art and Judaism’ throughout the history by examples of Jewish influence on other cultures as well as by examples of the Jewish culture itself.

The close contact of the iconic and non-iconic tradition has always brought the dynamic rethinking of the visual in the western Art. This relationship to the mimetic Art as something in contradiction with the truth has brought constant non-canonic approaches. We will follow this relationship of ‘Jewishness’ to the non-canonic understanding of culture up to the



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abstraction and modernity. The clash of modernist artists grappling with the Holocaust and other totalitarian movements were accompanied by growing power of the totalitarian art.

A special attention will be paid to the city of Prague. Prague is one of the oldest and most prominent Jewish centers in Central Europe. Despite all historical circumstances, the continuity of the local Jewish culture has never been disrupted throughout the 1000-year history of the Prague Jewish community. The 'Golden Age' of the Jewish Town in Prague occurred at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries. Prague became one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe. The last of Jewish culture in Prague dates to the turn of the 19th and 20th century. Many Jewish artists enriched the multi-cultural Central European environment.

The two weekend class excursions to Vienna and Berlin provide a full idea of Central Europe – the most important region in forming Jewish intellectual life, identity and historical consciousness in the 21st century.

Schedule

Class 1- Introduction and Middle Ages

Introduction - Jewish non-iconism – Visual tradition: monuments of late antiquity and Early Middle Ages- images in Dura Europos Synagogue, early compromise with image –Ecclesia et Synagoga, place of the Synagogue in the Christian image and differences of their architecture. The era of Prague Synagogue until the Hussite wars – art and culture - The influence of Judaism on the European iconoclastic movements. – Christian image of the Jewish Law.

Reading:

Drake-Boehm B, Prague, The Crown of Bohemia. , (the chapter on Jewish culture), 2005, catalogue of the NY exhibition

Vivian B. Mann (ed.): Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts, Cambridge 2000.

Grace Cohen Grossman, Jewish Art, Los Angeles 1995

Karl van der Toorn (ed.): The Image and the Book. Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East, Leuven 1997

P. Bland: The Artless Jew. Medieval and Modern Affirmations and Denials of the Visual, Princeton 2000



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Class 2 – Ghetto – the Jewish quarter

Langweil model of Prague – urbanism and structuration of society. Understanding of ghetto by the majority. – The Fourth Lateran Council's definition of the holy matter: Art as embodiment, Body and Law as medieval binaries – the image of European society for the next centuries.

Reading :

Volavkova, Hana: *The Lost Jewish Town of Prague*, Prague: Paseka 2004

Benjamin Ravid. "All Ghettos Were Jewish Quarters, but Not All Jewish Quarters were Ghettos." *Jewish Culture and History* 10. 2-3 (2008): 5-24

Guistino, Cathleen M., *Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle-Class Ethnic Politics around 1900*. New York: Columbia UP, 2003.

Vilimkova, Milada, *The Prague Ghetto*, Prague: Aventinum, 1993

Class 3 - Christian Passion Iconography and Anisemitism

How did the Christianity understand the Jews? Image of the Judaism in Medieval Christian Art.

Reading :

Bynum, Caroline Walker, *The Presence of Objects: Medieval Anti-Judaism in Modern Germany*. In: *Common Knowledge*, Volume 10, Issue 1, Winter 2004, pp. 1-32

Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, *No Graven Image? Israelite Aniconism in Its Ancient Near Eastern Context*, Stockholm 1995

Karl van der Toorn (ed.), *The Image and the Book. Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, Leuven 1997

Class 4 – Jews under the Habsburg rule

Rabi Loew (Maharal) – legend and the historical figure – Rudolf II, Jews and the Mannerist universe as the sum of truths in the visual and abstract form – relation of the image and thought round 1600 – the sculpture of Rabi Loew on Marianske square.

Prague Jews during the thirty years war – the story of the Christ Sculpture and the Hebrew sign at the Charles Bridge –The Jewish culture in the Baroque period.

Reading:

Hana Volavková: *The Synagogue Treasures of Bohemia and Moravia*, Praha 1949

Sedinova, Jirina: *Jewish Town in Prague*. In: Fucikova, Eliska (ed.) *Rudolf II and Prague*. London; New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997, p. 302

Kybalova, Ludmila; Kosakova, Eva; Putik, Alexandr ed., *Textiles from Bohemian and Moravian Synagogues from the Collection of the Jewish Museum in Prague*, Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague, 2003



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Class 5 – Maharal Institute

Visit of the Maharal Institute in Prague- <http://www.maharalinstitute.com/default.html>

Class 6 – Enlightenment – emancipation

From the expulsion towards the Enlightenment - iconography and culture — non-iconism and rationality in the age of reason – Biedermaier. Emancipation of Jews and Fine Arts -

Reading:

David Sorkin, The Religious Enlightenment: Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna. Princeton, 2011

Class 7 - The wandering Jew in 19th century art

The wandering Jew in 19th century art. - Imagining Jews -Ahasver, Golem and other Jewish” references - Jewish Artists in 19th century Central Europe; - the conversion of the religious iconography to the national one.

Reading:

Susan Tumarkin Goodman (ed.), The Emergence of Jewish Artists in Nineteenth-Century Europe, London 2001

Hyman Lewbin, Rebirth of Jewish Art. The Unfolding of Jewish Art in the Nineteenth century, New York 1977

Class 8 - The facade

The mixture of styles on the facades of the main boulevards replacing the former Jewish quarter: Orientalism and Jewish Architecture, historicism, Art Nouveau, Pan-Slavic symbols, Jewish and German symbols, – animosity and cohabitation of the Jews in the minority within minority (Czechs themselves were a minority in the German speaking cultural space of Central Europe).

Reading:

John MacKenzie, Orientalism. History, Theory and the Arts, Manchester 1995

Class 9 - In Morbid colors

In Morbid colors – the idea of decadence and Jews – visit to the Trade Palace collection of the National Gallery for searching parallels between written and visual in the autumn of Austria-Hungary.

Reading:

Urban Otto M., Merhaut V., Decadence: In Morbid Colors, Art and the Idea of Decadence in the Bohemian Lands 1880/1914. Prague 2006



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Class 10 – Modernism

Modernism: facets and poles of modernism in art – primitive forces of society, new social concepts, technology.

Reading:

Matthew Baigell / Milly Heyd (eds.): *Complex Identities. Jewish Consciousness and Modern Art*, New Brunswick 2001

Svacha, Rostislav, *The Pyramid, the Prism and the Arc, Czech Cubist Architecture 1911 – 1923*. Prague 2001.

Vlcek J., *Czech Cubism 1909–1925*. Praha 1996

Abigail Gillman, *Viennese Jewish Modernism Freud, Hofmannsthal, Beer-Hofmann, and Schnitzler*. Pennsylvania 2009

Class 11 – Jewish Mercenary of Art Jewish Salons, the Alternative Collecting

Creation of famous collections – their looting and recent restitutions. The class will present recent research of the Jewish Museum in Munich on Jewish collecting:
http://www.lootedart.com/web_images/news/PM_Provenienzforschung.pdf

Reading:

Fredric Bedoire, *The Jewish Contribution to Modern Architecture, 1830-1930*, New York 2004

Deborah Hertz: *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin*. Yale 1988

Class 12 – Entartete Kunst

Attacks on modernism – the culture and aesthetics of totalitarian regimes.

Reading:

Adam, Peter (1992). *Art of the Third Reich*. New York:

Barron, Stephanie, ed. (1991). *'Degenerate Art:' The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany*. New York

Evans, R. J. (2004). *The Coming of the Third Reich*. New York

Minnion, John (2nd edition 2005). *Hitler's List: an Illustrated Guide to 'Degenerates'*. Liverpool: Checkmate Books. ISBN 0-9544499-2-4

Nordau, Max (1998). *Degeneration*, introduction by George L. Mosse. New York:

Petropoulos, Jonathan (2000). *The Faustian Bargain: the Art World in Nazi Germany*. New York, N.Y.: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0195129644

Class 13 - Music Life

The Jewish life and music in Prague and the Central Europe 1900-1945 - the Prague German Theatre and the National Theatre - Mahler –Zemlinsky -Haas - Krasa – Klein – Schulhoff – Ulmann.

Reading:

J. Karas, *Music in Terezín, 1941–1945* (New York, 1985)

Antony Beaumont: *Zemlinsky*, London 2000

Shawn, Allen. *Arnold Schoenberg's Journey*. New York. 2002

Mahler, Alma. *Gustav Mahler: Memories and letters*. London 1968



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Class 14 - Iconclash, Critical reflections of Visual Communication

The conflict of image in the post-war culture. Iconic turn of the contemporary world

Reading:

Latour and Weibel (eds.) *Iconoclash*. Karlsruhe 2002.

Theodore J. Lewis: „Divine Images and Aniconism in Ancient Israel“, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118, 1998, 36-54.

Class 15- Nature, culture and politics

Beauty as a political and natural category in Prague intellectual life –The postwar taboos and their reflections in visual culture and philosophy: Stanislav Komarek, David Cerny etc...

Reading: Stanislav Komarek, *Nature and Culture: The World of Phenomena and the World of Interpretation*, Munich 2009.

Class 16- Memory

Discussion: Visit to Hagibor centre, meeting with seniors of the Jewish community – or a discussion with: Renee Goldova (question of the Prague German-Jewish music life, survivor of Nazi and Communist persecution) or Eva Hermannova (the last living participant on the Terezin music performances and former director of the National Theatre) – will be specified 1 month in advance.

Reading: Stephen C. Feinstein (ed.): *Absence/Presence. Critical Essays on the Artistic Memory of the Holocaust*, Syracuse 2005

Mark Godfrey: *Abstraction and the Holocaust*, New Haven – London 2007

Avram Kampf, *Jewish Experience in the Art of the Twentieth Century*, South Hadley 1984.

Class 17 – Berlin

Preparation and discussion for the Berlin trip (in the classroom): Architecture of Daniel Liebeskind, Contemporary architecture of Berlin, collections of Berlin Jewish Museum. German tradition of ‘Biblical Archeology’ - models of Jerusalem in Pergamon museum.

Class 18 - Vienna

Preparation and discussion for the Vienna trip (in the classroom): Sights and monuments to visit, music examples of Viennese music after 1900: Mahler, Zemlinsky, Schoenberg. Comparison of Prague and Vienna round 1900.



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Excursion I. - Class Trip to Vienna

Vienna round 1900 was probably the most important Jewish intellectual metropolis of its time. We will explore The Jewish Museum Vienna – Judenplatz- discuss Psychoanalysis and Viennese Art Nouveau – the cult of Richard Wagner and unsuccessful Art student Adolf Hitler - destroying Gustav Klimt paintings and Nazi propaganda issue (Entartete Kunst) – on the way back, visiting Villa Tugendhat in Brno.

Excursion II. - Class Trip to Berlin

Visiting Berlin- the Jewish quarter – Jewish Museum – German History Museum – The Train Company Memorial for those Sent to the 'East' – Peter Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial – Micha Ullman's 'Empty Library' - The New Synagogue – Pergamon museum. The tragic events of the 20th century have almost rendered the Jewish Community in Berlin to perish. Today, it is one of the fastest growing Jewish Communities in the world with over 20 000 members. How does contemporary Germany deal with this horrible memory? In our tour, we shall see different modes and memorials; understand the difference between the culture of memory in East Berlin, West Berlin and unified Germany.

Other Recommended readings:

- Dan, Josef (ed.), Studies in Jewish Manuscripts, Tübingen 1999*
Jacoby, Ruth, Ancient Jewish Synagogues. Architectural Glossary, Jerusalem 1990
Kraeling , Carl H., The Synagogue. The Excavations at Dura-Europos, Final Report VIII, New Haven 1956
Lukomskii , Georgii K., Jewish Art in European Synagogues. From the Middle Ages to the Eighteenth Century, London 1947
Malachi, Beit-Arie: The Making of the Medieval Hebrew book: Studies in Paleography and Codicology, Jerusalem 1993
Narkiss, Bezalel , Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts, Jerusalem 1969
Parik, Arno, Prague Synagogues, Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague, 2000
Parik, Arno, Prague Jewish Cemeteries, Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague, 2003
Parik, Arno, Images of the Prague Ghetto, Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague, 2005
Putik, Alexandr, Sixtova, Olga ed., History of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravi From the First Settlements Until Emancipation (Exhibition Guide: The Maisel Synagogue), Prague: Jewish Museum in Prague, 2002
Roth, Cecil (ed.), Jewish Art. An Illustrated History, Jerusalem 1971
Volavkova, Hana, The Synagogue Treasures of Bohemia and Moravia, Prague, Sfinx, 1949
Volavkova, Hana, A Story of the Jewish Museum in Prague, Prague: Artia, 1968
Wischnitzer, Rachel , The Architecture of the European Synagogue, Philadelphia 1964

A course reader will be distributed to students at the beginning of the course.



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Course Objectives

The course will provide an inside look at Jewish culture in the Czech lands and Central Europe. Prague offers a microcosm of both – the representative art and the collision and intersection of different cultures. It will explore the subject from different points of view with special attention to architecture, fine arts and music. The impact given on ‘experience’ means that students will have an opportunity to explore all different features and characteristics of Jewish cultural monuments on field trips.

Student Responsibility and Code of Conduct

Students are subject to the general standards and requirements of Charles University in regard to attendance, examinations, and conduct, as well as to the specific requirements of the program. The student is expected to assume the initiative in completing all requirements at the time specified.

Requirements

The students are expected to actively participate in discussions. They will be given final test and they will write a short essay or a critical review on a topic related to the course according to own selection, the topic must be discussed with the instructor in advance.

Assessment and Final Grade:

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

· final test	25 %
· class attendance and participation	50 %
· essay (3 pgs.)	25%