JSP 490/GER 430. Spinoza: Secularization in Modern Jewish Thought

What makes Jewish Thought since the 17th century so stunningly modern and “post-contemporary” is the critical way in which its proponents address secularization as the hidden, yet central problem of modernity. Readings include texts by Spinoza, Mendelssohn, and Heine, which become legible as critical negotiations of a project of secularization that no longer imposes assimilation as imperative but celebrates cultural difference and particularity as affirmation of an emancipatory vision of modernity that no longer hinges on the marginalization of Jews but recognizes their traditions as signal contributions.

4 Jan  Spinoza and current concepts and theories of secularization
11 Jan  Heine, “City of Lucca”
18 Jan  Heine, “Rabbi of Bacherach”
25 Jan  Heine, “Lorelei” and “Apollogott”
 1 Feb  Heine, “On the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany”
 8 Feb  Spinoza, TTP, Preface, chapters 1-4
15 Feb  Reading Week
22 Feb  Spinoza, TTP, chapters 5-7
 1 Mar  Spinoza, TTP, chapters 12-15
 8 Mar  Spinoza, TTP, chapters 16-20
15 Mar  Mendelssohn, Jerusalem part 1 and “What is Enlightenment?”
22 Mar  Mendelssohn, Jerusalem part 2
29 Mar  Final Discussion