

INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

Robert Tabak, Ph.D.

St. Joseph's University, Fall 2012

Religious Studies 231, Section D01

Mon. and Weds. 4:00-5:15 PM, Bellarmine Hall Room 229

Instructor contact information

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Office hours: one-half hour before class, or by appointment. (Adjunct faculty office in Bellarmine, 1st floor).

Syllabus

Please note: some changes may be made in texts and topics

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1. Overview This class is an introduction to Jewish beliefs, practices, and history from the biblical period to the present. Judaism has a continuous history, and has greatly influenced Christianity, Islam, and Western civilization. However, Judaism has changed over time. There also has been considerable diversity within the Jewish world according to geography, gender, and modern religious movement.

We will be using several perspectives to help us understand Judaism. First, we will use history and other disciplines to see how "Judaism" developed and changed over time, through biblical, rabbinic, medieval, modern, and contemporary periods. In addition, we will examine key ideas of Judaism, including God, Torah, and Israel. The course will use examples concerning worship, holidays, life cycle and ideal behavior for men and for women. At various points, we will see how Jews have in the past and present

defined sacred time (the rituals of the day, the week, and the year), sacred space (land, temple, synagogue, household), and religious values (God, Torah, Israel, the just society.)

In addition to lectures we will be using A) books and articles that tell about key issues and events (secondary sources). B) In addition, we will read key texts themselves (primary sources) from the Jewish tradition. C) Students also will have several “field experiences” of visiting Jewish congregations and communities today. D) We will also use selections from films and literature to capture experiences and issues in Judaism and Jewish life. Overall, we will present the tensions among tradition, change, and diversity on several levels.

These approaches can help students ask questions about and understand other religious traditions and societies, as well as their personal stories.

2. Required texts

Raymond Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People* Oxford Univ. Press, 1998/2000

Norman Solomon, *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 1996/2000

Arthur Green, *These are the Words: A Spiritual Vocabulary of Jewish Life* (JewishLights)

Short explanations of Jewish concepts and values.

Geraldine Brooks, *People of the Book: A Novel* (2008) Note: We will be discussing this historical novel beginning in October, so you should begin reading it earlier. Note that the novel unfolds in “archeological” fashion, with the most recent times first, and the earliest times near the end of the novel.

Sarah Glidden, *How to Understand Israel in Sixty Days or Less* (2010)

Selected additional readings from various books will be available through the library and posted through the college’s website. All required texts should be on reserve in the library.

3. SOME RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL READINGS:

Titles under these topics are posted on Blackboard under “Syllabus.” The SJU Library owns all recommended books.

Overviews of Judaism

Jewish history

Jewish culture, life, folklore

Jewish texts

Jewish ritual and life cycle

Jewish holidays

American Judaism

4. Learning goals for this class (with thanks to Sarah Benor of the University of Southern California and Hebrew Union College, Los Angeles)

1. Being Jewish is not just adhering to a religion but also belonging to a people
2. There is a chain of Jewish knowledge, belief, textual production, and practice stretching from Biblical times to the present
3. Judaism and Jewish culture have changed through history and have had diverse manifestations around the world, influenced and affected by local non-Jewish cultures
4. Three of the most important aspects of Judaism are God, Torah, and Israel
5. Judaism emphasizes actions over belief

5. INTERNET AND E-MAIL NOTE: THIS COURSE ASSUMES:

that you have access to the internet (at home, dorm, library, or work) and can:

- a) access the course and college web pages;
- b) will check for e-mail related to the course on your college e-mail account several times a week;
- c) will check occasional web sites or recommended readings;
- d) will participate in web discussions (threads) or submit short reactions to topics on the course web site.

If you cannot do these things, you should speak to the instructor about whether or not you should drop the course.

6. List of valuable web sites and encyclopedia

Please note: the Internet, like a huge bookstore, has great resources as well as biased and doubtful sources (a university-sponsored web site usually will be more valuable than some kid's middle school project). Some sites are even prejudiced sources written by antisemites. Always attempt to verify who has created a source and why. Did you access it through a recognized portal, or just by putting key words into a search engine such as Google? If something seems doubtful, can it be verified with other reliable sources? Skepticism is justified. Consult the professor or a librarian if you are having difficulty sorting this out.

Most important single reference work

Encyclopaedia Judaica (2007) [Note spelling of first word.] This is actually a 22 volume newly-revised encyclopedia available on-line through the SJU library web site. It has up-to-date articles and bibliographies, and has greatly expanded coverage of Jewish women and gender issues since the first (1971) edition. Consult it often! [You must access this via the SJU library site.]

Starting point and basic information

www.myjewishlearning.com is a very extensive website with both beginning and advanced articles on many themes in Judaism and Jewish life – holidays, life cycle, history, ethical issues. It is guided by a group including Hebrew College near Boston, and is not affiliated with any denomination or movement in Judaism.

Jewish Heritage Online Magazine (www.jhom.com) has a wide variety of themes from holidays to folklore and resources from ancient times to modern poets. It is an interesting site to get ideas on

themes that might come up in class or reading. For example the “Passover” section includes interpretations by modern scholars, literature, arts, customs, language, and mystical teachings.

Check www.jewishvirtuallibrary.com under “library” for a variety of articles, but try to note dates. Some articles are very recent, others are twenty years or more old, and can be of historical interest but don’t necessarily reflect the current situation. There are articles on religious movements, history, Israel, women and Judaism, and many other topics.

See Blackboard under “Syllabus” for numerous additional recommended web sites.

Older encyclopedia

Two very good starting points for research on many topics

Explanations, sample texts, and charts –from another professor

Jewish women; new rituals

Jews around the world

Holocaust

Current Jewish discussions and “Jews in the news”

7. Email to instructor, Dr. Tabak

I will try to read my e-mail regularly and usually will reply within 48 hours. Please note that I don’t read email or use the telephone for non-emergency calls on the Shabbat (Sabbath) from Friday evening until Saturday evening, as well as major Jewish holidays.

My college e-mail address is the preferred contact. However, I am also giving you my regular personal email and home phone. Please use these if the matter is urgent or if for some reason I have not responded.

8. Class and paper procedures

Bring your Bible and indicated course readings to class. Using supplementary materials, there will be times when we will look at texts in pairs (dyads) or small groups. Coming to class prepared is helpful to your learning and respectful of your fellow students. Do readings before class. Don’t leave all your reading until the night (or morning) before class. We will often have a short discussion of readings. Come with questions or comments.

Grading

Class participation 10%

Class presentations 10%

Short Paper 5%
(mini-research paper)

Research paper 25%

Midterm and web 25%

Final and web 25%

9. Academic Honesty

The University policy applies to all class work. Plagiarism (using sources without citing them or handing in someone else's work as your own) is a serious violation and can lead to penalties including failure in the course.

10. Students with Disabilities In accordance with state and federal laws, the University will make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. For those who have or think that you may have a disability requiring an accommodation (learning, physical, psychological) should contact Services for Students with Disabilities, Room G10, Bellarmine, 610-660-1774 (voice) or 610-660-1620 (TTY) as early as possible in the semester for additional information and so that an accommodation, if appropriate, can be made in a timely manner. You will be required to provide current (within 3 years) documentation of the disability.

For a more detailed explanation of the University's accommodation process, as well as the programs and services offered to students with disabilities, please go to www.sju.edu/studentlife/studentresources/sess/ssd. If you have any difficulty accessing the information on-line, please contact Services for Students with Disabilities at the telephone numbers above.

11. SPECIAL CLASS MEETINGS (confirm with instructor)

- a) -----Mon. Oct 1. Special location: Class will meet in main SJU library.) Session with reference librarian on use and misuse of the internet.
- B) SUN. SEPT. 23 (AFTERNOON). VISIT TO NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY, 5th and Market Streets, Center City. Philadelphia. (You are encouraged to visit on this date, but if you have a conflict you can go on an alternate date.) You are responsible for discussing any delays or conflicts with the instructor. Response paper due following –Sept. 30
- c) Weds. Oct. 1 (SPECIAL EARLIER TIME - tentative) Field visit to Congregation Adath Israel, Old Lancaster Road. This synagogue is within walking distance of campus. We will meet at the synagogue, NOT at the regular classroom. Response paper due Tues. Oct. 9.
- d) Film evening. We will schedule approximately two hours for a film showing at a special time, tentatively Mon. Nov. 26. (Anyone unable to attend at the time set will be able to borrow the film from the SJU library on their own.)

12. Class preparation

Attendance and participating in class or small group discussions is part of the class requirements as well. Cell phones and other communication devices should be off and put away during class time.

Missing more than three classes without a medical excuse or other significant reason will result in a lower grade. You should not attend class if you are sick, or if you cannot get there safely in bad weather.

However, it is the student's responsibility to inform the instructor in writing of a reason for missing class, and provide written documentation on health or similar issues that cause you to miss multiple sessions.

13. Course requirements, papers and Web portfolio

The written course requirements are a) several short papers, b) plus a mid-term and a final exam, and c) a longer research paper. Also, d) there is a portfolio of short responses posted by you to the course web site discussion page, explained below. e) Each student will present (sometimes with a fellow student) at least short (3-5 minutes) report on "Jews in the news"—a current events report on some current news story or issue and a short (approx. 5 minutes) introduction or overview of one of the themes for a class (Powerpoint may be helpful for this.) There may be two or three short in-class quizzes. "Page" in written assignments means double spaced, standard 12-point font, approximately 250-275 words per page. f) There may be some additional collaborative or individual short responses to classes or readings.

13 A) Mini-research paper (holiday or Jewish life cycle) due (holiday or Jewish life cycle) due by Oct. 9 This is a mini-research paper on one topic, 2-3 pages. Details on Blackboard under "Syllabus."

B) Reaction paper on visit to National Museum of American Jewish History

Reaction papers: Suggested questions to consider: What did you notice? What was surprising or familiar to you? How did this fit with readings or class presentations? How did this reflect, to your understanding, the "great tradition" and "little tradition"? This will be part of the submissions for the mid-term exam.

C) 2-3 page web "reaction paper" covering the class synagogue visit with the class (see suggested questions below) due one week after the visit. This will be part of submissions for mid-term exam.

Reaction papers: Suggested questions to consider: What did you notice? What was surprising or familiar to you? How did this fit with readings or class presentations? How did this reflect, to your understanding, the "great tradition" and "little tradition"?

D) People of the Book response. A 2-4 page reaction paper to the novel People of the Book. This book (based on an ancient illustrated Passover haggadah) deals in a fictionalized way with people in different centuries who interact with the book.

People of the Book response. This response will become part of your mid-term exam. More details and specific questions will be given later. While you should cite examples, don't just summarize the plot.

E) A 10-12 page research paper, due by Mon. Dec. 3 on a theme in the course.

Preliminary step: You will need to submit a bibliography and a short theme paragraph on your research paper (total one page) for review by Mon. October 22.

Choose a theme from the lectures, readings, films, or your own interests related to this course.

SEE BLACKBOARD under "Syllabus: Research (term) paper" for more information and requirements.

Web discussion pages and portfolio. The course web site (accessible under WWW.MY.SJU.EDU) has a discussion board section. You are expected to participate in discussion by posting responses to questions, or to other students' responses regularly. This is not a formal paper or a research paper, but you should refer to class readings, supplementary [reserve] readings, or other class materials where appropriate. Hand in a portfolio of your best responses/comments electronically a) at the mid-term exam hand in your response to People of the Book plus two other web posts and b) at the final exam, hand in four web posts from the second half of the class.

Criteria: A typical posting is only a paragraph or two. Web postings are not research papers, and are more informal. It is permitted to make small editorial changes.

Of your four chosen postings:

- a) at least two postings should cite some reading assignment for the course (long quotes not needed). It may continue with your comment/thought/argument.
- b) excellent posts will often cite at least one reading from the reserve list at the library or an appropriate web resource
- c) postings may be in response to the instructor questions/prompts or to another student's posting.

Short assignments: There will be occasional short assignments, such as bringing into class a paragraph or a question on the readings, or asking for a response to a question on the class web site.

Class reports: Students will do two class reports during the course. A 1-2 page written summary (and a list of sources consulted) should be submitted to the instructor.

14. CRITERIA FOR THE EVALUATION OF COURSE WORK (with appreciation to Dr. Phil Cunningham of St. Joseph's University)

Criteria for Excellence in Oral Presentation and Participation:

A consistent effort must be made to contribute to the class in an articulate and critically reflective manner. A presentation must be succinct, well-planned, and informative. It must meet the criteria for critical reflection. It must stay within the planned time limit.

Criteria for Excellence in Written Work:

The work should be a response to the assignment. Writing should be concise, show good grammar usage, correct spelling and typing, and follow a standard academic format. It must show a good grasp of the material and critical thinking. On papers with research, sources must be indicated (footnotes or citations) and a bibliography included.

Definition of Critical Thinking [courtesy of Barbara Anne Radtke]

Critical thinking or reflection is the ability to evaluate a statement by identifying hidden or owned assumptions in the statement, assessing its strengths and weaknesses based upon experience and knowledge of the subject, judging the value of the statement, and proposing an addition, correction, deletion, or alternative position which you believe better meets the standards of evaluation.

15. EXTRA CREDIT, makeup, or enrichment:

An additional 3-4 page reaction paper on one of these topics: 1) visit a synagogue Shabbat service (either Friday evening or Sat. morning); OR 2) attend a Jewish cultural event (film, play, lecture – check the Jewish Exponent newspaper for listings)

16. COURSE OUTLINE

Key concepts: God, Torah, Israel

Our classes will have two major themes. In each week we will usually look at an historical topic as well as one related to Jewish life: calendar cycle, life cycle, synagogue, community, home. On some days, a shorter additional theme will be added. Each week also will include some time to discuss the assigned readings. *Italicized* special topics for some sessions are potential student report topics. Not all will be covered in any session.

NOTE: READINGS ARE OFTEN ASSIGNED FOR TWO SESSIONS.

This syllabus is subject to change.

1) Mon Aug 27

A) Introduction to course; Who are the Jews?

What is Judaism? Why study Judaism?

Key vocabulary and resources

B) What is Torah? (book, wider concept of written and oral Torah, process)

What do we mean by \"Israel\"?

C) \"Great and Little Tradition\" (formal, written; informal, custom and observance)

2). Weds Aug 29

Readings:

Green, These Are the Words "Bet Keneset" (synagogue) p. 218; "Yeshivah" p.186; "Torah" p. 69:

"Yisrael," p.188; "Erets Yisrael" p. 219;

SHJP [Short History of the Jewish People], introduction

Solomon, Judaism, Intro. and "Who are the Jews?" pp. 1-17

Lowenstein, The Jewish Cultural Tapestry, "Folk Traditions" p.1-9 (on Blackboard.)

Mon. Sept 3 -- Labor Day – no class

3) Weds. Sept 5

Biblical Traditions I - Stories

God and the world-Creation: How did the world come to be?

Jews, tradition, and change; roles of men and women

SHJP [Short History of the Jewish People], pages 1-23

Bible: Genesis 1-5

Green, These Are the Words "YHWH" p.3; "Adonai" p.5; "Tselem Elohim" p.183.

4) Mon. Sept. 10

Biblical Traditions II

Exodus, Israel, Revelation, Land

 Israel as God's people: Was there one God or many?

Did Israel have a special relationship with God?

Bible: Genesis, 12:1:9 (God's call to Abraham); Exodus chapters 1-4, Exodus chapter 12

Exodus 19:1-20:14 (the numbering varies in Chap. 20 – this includes the Ten Commandments)

Short references from Bible – a few verses each:

Deuteronomy 4:15-20; Judges 3:7 and 10:6; Jeremiah 2:27 and 32:35

Readings for previous class plus Green, Words, "Yisrael," p.188; "Erets Yisrael" p. 219; "Mitsvah" p.98, "Pesach" p. 246; "Matzah" p. 197; "Haggadah" p.40

Optional (reserve) reading:

from Biale, Cultures of the Jews: A New History, R. Hendel, "Israel among the Nations" pp. 43-75;

especially pages 53-63

5) Weds. Sept. 12

A) Calendar: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur: human beings, sin, forgiveness

B) "Jews in the News" – current topics

Bible: Leviticus 23:23-36 and 23:39-44 (New Year, Day of Atonement, Sukkot)

Solomon, Judaism: calendar pp. 52-64

Green, These Are the Names, "Rosh Hashanah" p. 250; "Yom Kippur" p. 267; "Teshuvah" p.137; "Yetser Ha-tov" p.139 "Shofar" p.204; "Rahamim" p.26;

Supplemental [optional] reading (on reserve in library):

Waskow, Seasons of Our Joy; Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur

6) Mon. Sept. 17 Dr. PHIL CUNNINGHAM, GUEST SPEAKER

Romans and Jews, Second Temple Period

What do we know about Judaism in the Greco-Roman period?

How did Judaism and Christianity separate?

 What are Jewish ideas about the messiah?

Solomon "How Did Judaism and Christianity Split Up?" pp. 18-30

SHJP, pp.51-62

Arthur Green, These are the Words; " Kotel Hamaarvi (Western Wall) p. 222. \"Mashiah\"[Messiah] pp.160-61, "Shalom," p.170.

Additional concepts: Second Temple

 Dead Sea Scrolls

 Diaspora

Bible

Isaiah 2:1-4; Isaiah, chapter 11; Malachi chap. 3

Matthew 1 (Christian scriptures)

Extra reading:

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/beliefs/Theology/Afterlife_and_Messiah/Messianism/Who_is_the_Messiah.shtml (Much of this article is on the post-Temple period in Judaism,

or go to www.myjewishlearning.com, click on “Beliefs” then “Theology,” then “Afterlife and Messiah,” then “Messianism,” then “The Messiah.”) “Who is the Messiah? Judge, warrior, beggar, academic, philosopher, king, healer, common person: Jewish sources describe the Messiah with surprising diversity.” By Jeffrey A. Spitzer

7) Weds Sept 19

A) Rabbinic Judaism, midrash (story/interpretation) and halakha (and law), part one

Key questions: How did Judaism develop after the destruction of the Temple (70 CE)? How did Jews survive and grow without political independence?

Solomon, “How Did Judaism Develop?” 31-36

SHJP, pp. 62-69

Green, These Are the Words, “Aggadah” p.39; “Halakhah” p. 41; “Midrash” p. 48; “Talmud” p.63. “Derekh Erets” p.151.

Interactive Talmud page:

<http://www.acs.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudPage.html>

Additional topics:

Jewish women in Greco-Roman or early rabbinic era

Views of what was a good life

Jews and Christians: “Parting of the ways”

Optional reading on reserve in library: Orenstein and Litman, Lifecycles Vol.2 : Jewish Women on Biblical Themes in Contemporary Life, Ruth Fagen, “Talmud Torah” pp. 113-122.(focus on contemporary women and approach to studying rabbinic texts.)

Sun Sept. 23-- field trip to National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia. Reflection paper ~due one week later, Sun. Sept. 30.

8) Mon Sept. 24

Rabbinic Judaism II

See previous session readings.

Weds. Sept 26 –no class, Yom Kippur

9) Mon. Oct 1

Meeting with librarian: Use and misuse of the internet. Meet at Drexel (main) library, not at regular classroom

Assignment: Mini-research paper (holiday or Jewish life cycle) due by Tues. Oct 9

10) Weds. Oct 3 – synagogue visit, tentative---EARLIER TIME

SYNAGOGUE VISIT Field trip to Temple Adath Israel, Old Lancaster Rd. (walking distance) – Do not meet at classroom. More information will be given.

Synagogues:

Solomon, "The spiritual life: prayer, meditation, Torah." 68-83

"Out of the Ghetto," 98-108 on Jewish denominations

Green, These Are the Words; "Amidah" p. 75; "Shema" p. 102; "Daven" p. 80, "Rav [Rabbi]" p.167;

Humash" p. 44; "Siddur"

Green, Words, "Sukkot" p. 264; "Lulav/Etrog" p.195; "Sukkah," p. 205; "Kehillah" p.157.

Article on visiting a synagogue (revised by R.Tabak)

Mon Oct. 8 – No class, Shemini Atzeret (conclusion of Sukkot)

11) Weds. Oct 10

Jewish home, dietary laws, symbols;

Jewish life cycle: example: weddings

Solomon, Judaism "Making a Jewish home" 84-97

Web article: \"What makes a home Jewish?\" by Vanessa Ochs,

<http://www.crosscurrents.org/ochsv.htm>

(Source: Cross Currents, Winter 1999/2000, Vol. 49) This article is on the web. There is also a link planned at the course web site. If you have difficulty, enter "Vanessa Ochs Jewish home" into a search engine such as Google.

Course readings.

Green, These Are the Words, "Kosher, Kashrut"p. 93; "Tsedakah" p.161; "Mezuzah," p. 201; "Shabbat" P. 255; "Mikveh" p.224. "Nerot Shabbat" (candles) p. 202;

Special topics: varieties of Shabbat (Sabbath) observance

Kosher (kashrut) practices

Mikveh

Jewish life cycle

What are some key ways many Jews observe life cycle events? How do observances change or vary?

Example: Weddings

Green, These Are the Words, "Brit Milah" p.238; "Bar Mitsvah/Bat mitsvah" p.235; "Nesu'in" P. 245;"Huppah" p. 194; "Levayah" p.242.

Special topics:

Birth/circumcision /brit milah/bris)

Birth – naming ceremonies for girls, simchat bat

Bar and bat mitzvah

Jewish weddings—general

Jewish weddings—same-

sex couples

Death/mourning traditions

Optional, reserve: Lowenstein, The Jewish Cultural Tapestry, "Cuisine" pp. 119-137

Goldberg, Life of Judaism, E. Ramon, "Tradition and Innovation in the Jewish Wedding."

Mon. Oct. 15 – no class, University break

12) Weds. Oct 17

Mid-term exam

***Assignment due: FOUR WEB POSTS (see syllabus) –one on response to synagogue visit, one on National Museum of American Jewish History visit; two your choice

13) Mon. Oct 22

Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages.

Questions: What were positive and negative aspects of these interactions?

How does People of the Book portray this period?

SHJP, Medieval Christian Europe pp.97-121

Solomon, p36-49

Antisemitism: website TBA

Special topics: Church attitudes toward Jews

Rashi

Ghettos

Expulsion from Spain

Mon. Oct. 22 Assignment due: Theme paragraph and preliminary bibliography for paper

14) Weds Oct. 24

Jews under Islam

What Questions: What were positive and negative aspects of these interactions?

How does People of the Book portray this period?

SHJP: Jews in Islamic World pp. 71-96;

SHJP: Jews in the Ottoman Empire and Middle East" p.123-147

Green, "Kabbalah" p.45; "Sefirot" p. 28; "Shekhinah" p. 33

Special topics:

Maimonides

Cairo Geniza

Optional readings: Goldberg, Life of Judaism, S. Sered, "Religious Roles of Elderly Women"

Life of Judaism, Awert, "Preparing for Passover in North Africa"

15) Mon Oct 29 Jews in Early Modern World

_____READINGS,

People of the Book: Ghetto of Venice chapter

Special topics:

Jews and Ghettos

Marranos/Crypto-Jews

Dona Gracia Nasi

Baruch Spinoza of Amsterdam: Jewish rebel or heretic?

Shabbatai Zevi: the messianic movement around 1660

Hasidism in Eastern Europe: a new mystical movement

Jewish women's spirituality

Moses Mendelsohn: a bridge to modern Judaism?

Jewish enlightenment (Hebrew: haskalah)

16) Weds. Oct. 31

Modern world: emancipation, changes in Western Europe 18th-19th centuries

Key questions: how did many Jews respond to emancipation and modernization? How did general society respond to Jews?

SHJP, pp. 149-171, "The Jews of Western Europe"

Solomon, Judaism 49-53 and "Out of the Ghetto," 98-108

Optional: Goldberg, Life of Judaism, E. Ramon, "Tradition and innovation in the marriage ceremony" p. 105-120; F. Furman, "Synagogue Life among American Reform Jews" pp. 51-62; L. Davidman "Turning to Orthodox Judaism," pp. 93-104

French Revolution, Napoleon and Jews

Emancipation

Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara

Reform Judaism

Modern Orthodox Judaism

Alfred Dreyfus trials and impact (France, 1890s and following)

17) Mon. Nov. 5

Jews in Eastern Europe

Key questions: How did Jews respond to emancipation and modernization Eastern Europe? How did some people express secular Jewish identity? Did conceptions of masculinity and femininity change?

SHJP: Eastern Europe 173-187;

Green, Words: "Hasid" p.152; "Rebbe," p.168; "Kavod" p. 15; "Kehilla"p.157; "Nisu'in" (Marriage) p. 245; "Huppah" p.194.

Recommended: Goldberg, Life of Judaism, G. Sternberg, "The Ethos of an Eastern European Community" pp.15-27

Special topics:

Yiddish

Zionism

Bund (Jewish Labor Bund)

Changing gender roles in Eastern Europe – late 19th cent. to holocaust

18) Weds. 7 Topic TBA

19) Mon. Nov. 12 Rise of Nazism; the holocaust

Key questions: How did the holocaust happen? How did it affect Jews and the world in general?

SHJP, "The Holocaust" pp.199-215;

Solomon, Judaism "Holocaust theology" pp.115-120

Green, "Tikkun Olam [Repairing the World]," p.175; "Tsedakah [righteousness, charity] p.181

Optional(reserve): Goldberg, Life of Judaism, I. Schorsch and J. Feldman, "Memory and the Holocaust" pp. 149-172.

Special topics:

Antisemitism

"Protocols of the Elders of Zion"

Nuremberg Laws

Kristallnacht

Kindertransport (rescue of German Jewish children before the war)

20) Weds Nov. 14

Jews and their neighbors during the holocaust: Perpetrators, bystanders, victims

Video: Tak for Alt

See readings for previous session.

Special topics:

Rescuers of Jews (righteous gentiles)

Countries with large scale rescue: Denmark or Bulgaria
Jews and Poles during and immediately after holocaust: a conflicted story
The Catholic Church and the holocaust
Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches in the holocaust
Jewish spiritual resistance to Nazis
Jewish armed resistance to Nazis
Collaboration with the Germans: a buried story (France, or Poland, or other countries)
Nuremberg War Crimes trials or other trials of Nazis
Jewish women's experiences during the holocaust
Child survivors of the holocaust
A single country—experiences during the holocaust
The United States as a “bystander” during the rise of Nazism/holocaust: did they fail to act?
Palestine during rise of Nazis and WW II

21) Mon. Nov. 19

Holocaust speaker, tentative

Weds. Nov. 21, no class, Thanksgiving vacation

22) Mon. Nov 26

Israel society and culture

What were some of the crises and options facing Jews at the beginning of the 20th century?

How did the Zionist movement build a new society in Palestine? What were conflicts within this society and with others?

SHJP: “Zionism and the Origins of the State of Israel;” 217-226 (part of chapter)

Solomon, Judaism pp,109-115

Green, Words, “Erets Yisrael” p.219; “Kotel Ma’aravi” (Western Wall) p.222; “Bet Ha-Mikdash” (Temple) p.218.

Special topics:

Revival of Modern Hebrew language

Aliyah (immigration to Palestine or Israel)

Kibbutz

Tel Aviv

Zionism and violence

Jews and Arabs

Christian (Catholic and /or Protestant) attitudes towards Zionism and Israel

Film showing: Under the Domim Tree, tentative date evening Mon. Nov. 26

23) Weds, Nov. 28 Israel – contemporary issues

SHJP: “Zionism...” and “The Jewish people after 1948” (part) pp. 227-248 (note –this is part of two chapters)

Key reading: Sarah Glidden: How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less

plus readings for previous class (11/21)

Special topics:

Religion and state in Israel

Six-Day War (1967) and aftermath

Israelis and Palestinians

Israeli democracy and current issues (examples: women/men in Israel; Israeli Arabs and majority; Ultra-Orthodox [haredi], Orthodox, and non-Orthodox Jewish Israelis)

Israeli culture – Hebrew film, music, literature

Israelis and American Jews (one possible topic: impact of Birthright Israel trips)

Mon. Dec. 3 – Assignment due, Research paper

24) Mon. Dec 3

Overview of American Jewish history

What were some key developments in American Jewish life? In what ways was Jewish experience in the US similar or different from other countries or times?

SHJP: US, 187-197

Additional articles/web sites may be added.

Special topics:

Religion and state in America: Is the U.S. a “Christian country”?

Jews and America – early US (pre-1830)

Reform Judaism in the US

Yiddish and secular Jewish culture in the US

Antisemitism in the US, especially 1880s-1950s

Jews and American socialist and/or labor movements

Jews and American business

Orthodox Judaism in the US

Voyage of the SS St. Louis (1939)

Jews and the civil rights movement

The Soviet Jewry movement (1960s-80s)

25) Weds. Dec. 5

A) Jews in the US, continued:

Movements in contemporary Judaism (denominations)

B) Jews in the Diaspora today

C) Course review

Solomon, Judaism, pp. 121-125 “God,” “Feminism”

Optional (on reserve in library)

In Kaplan, American Judaism R. Geffen, “Life cycle rituals: Rites of Passage in American Judaism” pp. 225-235 and also L. Grossman, “Jewish Religious Denominations” pp.81-100;

Goldberg, Life of Judaism, C. Weissler, "Worship in the Havurah Movement," pp. 79-92

Special topics:

Conservative Judaism

Reconstructionist Judaism

Current issues as reflected in Jewish blogs and web media

Feminism and Judaism

Secular Judaism today

Contemporary Judaism and LGBT Jews (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender)

Jews in one of major countries: France, Canada, Great Britain, Russia, Germany, Argentina

26) Mon Dec. 10- final class

Issues in contemporary Judaism

What are some of the issues facing Jews (individually, as a group) and Judaism today?

Sample topics: Conversion

Intermarriage

Optional Barnavi, Historical Atlas pp.270-77, "America is Different, Khrushchev to Gorbachev; Eastern Europe; Feminism" pp. 280-281,

Final exam

Week of Dec. 17 (Tentative)

Assignment: Four best web postings (see syllabus)

(Additional notes on following pages were not part of student syllabus)

Robert P. Tabak, PhD

Email: rtabak50@gmail.com December, 2015

Supplementary and enrichment materials for Introduction to Judaism course

Required texts: In addition to more standard textbooks, two novels:

People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks (medieval and modern periods)

How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less by Sarah Gladden (graphic novel on skeptical 26-year old American's encounter with Birthright Israel and Israel itself)

Guest speakers and field trips

- 1) Field trip 1 to local synagogue (sometimes synagogue with mikveh). Fall semester visit was usually scheduled at Sukkot.
- 2) Field trip 2 to National Museum of American Jewish History, Philadelphia.
- 3) Guest speaker, community rabbi
- 4) Guest speaker, holocaust survivor. Speaker follows class prep and film Tak for Alt

Films and AV materials

Used in full

I Miss the Sun (US, ca. 1980, 20 min). Mary Halawani's film looks at her Egyptian Jewish grandmother then living in Brooklyn against the background of a family Passover seder, Egyptian style.

Tak for Alt (US ca. 2000, 59 min.) Story of teen holocaust survivor Judy Meisel begins with violence against African Americans in 1963 in Philadelphia suburb. Story of Kovno ghetto, Stuthoff concentration camp, rehabilitation in Denmark, and involvement in work to prevent hatred.

Hitchhikers (ca. 1997, Israeli, 45 min) Four people representing "typical" types of Israelis meet while hitchhiking and break expected roles. Explores prejudice/stereotypes. Multiple endings.

Under the Domim Tree (Israel, 1994, about 1:40.) Shown outside of class time. Film set in Israeli youth village in 1953 where most of the teens are child holocaust survivors. Explores loss and hope.

Sample Youtube and short video clips (selection)

Course Intro – what is Torah?

- a) Torah scribe (sofer) (need new video)_____, [previous clip no longer available on Youtube]
- b) <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJRnbik1mvA> Torah Covers, 1995, Shaar Shomayim, Montreal, made by women in congregation
- c) Torah: adult bat mitzvah . havurah setting 2010
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5KH62xvLY8>

- d) Opening scenes of film Yentl (US, 1983) contrasted with opening 20-25 min of Not a Job for a Nice Jewish Girl (Australian documentary, 1996, on one of first women rabbis in that country)

2nd Temple Judaism: Heritage: Civilization and the Jews, (1984) Disc 1, first pt. of "The Shaping of Traditions"

Twentieth century: Selected clips from Image Before My Eyes (1980) on interwar Poland

<http://users.erols.com/mwhite28/jews-20c.htm> Map of Jews 20th century (map is not ideal but shows some effects of mass emigration, holocaust, and creation of Israel)

<http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/gallery/maps.htm> Emancipation, expulsion, holocaust maps

Holocaust, Palestine, and resistance: trailer for recent Hannah Szenes film www.blessedisthematch.com

American Jewry: selected video clips from The Jewish Americans (PBS, 2008)

City stories (sample) –Salonika

Sephardim, early modern <http://jewishhistory.research.wesleyan.edu/i-jewish-population/1-sephardic-diaspora-regional-trends/>

Salonika <http://www.sephardicstudies.org/thes.html> Salonika, a few pics pre-and post war
USHMM -- destroyed cemetery, etc. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005422>
<http://www.jmth.gr/web/thejews/pages/pages/history.htm> History, Salonika Jewish museum, photos and text

Pre-state Palestine and Israel to present: society

1) "Tel Aviv the gorgeous city" (architecture and people)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzd8WIcoOs8> (2006) (3-5 minutes) contrasted with

2) Tel Aviv on Yom Kippur [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfOzPDz2YBY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfOzPDz2YBY) (3-4 minutes)

Rachel Papo: photography of women soldiers <http://www.rachelpapo.com/serial1.html> OR
<http://www.serialno3817131.com/>

Birthright \"I went to Israel - I liked it\"

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njhYhOd8Qyo&feature=related](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=njhYhOd8Qyo&feature=related)

Literature and song: Etti Ankri, Shirat Haesavim [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFfgH0oJdwE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sFfgH0oJdwE)

(based on Naomi Shemer's reworking of a text by Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav). Song starts 30 sec. in.

Israeli and Palestinian narratives: Article on learning each other's history (one page PDF)

<http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/downloadPublication.cfm?PublicationID=11149>

Preliminary draft (English) of joint Israeli-Palestinian history book

<http://www.vispo.com/PRIME/leohn1.pdf>

Kibbutz: "Last kibbutz" (1995, title is exaggerated: change/decline of old-style kibbutz with children's houses, Bar Am) [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GQ_bYu-cgM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GQ_bYu-cgM)

Changed kibbutz (Ein Hashofet, 2007) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Hk496McrzE>