

## HSTEU 466/SISJE 466 The Sephardic Diaspora

Professor S. Stein

Office hours: Monday 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

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This class studies the creation and culture of the Sephardic Diaspora, a trans-national Jewish community. The class begins with the creation of the Sephardim as a distinct sub-ethnic Jewish group in the wake of the expulsions from Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century. We will then follow the path of Sephardim as they moved to the Dutch and Ottoman Empires, to Western Europe, the Americas, and North Africa, paying particular attention to the shaping of modern Sephardic culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. To study the culture and history of the Sephardim, we will rely upon primary and secondary documents, including poetry, fiction, memoir, objects of material culture, music, maps and scholarly writing.

The following syllabus serves as a contract between professor and students. By participating in this class, you are agreeing to abide by the requirements and expectations spelled out below.

### Requirements

#### In-Class Requirements:

Students will be expected to attend class weekly having completed their reading and writing assignments. In taking this class, we are agreeing to learn as a group. Students are expected to treat one another, and one another's ideas, seriously and respectfully.

#### Exams:

Students will be expected to take a midterm and a final examination. Each exam has two components. First, students will take an in-class exam consisting of short-answer identification questions drawn from lectures and assigned readings. Second, on the day of the midterm and on the day of the final, students will receive three take-home essay questions. You are expected to choose *one* of these, and to write a 5-7 page paper over the course of the following weekend. Papers will be due the Monday after they are distributed.

#### Late Essays:

Extensions will be granted only in cases of verified emergencies, such as illness. Late papers will suffer a drop in grade by half a grade per day (from a 4 to a 3.5, for example, or from a 3.5 to a 3).

### Grading Guidelines

Students are required to complete *all* assignments in order to pass the course.

Participation (including attendance)	20%
In-class midterm exam	20%
Take-home midterm essay	20%
In-class final exam	20%
Take-home final essay	20%

**Required texts available at the University Bookstore:**

Zion Zohar, editor, *Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times* (New York, 2005). Abbreviated as **SMJ**, below.

Aron Rodrigue and Esther Benbassa, *Sephardi Jewry: A history of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century* (Berkeley, 2000).

Daniel Schroeter, *The Sultan's Jew: Morocco and the Sephardi World* (Stanford, 2002). Abbreviated as **TSJ**, below.

Cecil Roth, *Doña Gracia of the House of Nasi* (Philadelphia, 1977).

André Aciman, *Out of Egypt: A Memoir* (New York, 1994).

Jelle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937-1962* (New York, 1996).

There is also a **required course packet** available at Ram's Copy Center on University Avenue. Readings from the course packet are marked below with a bullet (●).

**Writing help**

All students, regardless of their major or year, are encouraged to seek help on papers from the History Writing Center. The History Writing Center offers half-hour, individual appointments with graduate student tutors who are well versed in the special demands of writing history papers. Students are invited to use the Writing Center at any stage in the composition process, from thesis development through multiple drafts of an essay. For more information:

<http://depts.washington.edu/histwrit/>

**Access Students**

Space permitting, access students are welcome to attend lectures. According to a new policy of the Registrar's Office, access students are required to register for the course.

## Meetings

### Week One: Histories and myths

#### Tuesday

How to read like an historian: sources, arguments, myths

#### Thursday

Diaspora, ethnicity, sub-ethnicity, culture: defining the boundaries of “Sephardi”

#### Required readings:

Zion Zohar, “A Global Perspective on Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewry: An Introductory Essay,” *SMJ*, pp. 3-23.

- Peter Novick, “Introduction: Nailing Jelly to the Wall,” *That noble dream: the "objectivity question" and the American historical profession*, pp. 1-17.
- Joëlle Bahloul, “The Sephardic Jew as Mediterranean: A View from Kinship and Gender.” *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 4, no. 2 (1994): 197-207.

### Week Two: From Spanish to Sephardi, Converso, and Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation

#### Tuesday

Medieval Jewish life under Crescent and Cross

#### Thursday

Expulsion and the invention of the Sephardi and Converso Diasporas

#### Required reading:

Mark Cohen, “The Origins of Sephardic Jewry in the Medieval Arab World,” *SMJ*, pp. 23-39.

Norman Stillman, “The Judeo-Arabic Heritage,” *SMJ*, pp. 40-54.

- Renee Levine Melammed, “Jews and Conversas: The First Century of Crypto-Judaism,” *Heretics of Daughters of Israel? The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile*, pp. 31-44.

### Week Three: Finding new homes and identities I

#### Tuesday

To the Dutch Empire and the Americas

#### Thursday

To Western and Southern Europe

#### Required reading:

Cecil Roth, *Doña Gracia and the House of Nasi*, pp.1-83.

Jonathan Schorsch, “Early Modern Sephardim and Blacks: Conflict and Contact Between Two Minorities,” *SMJ*, pp. 239-258.

- Yosef Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto: Isaac Cardoso: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics*, selection.

## **Week Four: Finding new homes and identities II**

### **Tuesday**

In-class midterm exam

### **Thursday**

Jewish society in the early modern Ottoman Empire and Moroccan Sultanate

#### **Required reading:**

Aron Rodrigue and Esther Benbassa, *Sephardi Jewry*, pp. 1-64.

Cecil Roth, *Doña Gracia and the House of Nasi*, pp. 84-122.

Daniel Schroeter, "Court Jews and Muslim-Jewish Relations in Morocco," *TSJ*, pp. 1-35.

## **Take home midterm exams distributed**

## **Week Five: Spiritual and material worlds**

### **Tuesday**

Messianic currents and the Jewish globe

### **Thursday**

Global commerce and culture in the early modern period

#### **Required reading:**

Daniel Schroeter, "The Rise of the Macnins" and "The Plague and the World of Mediterranean Jewry," *TSJ*, pp. 36-54.

Mark Kligman, "Diversity and Uniqueness: an introduction to Sephardic Liturgical Music," *SMJ*, pp. 259-284.

• Moshe Idel, "Jewish Philosophy and Kabbalah in Spain," *SMJ*, pp.120-144.

• Gershom Sholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 287-324.

## **Week Six: Modern cultural and political forms**

### **Tuesday**

Cultures and politics under nation-state

### **Thursday**

Cultures and politics under empires and imperialism

#### **Required reading:**

Aron Rodrigue and Esther Benbassa, *Sephardi Jewry*, pp.65-158.

Daniel Schroeter, "The *Berberiscos* of London," "The Macnins in Morocco," and "The Sultan's Jew," *TSJ*, pp. 55-124.

•Paula Hyman, *The Jews of Modern France*, pp. 15-90.

## **Week Seven: The erosion of the Ladino-speaking heartland**

### **Tuesday**

Nationalism, racism, anti-semitism

### **Thursday**

Emigration, the Holocaust, and World War II

#### **Required Reading:**

Aron Rodrigue and Esther Benbassa, *Sephardi Jewry*, pp. 159-191.

- Aron Rodrigue, "The Ottoman Diaspora: The Rise and Fall of Ladino Literary Culture," *Cultures of the Jews* volume 3, David Biale, editor.
- Henry Abramson, "A Double Occlusion: Sephardim and the Holocaust," *SMJ*, pp. 285-299.
- Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation 1941-1944*, pp. 235-261.

**Week Eight: The Mediterranean remapped**

**Tuesday**

Colonialism, decolonization and nation shaping

**Thursday**

Migrations, dispersions, reorientations

**Required reading:**

André Aciman, *Out of Egypt*

Daniel Schroeter, "The Unwanted Emissary," and "Macnin's Leagcy: Sephardi and Oriental," *TSJ*, pp. 144-160.

**Week Nine: Multi-cultural and/or Jewish: Israel and its Jewish minorities**

**Tuesday**

Ashkenazim, Mizrahim, Sephardim, Israeli: the politics of sub-ethnicity

**Thursday**

In class film screening: selections of "Salah Shabati" and "Land of Promise."

**Required reading:**

- Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema*, pp. 115-119, 138-155.
- Shlomo Deshen, "The Emergence of the Israeli Sephardi Ultra-Orthodox Movement," *Jewish Social Studies* 11/2, Winter 2005.
- Joseph Massad, "Zionism's Internal Others: Israel and the Oriental Jews," *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, 1996, 25/4.
- Poems of Sami Shalom Chetrit, from *Keys to the Garden*, pp. 357-369.

**Week Ten: Sephardi culture in 20<sup>th</sup> century America**

**Tuesday**

New York, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Seattle

**Thursday**

Historic walking tour of Sephardi Seattle. We begin at Pike Place Market: latecomers may be left behind.

**Required reading:**

- Selections from Diana Matza, *Sephardic-American Voices*, pp. 23-24, 35-40, 103-106, 153-159.
- Marc Angel, *La America*, pp. 3-60.
  - "Mistaken Identity?" *Atlantic Monthly*, December, 2000, pp. 85-96.

**Week Eleven: Sephardim (and their echoes) toward the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

**Tuesday**

France, Turkey, Greece, and beyond

**Thursday**

In-class final exam.

**Required reading:**

Joelle Bahloul, *The Architecture of Memory: A Jewish-Muslim Household in Colonial Algeria, 1937-1962*.

- Sarah Abrevaya Stein, "Asymmetric Fates: Secular Yiddish and Ladino Culture in Comparison," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96.4 (Fall 2006), 498-509.

Please screen the film, "I Remember Rhodes," on reserve at Odegaard Library.

**Take-home final exams distributed.**