

Fall 2021
American Jewish History
Exile or Promised Land? Difference or Synthesis?

HYBRID COURSE

DRAFT, and subject to change

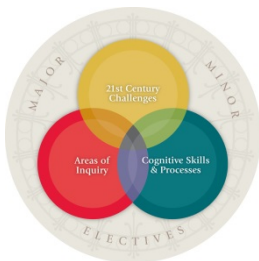
Jewish Studies 563:231:01/History 512:231:01
Miller Hall, Room 115
T/TR, 6th period (5:00-6:20 p.m.)
nsinkoff@rutgers.edu

Professor Nancy Sinkoff
14 College Avenue, room 103
Office hours: TBD
(or by appointment)

This course will examine the history of American Jews through the lenses of the questions: is America the land of exile or the land of promise? How have American Jews synthesized their Jewishness (inclusive of religion) with American values and how have they distinguished their Jewishness from American values? Where have the points of conflict between these two sets of values resided? How have American Jews created Jewish communal forms in the United States and how has American individualism militated against those forms' cohesion and longevity? What American Jewish thinkers have addressed these issues? How have Jews interpreted their Jewish and American identities culturally?

Topics to be covered include: migration, communal and religious innovation, acculturation, ethnicity, politics, and antisemitism. The course will also explore the ways in which Jews have been represented by popular American cultural forms, including fiction and films.

Students are required to read the materials in advance of our sessions. Hasia Diner, *The History of the Jews in the United States, 1954-2004*, is the "textbook" for the course. Philip Roth's *Goodbye, Columbus*, is also required. Because we will pay particular attention to the primary sources—all of which are available on Sakai (**PHS**)—in class, sources assigned for specific dates must be brought to class. Additional readings, in the form of articles and book chapters, have been uploaded to Sakai. The secondary sources (**SIS**) will allow you to a) deepen your understanding of the history we're engaging and b) enter into the contemporary scholarly conversation about the meaning of that history.



This course fulfills CORE requirements in HST:

K: Explain the development of some aspect of a society or culture over time, including the history of ideas or history of science.

L: Employ historical reasoning to study human endeavors, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

Additional Learning Goals:

Acquire an overview of the major issues in the history of the Jews in the Americas, with a focus on the United States from the mid-seventeenth century until the present.

Engage in the craft of history by studying a variety of primary sources, such as legal documents, newspaper reports, autobiographical material, religious tracts, and letters, and through reading secondary interpretations, including scholarly articles.

Develop skills of communicating orally and in writing through classroom discussion based on questions posted on the Sakai site, exams, and short papers.

Required Texts: (available for purchase at the Rutgers University Bookstore, Ferren Mall, 732-246-8448):

Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States: 1654-2000* (UCal. Press, 2004), ISBN: 0520227735

Philip Roth, *Goodbye Columbus and Five Short Stories* (Penguin, 1993), ISBN: 9780679748267

Primary Historical Sources (PHS) and Secondary Interpretive Sources (SIS) are posted on Sakai (sakai.rutgers.edu). Click on American Jewish History, Fall 2019, Resources, folder: Primary Sources or folder: Secondary Sources.

Grading:

1. Attendance and participation in class: Students are required to prepare the course readings and to participate actively in class discussion. As noted, students *must* bring the primary sources, printed from the Sakai site, to class on assigned dates or have them available on our "remote" days. The best way to keep track of them is in a folder. Attendance will be taken at every class. Students with more than three unexcused absences will have their grade lowered by 1/3 for each missed class. **10%.**

2. Four short essays analyzing primary source readings. These essays, three double-spaced pages, are due in class *on* designated dates. If you prefer, you may send them to me as an email attachment *before* class: **10% each, 40%.**

4. Written Historical Book Review with Oral Presentation. **20%**

5. Final Take-Home Exam (questions will be given out on **12/10**). The final exam is due, via email, on **12/17**): **30%.**

****All of these components must be met to fulfill completion of the course****

****Extra Credit Opportunities, such as attending films or lectures related to the course material, will be posted on Sakai throughout the semester****

1. Thurs. Sept. 2: Introduction. American Jewish History: A Case Study in American Exceptionalism?

2. Tues. Sept. 7: Colonial Jewry [Due to the Jewish New Year, this lecture will be prerecorded]

PHS: "Petition to Expel the Jews from New Amsterdam," September 22, 1654.

"Reply to Stuyvesant's Petition," April 26, 1655.

"Rights of the Jews of New Amsterdam," March 13, 1656.

Excerpts from "The Earliest Extant Minute Books of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregation, Shearith Israel," 1728-1786.

SIS: Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States: 1654-2000*, pp. 13-40.

Stanley Mervis, "Enslaved Domestic Labor among West Indian Sephardim."

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/caribbean-islands-and-guianas>

3. Thurs. Sept. 9: The Consequences of the Revolution and the Early National Period

PHS: "The Declaration of Independence," "The Virginia Act of 1785," "The Constitution of the United States of America, 1789," "Welcome to Washington from the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, RI, and Washington's Reply, 1790."

SIS: Diner, 41-67.

4. Tues. Sept. 14: The "Golden Age" of Central European Jewry: Mobility and Community

PHS: Excerpts from Abraham Kohn's peddler's diary.

SIS: Diner, pp. 71-88, 99-113.

5. Thurs. Sept. 16: The Civil War, Jewish Politics in Blue and Grey

PHS: "Abolitionist Forced to Flee."

Excerpts from R. Morris Raphall's Defense and R. David Einhorn's Critique of Slavery.

President Grant's General Order #11.

6. Tues. Sept. 21: Americanizing Judaism [Essay #1 Due**]; Sukkot 1: this lecture will be prerecorded]**

PHS: "The Petition of Forty-Seven Members of Charleston's Beth Elohim Synagogue, 1824;" Documents from the Pittsburgh Platform."

Rebecca Gratz, "America is Not Palestine (1841)."

Isaac Mayer Wise, "The Confirmation of Girls," 1854.

Isaac Leeser, "Proposed School, 1835"; "Education of Girls," 1835.

"The Pittsburgh Platform," 1885.

SIS: Diner, pp. 112-34.

Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, "Union and Disunion."

7. Thurs. Sept. 23: East European Immigration: Migration, Settlement, and Work

PHS: Jacob Schiff, "Origin of the Galveston Movement, 1906."

Charles S. Bernheimer, "Sweatshops in Philadelphia, 1905."

Isaac Rubinow, "The Economic Condition of the Russian Jew in New York, 1905."

"The Protocol of Peace in the Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Trade, 1910."

SIS: Diner, pp. 88-99.

Susan Glenn, "Uprisings: Women and the Mass Strike Movement," in *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*.

8. Tues. Sept. 28: Secular *Yidishkayt* among East European Jewish Immigrants [Sukkot 1: this lecture will be prerecorded]

PHS: "The Beginnings of Secular Jewish Schools, 1918-1920."

Leibush Lehrer, "Camp Boiberik: The Growth of an Idea"

Chaim Zhitlovsky, "What is Jewish Secular Culture?"

Interview with Miriam Gross: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEIXgHe7mRw>

SIS: Tony Michels, "Speaking to 'Moyshe': Socialists Create a Yiddish Public Culture."

9. Thurs. Sept. 30: Americanizing the Immigrants: Philanthropy and Social Control [Essay #2 Due**]**

PHS: "The Kehillah of New York City and the American Jewish Congress."

Israel Friedlander, "The Division Between German and Russian Jews, 1915."

Selections from *A Bintel Brief*, letters to the Jewish Daily *Forverts*.

SIS: Moses Rischin, "Germans versus Russians."

Nancy Sinkoff, "Educating for 'Proper' Jewish Womanhood."

10. Tues. Oct. 5: East European Jewry: Creating a Religious, American Jewish Community

PHS: H. Pereira Mendes, "The Beginning of JTSA," 1886.

Solomon Schechter, "Catholic Israel," 1896.

"The Orthodox Jewish Congregational Union of America," 1898.

Judah Magnes, "A Republic of Nationalities," *The Emanu-El Pulpit*, February 13, 1909."

Kaufmann Kohler, "The Concordance of Judaism and Americanism," 1911.

Bernard Revel, "The American Yeshiva," 1926.

SIS: Diner, 117-134.

Sarna, "Two Worlds of American Judaism."

13. Thurs. Oct. 7: Literary Representations of the Immigrant Experience

PHS: Morris Rosenfeld, "In the Factory."

Anzia Yezierska, "The Lost Beautifulnes," "Soap and Water."

SHS: Irving Howe, "The Culture of Yiddish", *World of Our Fathers*.

11. Tues. Oct. 12: Social Antisemitism, World War I, and American Jewry on the World Stage

PHS: "The Manhattan Beach Affair," 1879.

Louis Marshall, "The American Jewish Committee, 1906."

"ADL: A Statement of Policy," May 1915.

Henrietta Szold, "Zionism and the Jewish Woman in America," 1915.

SIS: Diner, 205-213.

12. Thurs. Oct. 14: The Interwar Years I: The Second Generation Americanizes

PHS: Labor Disputes in Mordecai Kaplan's Diary, July 28, 1919.

Mordecai M. Kaplan, "The Reconstruction of Judaism," 1920.

<https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/my-grandparents-had-a-hotel>

SIS: Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews*.

13. Tues. Oct. 19: American Zionism

PHS: Abba Hillel Silver, "Toward American Jewish Unity," and "American Jewry in War and After."

"The Columbus Platform," 1937.

Louis D. Brandeis, "The Jewish Problem and How to Solve It (1915)."

SIS: Naomi W. Cohen, *American Jews and the Zionist Idea*.

Mark Raider, "Stephen S. Wise and Golda Meir: Zionism, Israel, and American Power in the Twentieth Century."

14. Thurs. Oct. 21: The Interwar Years II: The Second Generation Politicizes

PHS: Green, *Jewish Workers in the Modern Diaspora*.

SIS: Diner, 173-202.

Wenger, "From Neighborhood to New Deal."

15. Tues. Oct. 26: Antisemitism and Its Response

PHS: Henry Ford, "The International Jew: The World's Problem," 1920.

Father Charles E. Coughlin, speech on Jews and Communism:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igsGXwcZghI>

Jacob Glatstein, "A Gute Nakht, Velt."

Charles A. Lindberg, Des Moines Speech, September 11, 1941.

SIS: Marcia Graham Synott, "Anti-Semitism and American Universities: Did Quotas Follow the Jews?"

Tony Michels, "Is America Different? A Critique of American Jewish Exceptionalism."

16. Thurs. Oct. 28: American Jews and the Holocaust **[Essay #3 Due** via email before class]****

PHS: Documents on the "Anti-Nazi Boycott" of 1933.

"A Statement of Policy," American Council for Judaism, 1944.

Abraham J. Klausner, "Chaplain Abraham J. Klausner and Germany's Displaced Jews, 1945."
Letters Home from American Jewish Soldiers.

SIS: Diner, 215-265.

Henry Feingold, "Who Shall Bear Guilt for the Holocaust?"

Marianne Sanua, "From the Pages of the *Victory Bulletin*: The Syrian Jews of Brooklyn During World War II."

17. Tues. Nov. 2: American Jews and the Founding of the State of Israel

PHS: "David Ben-Gurion and Jacob Blaustein Exchange," 1950.

Dorothy Thompson, "American Demands Single Loyalty," and Oscar Handlin, "America Recognizes Diverse Loyalties."

SIS: Melvin Urofsky, "A Cause in Search of Itself: American Zionism after the State."

18. Thurs. Nov. 4: Post-War Jewish Life

PHS: American Jewish Committee documents on Communism

Excerpts from Will Herberg, *Protestant Catholic Jew: An Essay in American Religious Sociology Responsum* on the Sabbath, Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly, 1950.

Screened in class:

Excerpts from "For God and Country," U.S. Army Recruiting film, 1943.

SIS: Diner, pp. 259-304.

Deborah Dash Moore, "Jewish Migration in Postwar America: The Case of Miami and Los Angeles."

19. Tues. Nov. 9: Post-War Literary and Cultural Representations of Jewish Life

PHS: Philip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus*

Screened in class:

"I Am Easily Assimilated" from Leonard Bernstein's "Candide"

"We Know We Belong to the Land" from Oscar Hammerstein's Oklahoma!

"You've Got to Be Carefully Taught" from Rodgers/Hammerstein's "South Pacific"

Cecil B. DeMille's Academy Award acceptance speech for "Ten Commandments," (1957).

SIS: Herbert J. Gans, "The Origin of a Jewish Community in the Suburbs."

20. Thurs. Nov. 11: Secular Jewishness and Civic Politics, the 1960s

PHS: The New York Law against Discrimination, March 12, 1945.

President Truman's Veto of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, June 25, 1952.

R. Joachim Prinz, "America Must Not Remain Silent," 1963.

Selections from S. Katz's Symposium on Negro-Jewish Relations, 1966.

James Baldwin, "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They are Anti-White," 1967.

Irving Howe, "In This Moment of Grief," 1968.

SIS: Jonathan Kaufman, "Blacks and Jews: The Struggle in the Cities."

21. Tues. Nov. 16: Varieties of American Judaism during the Counter Culture [Essay #4 Due**]**

PHS: Selections from *The First Jewish Catalog*.

"Brooklyn Bridge Life Force of a Culture."

Bill Novak, "The Making of a Jewish Counter Culture."

"The San Francisco Platform, CCAR, 1976."

SIS: Riv-Ellen Prell, *Prayer & Community: The Havurah in American Judaism*.

Sarna, "The Post War Revival."

22. Thurs. Nov. 18: Tradition in America

SIS: Nomi Stolzenberg and David Myers, "Rethinking Secularization Theory: The Case of the Hasidic Public Sphere."

Sarna, "Remnants from the Holocaust."

23. Tues. Nov. 23: Civil and Religious Conflict, Guest Lecture: Dr. Kathryn Bloom

Film: "City of Joel" (90 minutes)

Philip Roth, "Eli the Fanatic."

24. Tues. Nov. 30: AIPAC, Evangelicals, and Support for Israel [Essay #5 Due**]**

PHS: Arnold Eisen, "A New Role for Israel in American Jewish Identity."

Peter Beinart, "The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment."

SIS: Caitlin Carenen, "The Political and Religious Landscape Shifts, 1980-2008."

25. Tues. Dec. 2: Student Presentations

26. Thurs. Dec. 4: Student Presentations

27. Tues. Dec. 7: Conclusions and Review: [Take-Home Exam Questions Given Out]**

SIS: Sarna, "American Judaism at a Crossroads."

Nathaniel Deutsch, "'Borough Park Was a Red State': Trump and the Haredi Vote"

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM is due on Tuesday, December 10, at 12:00 noon via email: nsinkoff@rutgers.edu. No late exams will be accepted.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Regular and punctual attendance is expected. I will take attendance before each class begins. Anyone who misses more than three classes will lose one 1/3 grade for each absence. Exceptions will be made only for extended medical or personal problems that can be documented to my satisfaction. If you miss two classes in the early part of the semester for undocumented reasons and then you miss a third later in the semester because you have the flu, I will not treat a doctor's note for the flu as sufficient grounds to exempt you from the attendance policy should you miss another class.

Because of this policy, you should not enroll in this course if your work schedule or obligations for a sports team conflict with the class period. Such conflicts will NOT be excused absences. Personal and medical issues necessitating multiple absences are the only causes that I will consider as legitimate grounds to mitigate the attendance penalty.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: The History Department at Rutgers has established a set of guidelines setting forth the department's policy on appropriate classroom etiquette for both professors and students (<http://history.rutgers.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/52-academics/undergraduate-program/108-policy-on-mutual-responsibilities-and-classroom-etiquette>). The guidelines endeavor to create a classroom environment appropriate for effective learning. They note that students who conduct private conversations (either with a fellow student or using a cell phone), work on crossword puzzles, or read material, *particularly on-line or on a phone*, not related to the class while the class is in progress distract the attention of the professor and fellow students from course material. I take this part of the policy seriously, and will ask you to leave the classroom if you engage in such activities. You will not receive credit for attending class if you are asked to leave because of rude or inappropriate behavior.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students with disabilities requesting accommodations must follow the procedures outlined at <http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu/request.html>

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism is unacceptable. Any work you hand in must be done independently and with appropriate citations. Not only direct quotation, but also paraphrasing someone else's work, requires an endnote or footnote. Cases of plagiarism will immediately be sent to the appropriate college dean for review. The current academic integrity policy can be found here: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml>

EXAM EXCUSE POLICY: Excused absences from exams will only be granted for students who can document a medical or family emergency. Students who feel a personal emergency is sufficiently grave to warrant an excused absence must speak with the dean of their college, and obtain a written letter from him/her explaining the nature of the emergency. Otherwise, non-attendance at an exam will result in failure of that exam.

EMAIL CONTACT: Every student has been given an official Rutgers email address by the university. I will use the email program through the Sakai website to make any necessary changes to the syllabus and for announcements. Therefore, if you do not use your Rutgers' email regularly, it is your responsibility to set up your Rutgers account to forward to the appropriate address.