

**Fall 2017**  
**American Jewish History**  
**Exile or Promised Land? Difference or Synthesis?**

**(DRAFT, subject to change)**

**History 512:231:01/Jewish Studies 563:231:01**  
**Miller Hall, Room 115**  
**T/TR, 5th period (2:50-4:10 p.m.)**

**Professor Nancy Sinkoff**  
**Office Hours, Tuesdays, 4:30-5:30**  
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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, and politics. 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. We will pay careful attention to the primary sources—all of which are available on Sakai—in class. Hasia Diner, *The History of the Jews in the United States, 1954-2004*, is the “textbook” for the course. Additional readings, in the form of articles and book chapters, have been uploaded on Sakai. The secondary sources 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. There will also be a **required** field trip to the Tenement Museum and the Eldridge Street Synagogue of New York.



**This course fulfills CORE requirements in HST:**

**H:** Understand the bases and development of human and society endeavors across time and place

**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

### **Additional Learning Goals:**

Acquire an overview of the major issues in the history of the Jews in the Americas, with concentration 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 autobiographies, legal charters, poetry, and testimonies, and through reading secondary interpretations, including scholarly articles and textbook readings.

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

**Primary Historical Sources (PHS) and Secondary Interpretive Sources (SIS)** are posted on Sakai ([sakai.rutgers.edu](http://sakai.rutgers.edu)). Click on American Jewish History, Fall 2017, 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. Students are required to bring the primary sources, printed from the Sakai site, to class on assigned dates. 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. Responses to primary source readings. These responses, two-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. **30%**
3. Book Review (a list of fiction, autobiography, memoir will be given out; assignment due on Dec. 5 in class): **20%**
4. Oral Presentation of Book: **10%**
5. Museum Visit. [ungraded but required]
6. Final Take-Home Exam. **30%**.

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

**1. Tues. Sept. 5: Introduction. American Jewish History: A Case Study in American Exceptionalism?**

**2. Thurs. Sept. 7: Colonial Jewry**

**PHS:** "Petition to Expel the Jews from New Amsterdam," September 22, 1654. (Sakai)  
"Reply to Stuyvesant's Petition," April 26, 1655. (Sakai)

“Rights of the Jews of New Amsterdam,” March 13, 1656. (Sakai)

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

Stanley Mervis, “Enslaved Domestic Labor among West Indian Sephardim.” (Sakai)

### **3. Tues. Sept. 12: 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.” (Sakai)

SIS: Diner, 41-67.

### **4. Thurs. Sept. 14: The “Golden Age” of Central European Jewry: Mobility and Community**

PHS: Rebecca Gratz, “America is Not Palestine (1841).” (Sakai)

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

### **The Civil War, Jewish Politics in Blue and Grey**

PHS: “Abolitionist Forced to Flee.” (Sakai)

Excerpts from David Einhorn’s Critique of Slavery. (Sakai)

President Grant’s General Order #11. (Sakai)

### **5. Tues. Sept. 19: Americanizing Judaism**

PHS: “The Petition of Forty-Seven Members of Charleston’s Beth Elohim Synagogue, 1824;” Documents from the Pittsburgh Platform,” (Sakai)

Isaac Mayer Wise, “The Confirmation of Girls,” 1854. (Sakai)

Isaac Leeser, “Proposed School, 1835”; “Education of Girls,” 1835. (Sakai)

“The Pittsburgh Platform,” 1885. (Sakai)

SIS: Diner, pp. 112-34.

Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism*, “Union and Disunion.” (Sakai)

### **6. Thurs. Sept. 21, EREV ROSH HASHANAH, NO CLASS**

**[holiday assignment reading]**

#### **East European Immigration: Migration and Settlement**

PHS: Jacob Schiff, “Origin of the Galveston Movement, 1906.” (Sakai)

Charles S. Bernheimer, “Sweatshops in Philadelphia, 1905.” (Sakai)

SIS: Diner, pp. 88-99.

Deborah Dwork, “Health Conditions of Immigrant Jews on the Lower East Side of New York, 1880-1914.” (Sakai)

### **7. Tues. Sept. 26: Work and Family in the Immigrant Community [primary source reading response due]**

PHS: Isaac Rubinow, “The Economic Condition of the Russian Jew in New York, 1905.” (Sakai)

“The Protocol of Peace in the Cloak, Suit, and Skirt Trade, 1910.” (Sakai)

“The Beginnings of Secular Jewish Schools, 1918-1920.” (Sakai)

SIS: Susan Glenn, “Uprisings: Women and the Mass Strike Movement,” in *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation*. (Sakai)

Tony Michels, “Speaking to ‘Moyshe’: Socialists Create a Yiddish Public Culture.” (Sakai)

**8. Thurs. Sept. 28. Americanizing the Immigrants: Philanthropy and Social Control**

**PHS:** “The Kehillah of New York City and the American Jewish Congress.” (Sakai)

Israel Friedlander, “The Division Between German and Russian Jews, 1915.” (Sakai)

**SIS:** Moses Rischin, “Germans versus Russians.” (Sakai)

Nancy Sinkoff, “Educating for ‘Proper’ Jewish Womanhood.” (Sakai)

**9. Tues. Oct. 3: East European Jewry: Creating a Religious, American Jewish Community**

**PHS:** H. Pereira Mendes, “The Beginning of JTSA,” 1886. (Sakai)

Solomon Schechter, “Catholic Israel,” 1896. (Sakai)

“The Orthodox Jewish Congregational Union of America,” 1898. (Sakai)

Judah Magnes, “A Republic of Nationalities,” *The Emanu-El Pulpit*, February 13, 1909.” (Sakai)

Kaufmann Kohler, “The Concordance of Judaism and Americanism,” 1911. (Sakai)

Bernard Revel, “The American Yeshiva,” 1926. (Sakai)

**SIS:** Diner, 117-134.

Sarna, “Two Worlds of American Judaism.” (Sakai)

**10. Thurs. Oct. 5: EREV SUKKOT, NO CLASS**

[**holiday assignment reading: Literary and Philosophical Representations of the Immigrant Experience**]

**PHS:** Morris Rosenfeld, “In the Factory.” (Sakai)

Anzia Yezierska, “The Lost Beautifulness,” “Soap and Water.” (Sakai)

Chaim Zhitlovsky, “What is Jewish Secular Culture?” (Sakai)

**11. Tues. Oct. 10: VISIT TO THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM and to the ELDRIDGE STREET MUSEUM**

**12. Thurs. Oct. 12. SHEMINI AZERET, NO CLASS**

[**holiday assignment reading:** Jenna Weissman Joselit, *Telling Tales: Or, How a Slum Became a Shrine.*” (Sakai) [or selections from *Remembering the Lower East Side: American Jewish reflections*, eds. Diner, Shandler, and Wenger, 2000. (Sakai)]

**13. Tues. Oct. 17. Social Antisemitism, World War I, and American Jewry on the World Stage**

**PHS:** “The Manhattan Beach Affair,” 1879. (Sakai)

Louis Marshall, “The American Jewish Committee, 1906.” (Sakai)

“ADL: A Statement of Policy,” May 1915. (Sakai)

Henrietta Szold, “Zionism and the Jewish Woman in America,” 1915. (Sakai)

Abraham Krotoshinsky, “A Polish Immigrant Rescues the “Lost” Battalion, 1918.” (Sakai)

Henry Ford, “The International Jew: The World’s Problem,” 1920. (Sakai)

**SIS:** Diner, 205-213.

**14. Thurs. Oct. 19. The Interwar Years I: The Second Generation Americanize**

**PHS:** Labor Disputes in Mordecai Kaplan’s Diary, July 28, 1919. (Sakai)

Mordecai M. Kaplan, “The Reconstruction of Judaism,” 1920. (Sakai)

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

**15. Tues. Oct. 24: American Zionism [\*\*Book Review Assignment Given Out\*\*]**

**PHS:** Abba Hillel Silver, “Toward American Jewish Unity,” and “American Jewry in War and After.” (Sakai)

“The Columbus Platform,” 1937. (Sakai)

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

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

Arthur A. Goren, “Celebrating Zion in America.” (Sakai)

**16. Thurs. Oct. 26: The Interwar Years II: The Second Generation Politicizes**

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

“The Free Voice of Labor: The Jewish Anarchists,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAUgK4e8Q-Q>

**SIS:** Diner, 173-202.

Wenger, “From Neighborhood to New Deal.” (Sakai)

**17. Tues. Oct 31: Antisemitism and Its Response**

**PHS:** Father Coughlin, “Not Anti-Semitism But Anti-Communism,” (1938),

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4PnJZCiG8I>.

Jacob Glatstein, “A Gute Nakht, Velt.” (Sakai)

**SIS:** Marcia Graham Synott, “Anti-Semitism and American Universities: Did Quotas Follow the Jews?” (Sakai)

Leo Ribuffo, “Henry Ford and the International Jew.” (Sakai)

**18. Thurs. Nov. 2: American Jews and the Holocaust**

**PHS:** Documents on the “Anti-Nazi Boycott” of 1933. (Sakai)

“A Statement of Policy,” American Council for Judaism, 1944. (Sakai)

Abraham J. Klausner, “Chaplain Abraham J. Klausner and Germany’s Displaced Jews, 1945.” (Sakai)

Letters Home from Soldiers. (Sakai)

**SIS:** Diner, 215-265.

Henry Feingold, “Who Shall Bear Guilt for the Holocaust?” (Sakai)

Marianne Sanua, “From the Pages of the *Victory Bulletin*: The Syrian Jews of Brooklyn During World War II.” (Sakai)

**19. Tues. Nov. 7: American Jews and the Founding of the State of Israel**

**PHS:** “David Ben-Gurion and Jacob Blaustein Exchange, 1950.” (Sakai)

Dorothy Thompson, “American Demands Single Loyalty,” and Oscar Handlin, “America Recognizes Diverse Loyalties. (Sakai)

Film: *Exodus 47* (2004).

**SIS:** Melvin Urofsky, “A Cause in Search of Itself: American Zionism after the State.” (Sakai)

**20. Thurs. Nov. 9: Post-War Jewish Life**

**PHS:** Daniel Bell, “Reflections on Jewish Identity, 1961.” (Sakai).

**SIS:** Diner, pp. 259-304.

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

**21. Tues. Nov. 14: Post-War Literary and Cultural Representations of Jewish Life**

**PHS:** Arlene G. Peck, "Coming of Age in the South: The Southern Jewish American Princess in the Fabulous Fifties." (Sakai)

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

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYtQL8eI5Ds>

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

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbrnXl2gO\\_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbrnXl2gO_k)

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4cqTBA6L44> [revival, 2008]

"Ten Commandments" introduction

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

**23. Thurs. Nov. 16: Secular Jewishness and Civic Politics (1960s, Civil Rights, Israel's Wars)**

**PHS:** The New York Law against Discrimination, March 12, 1945. (Sakai)

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

Joachim Prinz, "American Must Not Remain Silent." (Sakai)

Irving Howe, "In This Moment of Grief." (Sakai)

Selections from S. Katz's Symposium on Negro-Jewish Relations (Sakai)

**SIS:** Jonathan Kaufman, "Blacks and Jews: The Struggle in the Cities." (Sakai)

**24. Tues. Nov. 21: Tradition in America**

**SIS:** Ayala Fader, *Mitzvah Girls*. (Sakai)

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

Jerome Mintz, *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World*. (Sakai)

Sarna, "Remnants from the Holocaust." (Sakai)

**25. Thurs. Nov. 23: Thanksgiving. No Class.**

**26. Tues. Nov. 28: Tues. Nov. 25:** Film: "A Life Apart: Hasidism in America." (1997)

**PHS:** short piece by Shulem Deen (Sakai)

**27. Thurs. Nov. 30: Varieties of Contemporary American Judaism**

**PHS:** Selections from *The First Jewish Catalog, Brooklyn Bridge Life Force of a Culture* (Sakai)

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

"The San Francisco Platform, CCAR, 1976." (Sakai)

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

Sarna, "The Post War Revival." (Sakai)

**28. Tues. Dec. 5: AIPAC, Israel and the Case of Soviet Jewry**

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

Annelise Orleck, *The Soviet Jewish Americans*. (Sakai)

**SIS:** Frederick Lazin, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewry in American Politics*. (Sakai)  
David Verbeeten, “How Important is the Israel Lobby?” (Sakai)

**29. Thurs. Dec. 7: A Divided and Divisive Jewry: Conclusions [\*\*Book Review Due\*\*]; Take-Home Exam Questions Given Out]**

**PHS:** “A Portrait of Jewish Americans,” PEW Research Center. (Sakai)  
Peter Beinart, “The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment.” (Sakai)  
Nathan Englander, “What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank.” (Sakai)

**SIS:** Sarna, “American Judaism at a Crossroads.” (Sakai)

**30. Tues. Dec. 12: Student Presentations**

**TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM is due on Tuesday, December 19, at 12:00 noon via email: [nsinkoff@rutgers.edu](mailto:nsinkoff@rutgers.edu). No late exams will be accepted.**