

New York Jewry: History, Culture, Identity

Cornelia Wilhelm
cwilhelm@rci.rutgers.edu
phone (732) 932-3575

Office Hours: Wed. 1pm-3pm

Syllabus

From the Colonial Period until today, New York City has been a center of American-Jewish history and identity. However, until the late 19th century the city was only one of several hubs of Jewish life in America, which included Philadelphia, Cincinnati and Charleston. Consequently the course will explore how the city's very diverse and changing community rose to be the central and single most important urban Jewish community in the US representing a distinct self-awareness and identity as the center of Jewish life in the US during the 19th and 20th centuries.

The course will begin by examining the history of Jewish immigration and settlement in the city, continue by looking at the difficult task of shaping a "community" within the city's ethnic and religious diversity, and will trace "Jewish neighbourhoods" as part of the city's urban development and investigate inter-ethnic conflicts in the urban environment. Also, it will focus on Jewish trade and economic activity as part of the urban, national and international economy and examine how Jews were part of the work-force, as labor activists, entrepreneurs, and businessmen. Tracing the rise of New York Jewry will also comprise a close look at how the city became a religious and cultural hub of American Jewry with the growth of religious movements, universities, and intellectual leaders who played a major part in the intellectual, social and political life of the city. In this cultural context we will discover many elements of Jewish culture in American culture, including the stage, screen and in the press.

Finally, we will discuss how New York became a hub of Jewish secular organizations and representations, both in an American as well as an international context, and how the city presents itself today as the heart of a wider Jewish experience, legacy, and memory, as it is home to key cultural institutions of a destroyed European Jewry.

The course will utilize the proximity to the New York City for field research and discussions.

Course package on SAKAI

Additional Introductory Literature Available on Reserve Shelf:

- Diner, Hasia, *Lower East Side Memories: A Jewish Place in America*, Princeton/Oxford: Princeton UP, 2000.
- Diner, Hasia, *The Jews of the United States, 1654-2000*, Berkeley: UC Press 2004.
- Grinstein, Hyman, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860*, Philadelphia: JPS, 1945.
- Gurock, Jeffrey, *When Harlem was Jewish, 1870-1930*, New York: Columbia UP, 1979.
- Howe, Irving, *The World of Our Fathers*, New York: Harcourt, 1972.
- Jerome Mintz, *Hasidic People. A Place in the New World*, Cambridge/London: Harvard UP, 1992.
- Lederhendler, Eli, *New York Jews and the Decline of Urban Ethnicity, 1950-1970*, Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2001.
- Lowenstein, Steven, *Frankfurt on the Hudson, The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture*, Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1989.
- Rischin, Moses, *The Promised City, New York's Jews 1870-1914*, Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1962.
- Sarna, Jonathan, *American Judaism: A History*, New Haven: Yale UP, 2004.
- Weinberg, Sydney S., *The World of Our Mothers*, Chapel Hill/London: UNC Press 1988.

Course Requirements: Students are *required* to prepare the course readings and to participate actively for discussion in class!

Please note that some weeks have more reading than others, so try to pace yourself accordingly. You will find the books if you check the Reserves listings thoroughly (under the course name and number, under the professor's name, and by the book's title).

Class participation is *required* and students should bring the course packet and any primary sources that are assigned from the Sakai site to class.

You will write an early quiz, a midterm and a final exam. In addition you will have to submit an analytic research paper (max. 3000 words) on a topic you are selecting by Jan. 24, 2007.

The paper's format will be based on the history department's guidelines for undergraduate research papers (see website) and is **due April 18, 2007**.

The preparation of the paper is connected with

a) a short **bibliography** with relevant 10 titles, of which 5 should come from a journal; it is due Feb. 7, 2007

and

b) a **presentation of a paper in class** (approx. 15 minutes) on another date (see list of topics). This presentation should come with a short paper with your main points and an agenda for discussion. In order to prepare your paper you are required to consult with me during office hours **two weeks** before presentation.

The "midterm" will be split in two shorter quizzes, the first on Feb. 14 and the second is a take-home and due on March 7 and a final exam on May 4.

Grading:

Attendance and class participation:	10%
Quiz:	10%
Midterm Exam (quiz):	10%
Research Papers:	30%
Bibliography:	10%
In-class-presentations:	10%
Final	20 %

1/17

Introduction

New York Jews in the Colonial Period I

- Eli Lederhendler, *New York Jews and the Decline of Urban Ethnicity, 1970*, Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2001, 1-35.
- Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting....*,

1/24

VISIT AT THE LIBRARY (Requirement)

New York Jews in the Colonial Period II

- Leo Hershkovitz, "Some Aspects of the New York Jewish Merchant and Community, 1654-1820", *AJH* 66 (1976)
- Grinstein, *The Rise of the Jewish Community of New York, 1654-1860*, 39-80.

1/31

Immigration and the Growth of Diversity in the Community

- a) German Immigration
- b) Religious Life
- c) Social and Economic Development of the Community
 - Grinstein, *The Rise....*, 81-287.
 - Hasia Diner, *A Time For Gathering, The Second Migration, 1820-1880*, J.Hopkins UP: Baltimore/London, 1992, 6-59.

2/7

Becoming a Jewish Center: the impact of the Second Migration

- a) Immigration
- b) Community Challenged – Goren Arthur
- c) Social and Associational Life
 - Gerald Sorin, *A Time for Building*, pages will be announced.
 - Arthur Goren, *Kehillah, New York Jewry and the Quest for Community....New York: Columbia UP, 1970*, 1-56.
 - Daniel Soyer, "Between two worlds..."*AJH* 76 (1986).

2/14

Institutional Growth

- a) Jewish Organizational Life (AJC, AJCongress, World Jewish Congress, Joint, Educational Alliance, Industrial Removal, Zionists, Hadassah, NCJW etc.
- b) Religious Life, Theological Seminary, Yeshiva University
- c) Jews in Politics
 - Film "The Fee Voice of Labor"**
 - Tony Michels, *With a Fire in their Heart*, 26-124.
 - Goldstein, Judith, "Ethnic Politics: The American Jewish Committee as a Lobbyist, *AJHQ* 65 (1975) , 36-58.
 - Jack Wertheimer, *Tradition Renewed*,1-42.

2/21

Philanthropies and Businesses

- a) Jews in the Economy of the City (SOYER) requested on ez borrow
- b) Philanthropies (HIAS, Educational Alliance etc.)
 - Daniel Soyer, “Brownstones and Brownsville:...” *AJH* 88 (1998): 181-207.
 - Daniel Soyer, “The Rise and Fall of the Garment Industry in New York City”, D. Soyer (ed.), *A Coat of Many Colors*, New York: Fordham UP, 2005, 3-24.

2/28

Jewish Women of New York

- Elinor Lerner, “Jewish Involvement in the New York City Woman Suffrage Movement”, *AJH* (1981): 442-461.
- Henry Hurwitz, “A Mother Remembered” *AJH* 70 (1980): 5-21.
- Norma F. Pratt, “Culture and Radical Politics” *AJH* 70 (1980): 68-90.

3/7

EXCURSION – WHOLE DAY (Requirement) – the life in the Shtetl reconsidered:

Walking tour Lower East Side, Tenement House Museum,
The Center for Jewish History

SPRING BREAK

3/21

A Cultural Hub

Film “The Yiddish Cinema”

- Michael Schudson, *Discovering the News, A Social History of American Newspapers*, New York: Basic Books, 1978, 106-122.
- *A Bintel Brief, Sixty Years of Letters from the Lower East Side to the Jewish Daily Forward*, compiled by Isaak Metzker, New York: Ballantine Books, 1971, 34-39, 78-79, 91-92.
- Nathan Abrams, “A Significant Journal of Jewish Opinion...” *AJA* LV (2002): 35-62.

3/28

More Refugees on New York’s Shores

- Steven Lowenstein, Frankfurt on the Hudson, *The German-Jewish Community of Washington Heights, 1933-1983, Its Structure and Culture*, 39-56, 212-238.
Film “We Were so Beloved” by Manni Kirchheimer
- Jerome Williamsburg- Mintz, *Hasidic People. A Place in the New World*, 9-59.

- 4/4 Passover Holiday ! This class will be made up prior to April 3 or after April 10
Jews and Ethnic Conflict in the City
- Stephen H. Norwood, Stephen Harlan, Marauding youth and the Christian front : anti-Semitic violence in Boston and New York during World War II, *American Jewish History* 91,2 (2003) 233-267
 - Hasia Diner, *In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Pr., 1977, 199-235.
- 4/11 **After the Holocaust: New York as Worldwide Jewish Center**
- Nathan Glazer, “The National Influence of Jewish New York” 167-192, Martin Shefter, *Capital and the American Century, The National and International Influence of New York City*, NY1993.
 - Gregg Ivers, The political organization of American Jewry, 1906-1947, *Studies in Jewish Civilization* 4 (1993) 115-148.
- 4/18 **City and Suburbia: Leisure and Recreation for the Urban Crowds**
- Peter Levine, “The American Hebrew looks at ‘Our Crowd’: The Jewish Country Club in the 1920s” *AJH* 83 (1995): 27-49.
 - Baila Round Shargel, “Leftist Summer Camps in Northern Westchester County, New York” *AJH* 83 (1995): 337-358.
- 4/25 **New York as Place of Memory**
- Miron, Dan, Between science and faith : sixty years of the YIVO Institute, *YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science* 19 (1990) 1-15.
 - Christhard Hoffmann, “The Founding of the Leo Baeck Institute, 1945-1955”, Christhard Hoffmann, ed., *Preserving the Legacy of German Jewry. A History of the Leo Baeck Institute 1955-2005*, Tübingen: Mohr, 2005, 15-55.
 - Beth Wenger, “Memory as Identity: the invention of the lower east side”, *AJH* 85 (1997)
- 5/4 EXAM

