New York Jewry: History, Culture, Identity

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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:


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 %
Introduction

New York Jews in the Colonial Period I
- Eli Faber, *A Time for Planting*…,

VISIT AT THE LIBRARY (Requirement)

New York Jews in the Colonial Period II

Immigration and the Growth of Diversity in the Community

a) German Immigration
b) Religious Life
c) Social and Economic Development of the Community

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.
   - Daniel Soyer, “Between two worlds…”*AJH* 76 (1986).

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”*
Philanthropies and Businesses

a) Jews in the Economy of the City (SOYER) requested on ez borrow
b) Philanthropies (HIAS, Educational Alliance etc.)

Jewish Women of New York


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

A Cultural Hub
Film “The Yiddish Cinema”


More Refugees on New York’s Shores

  Film “We Were so Beloved” by Manni Kirchheimer
Passover Holiday! This class will be made up prior to April 3 or after April 10.

**Jews and Ethnic Conflict in the City**

**After the Holocaust: New York as Worldwide Jewish Center**

**City and Suburbia: Leisure and Recreation for the Urban Crowds**

**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.
- Beth Wenger, “Memory as Identity: the invention of the lower east side”, *AJH* 85 (1997)

**EXAM**