JEWISH HISTORY IN IBERIA AND LATIN AMERICA, 1492 TO THE PRESENT

**Introduction:** The presence of Jews in Iberia and Latin America covers a vast array of themes. Sephardim and Ashkenazim contributed to the development of Iberian and Latin American History in different periods and places. Several questions can be asked, and this course will cover, among others, the following. What is the relationship between the “discovery” of the New World in 1492 and the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain, also in 1492? Did Jews participate in the colonial Spanish American period? Was there any difference between Catholic and Protestant policies towards the Jews? When did Jews acquire full citizenship rights? Do Jews feel at home in Latin America? Did political and economic changes within Latin American countries affect the Jews?

Throughout this course, we will read a variety of materials, such as books, essays, case studies, and first hand testimonies. In addition, we will learn from other resources, such as novels and movies. The goal is to understand the variety of Jewish experiences in Iberia and Latin America, and to develop skills related to critical thinking.

**Class Requirements:** Students are expected to attend and participate in our weekly meetings, sign up for oral presentations, and turn in their written assignments.

**Class Structure:** We will meet once a week for two hours. We will open each class with presentations by two students. Each student will pick one of the required readings and do a 5-7 minutes oral presentation (brief summary, comments, and questions for discussion). Afterwards, we will hold a discussion, facilitated by the instructor. If a movie is scheduled, we will adjust the class structure accordingly.

**Written Assignments:**
**Journal:** Beginning on week #2 (and with the exception of weeks 6 and 15), students have to write a weekly journal, due at the end of each class. A journal is a short paper (1-2 pages), with the summary of the main idea of the reading, plus something from the student’s own perspective (like/dislike, agree/disagree). Each student must write a total of 10 journals (in other words, you are allowed to skip 1 week without a justification).

**Mid-Term Paper:** Due on March/18 (draft due on Monday Feb/28).

**Final Paper:** Due on May/6.

**Grading:**
Attendance and Class Participation (includes Response Papers): 10%
Oral Presentations: 10%
Mid-Term Paper: 40%
Final Paper: 40%

Reading Material:
a) Required Books (available at the UB, the University Bookstore)

b) Required Xerox Packet (available at the Humanities Building Copy Center, contains the readings marked with an *)

c) Novels for Mid-Term Paper (pick one among the following, available at the UB)

d) Books for Final Paper (pick one among the following, available at the UB)
Timerman, Jacobo. Prisoner without a Name, Cell without a Number (Madison: The Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

Weekly Schedule:

Unit I
Sephardic Jews under Muslim Rule:
The Iberian Peninsula (7th-14th centuries)

Week 1 (Monday, Jan/24): Course presentation and organizational details for the semester. The Jewish Diaspora and the Iberian Peninsula.
Week 2 (Monday, Jan/31): Sephardic Jews in the Iberian Peninsula
Gerber, Jane. *The Jews of Spain* (Ch 1-3).

**Unit II**
*Conversos from Jewish Descent under Catholic Rule:*
The Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish American Colonies (15th-17th centuries)

Select the novel of your choice from the list on page 2, and while you start reading it, see me at office hours regarding your Mid Term Paper.

Week 3 (Monday, Feb/7): Reconquista, Expulsion, and Inquisition. The multiple meanings of 1492. Movie: *The Inquisition*
Gerber, Jews of Spain (Ch 4-5)
Seed, Patricia. “Jewish Scientists and the Origin of Modern Navigation.” In Bernardini and Fiering The Jews and ...


Week 5 (Monday, Feb/21): Mexico and Peru
Alberro, Solange. “Crypto-Jews and the Mexican Holy Office in the Seventeenth Century.” In Bernardini and Fiering *The Jews and...
Bohm, Gunter. “Crypto-Jews and New Christians in Colonial Peru and Chile.” In Bernardini and Fiering *The Jews and...
Uchmany, Eva. “The Participation of New Christians and Crypto-Jews in the Conquest, Colonization, and Trade of Spanish America, 1521-1660.” In Bernardini and Fiering *The Jews and ...
Week 6 (Monday, Feb/28): PAPER DRAFT DUE (no journal due). Movie: *The Last Marranos*
Class Exercise: Peer review (please bring two copies of your paper draft, one for me and one for a peer review exercise)

Unit III

Portuguese Sephardic Jews under Protestant Rule:
The Caribbean (17th-18th centuries)

Week 7 (Monday, March/7): Portuguese Sephardim in the Caribbean (plus return of your paper draft)

Week 8 (Monday, March/14): Jews in the sugar economy
* Drescher, Seymour. “Jews and New Christians in the Atlantic Slave Trade.” In Bernardini and Fiering *The Jews ...*

FRIDAY, MARCH/18: MID TERM PAPER DUE (no later than 4pm in my mailbox, 4113 Humanities)

Week 9 (Monday, March/21): SPRING RECESS (no class)

Unit IV

Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews as Citizens:
Modern and Contemporary Latin America (19th-20th centuries)

Select the book of your choice from the list on page 2, and while you start reading it, see me at office hours regarding your Final Paper.

Week 10 (Monday, March/28): The beginning of contemporary communities
* Elkin, *The Jews ...* (Ch 2-4)

**Week 11 (Monday, April 4)**: Latin America and the Jews in World War II
* Spitzer, Leo. *Hotel Bolivia. The Culture of Memory in a Refuge from Nazism* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999), Ch 2: “The Crossing.”

**Week 12 (Monday, April 11)**: Jews outside of the cities. Movie: *Legado Elkin, The Jews …* (Ch 5)
* Spitzer, Leo. *Hotel Bolivia …*, Ch 4: “Buena Tierra.”

**Week 13 (Monday, April 18)**: Twentieth century politics and Anti-Semitism.
Elkin, *The Jews …* (Ch 11)

**Week 14 (Monday, April 25)**: Diversity in the late Twentieth century.
Elkin, *The Jews …* Ch 6-7

Movie: *Lost Embrace* (El abrazo partido)

**FRIDAY, MAY 6: FINAL PAPER DUE**