History 221: Jewish-Gentile Relations in Urban America, 1830-1970

UW-Madison/Spring 2005
Lectures: MWF 1:20-2:10 (1221 Humanities)
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Office Hours: Mon., 2:30-4:30 & by appointment

Course Description
Throughout their history Jews faced non-Jewish majorities, and America was no different. Yet unlike Europe, the United States has been, overall, a very hospitable place for Jews, and many of them came to see their new country as "the promised land". The course focuses on the relations between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors from the beginning of a significant Jewish immigration to the United States in the 1830s. The course ends in the 1970s in order to analyze what most historians interpret as a rightward & inward turn of American Jewry (especially after 1967) and link it to the larger wave of ethnic revival in America. As a whole, the course looks at the inter-ethnic and inter-religious dimensions of American Jewish life and relates them to the larger American context. How did American Jews view their fellow countrymen and how these opinions affected in turn Jewish integration into the larger society? How did the gamut of relations with other groups that ran from animosity to coalition building and amity change the country's political and cultural landscape? How did political and class differences within Jewish communities influence the character of interaction with other communities? Can we learn from the Jewish case about more general patterns of majority-minority relations in America?

Course Requirements
Attendance in lecture is required and constitutes 15% of your final grade. Each class I will take attendance, and any student who misses FIVE or more lectures throughout the semester would get a “Fail” grade (for those 15% of the grade).
Midterm exam: 25%
Three take-home assignments: 30%
Final exam: 30%.

The course’s textbook is The Jews in America: Four Centuries of Uneasy Encounter by Arthur Hertzberg, which is available at the University Book Store. The other readings are accessible online (through “my UW”).

* Primary documents (online)
# Scholarly readings (online)

Lectures and Reading

Week 1 (Jan. 19-21): Introduction and European Background
# Jacob Katz, Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages, 11-42

# S. Ettinger, in H.H. Ben-Sasson (Ed.), A History of the Jewish People, 825-846

**Week 2 (Jan. 24-28): Coming to the New World – the Colonial and Early Republic Period**


# Eli Faber, A Time for Planting: The First Migration, 1654-1820, 84-106

# Morton Borden, Jews, Turks and Infidels, 3-22

**Week 3 (Jan. 31-Feb. 4): Jewish Emigration from Central Europe 1830-1870**

(First paper is due on Monday, Jan. 31)


# Egal Feldman, Dual Destinies: The Jewish Encounter with Protestant America, 74-88

* G.F. Streckfuss, “The Immigrant to America”, in Rudolf Glanz (Ed.), Studies in Judaica Americana, 83
* “A Peddler Murdered”, Ibid, 86

**Week 4 (Feb. 7-11): The Small Town Experience and the Effects of the Civil War**


* “An Outrage” & “The Jews Have It”, in Morris U. Schappes (Ed.), A Documentary History of the United States, 1654-1875, 293, 517-520
* “The Germanization of the Synagogue”, in Glanz (Ed.), Studies in Judaica Americana, 105

**Week 5 (Feb. 14-18): The Eastern European Immigration 1881-1914**


* Rose Cohen, Out of the Shadow, 104-107  
* Michael Gold, Jews Without Money, 13-5, 165-175

**Week 6 (Feb. 21-25): Immigrant Jews in progressive America – politics, reform and crime (In-class midterm exam: Friday Feb. 25)**


# Rudolf Glanz, “Jewish Social Conditions as Seen by the Muckrakers”, in Studies in Judaica Americana, 384-407

* Edward A. Ross, The Old World in the New, 287-290

**Week 7 (Feb. 28 – March 4): Encounter with Other Americans, “Old” and “New”**


* Abe Cahan, “Are We Safe in America?” Forverts, June 16, 1903  
* David Hermalin, “Jewish and Polish Workers in the Factories”, Tog, May 17, 1920

**Week 8 (March 7-11): The “Roaring Twenties” – At Home in America?**


* Alfred Kazin, A Walker in the City, 15-7, 98-99  

**Week 9 (March 14-18): The 1930s and the New Deal**  
(Second paper is due on Wed., March 16)

# Ronald Bayor, *Neighbors in Conflict*, 57-86

* Philip M. Klutznick’s memoir, in *Not the Work of a Day*, 9-11

**Week 10 (March 21-27): Spring break**

**Week 11 (March 28 – April 1): World War II and the Holocaust**

# Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America*, 128-149


* Breckinridge Long, “Memo”, in David Wyman (Ed.), *America and the Holocaust*
* Alexander F. Miller’s memoir, in *Not the Work of a Day*, 6-12

**Week 12 (April 4-8): 1945-1955 – A Golden Era?**


# Stuart Svonkin, *Jews Against Prejudice*, 41-61


**Week 13 (April 11-15): The 1950s**
(Third paper is due Monday, April 11)


* J. Alvin Kugelmass, “Name-Changing – and What It Gets You”, *Commentary* 14 (1952), 145-150
Week 14 (April 18-22): The Turbulent Sixties


# Hillel Levine & Lawrence Harmon, The Death of an American Jewish Community, 2-9, 340-342

* Martin Luther King, Jr., Where Do We Go from Here, 92-3, 154-155

Week 15 (April 25-29): The Crisis of Liberalism

Class is cancelled on Monday, April 25 (Passover)


# Peter Novick, The Holocaust in American Life, 170-203

* Rabbi Meier Kahane and a poem by a black student, in Jonathan Kaufman, Broken Alliance, 157-159

Week 16 (May 2-6): Toward a New American Jewish identity?


Final Exam: Tuesday, May 10 @ 7:45 AM