

University of Wisconsin-Madison  
History Department  
Spring '05  
History 200  
Monday 1:20-3:20

Instructor: Ana E. Schaposchnik  
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5231 Humanities Building  
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Office Hours: Wednesday 2-4pm (or by  
appointment)

## **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)

Bernardini, Paolo and Norman Fiering (eds.) *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450 to 1800*. (New York / Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001).

Elkin, Judith Laikin. *The Jews of Latin America*. Revised Edition. (New York / London: Holmes and Meyer, 1998).

Gerber, Jane. *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*. (New York: The Free Press, 1992).

**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)

Aguinis, Marcos. *La gesta del marrano* (Buenos Aires: Planeta, 1992).

Gordon, Noah. *The Last Jew* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2000).

Zimler, Richard. *The Last Kabbalist of Lisbon* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 1998).

**d) Books for Final Paper** (pick one among the following, available at the UB)

Bodian, Miriam. *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation: Conversos and Community in Early Modern Amsterdam* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1997).

Cohen, Martin. *The Martyr Luis de Carvajal: a Secret Jew in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press, 2001).

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 (7<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries)**

Week 1 (Monday, Jan/24): Course presentation and organizational details for the semester.  
The Jewish Diaspora and the Iberian Peninsula.

\* Benbassa, Esther and Aron Rodrigue. *Sephardi Jewry. A History of the Judeo-Spanish Community, 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 2000), "Prologue."

\* Díaz-Mas, Paloma. *Sephardim : the Jews from Spain* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), Ch 1: "Historical Background."

\* Lowenstein, Steven. *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), "Regional Cultures: From Jerusalem to Spain, Poland, and Morocco: The Influence of Jewish Migrations."

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 (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> 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)

\* Kamen, Henry. *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), Ch 8: "How it Operated".

Seed, Patricia. "Jewish Scientists and the Origin of Modern Navigation." In Bernardini and Fiering *The Jews and ...*

Week 4 (Monday, Feb/14): Spain and Portugal in a comparative perspective. Community, *Conversos*, and Crypto-Jews. Historical Methodology: Controversy and Sources.

\* Gitlitz, David. *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society, 1996), Ch III: "The Major Points of Controversy."

\* Netanyahu, Benzion. *The Marranos of Spain. From the Late 14th to the Early 16th Century, According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources* (Ithaca and London: Cornell Univ. Press, Third Edition, 1999), Ch 1: "The Problem," and Ch 2: "The Responsa."

\* Yerushalmi, Yosef H. *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto. Isaac Cardoso; a Study in Seventeenth-Century Marranism and Jewish Apologetics* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1981), "Marranos in the Seventeenth Century."

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...*

\* "Keeping the Faith. Doña Blanca Méndez de Rivera." In Kagan, Richard and Abigail Dyer (eds.) *Inquisitorial Inquiries. Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2004).

\* Silverblatt, Irene. "New Christians and New World Fears in Seventeenth Century Peru." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol 42, n° 3, July 2000: 524-546.

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 (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries)**

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

\* Kaplan, Yosef. "The Curaçao and Amsterdam Jewish Communities in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries." *American Jewish History*, 72 (2): 193-211, 1982.

Kloster, Wim. "The Jews in Suriname and Curaçao." In Bernardini and Fiering *The Jews and ...*

\* Sorkin, David. "The Port Jew: Notes Toward a Social Type." *The Journal of Jewish Studies*, 50: 1-11, 1999.

\* Yerushalmi, Yosef. "Between Amsterdam and New Amsterdam: The Place of Curaçao and the Caribbean in Early Modern Jewish History." *American Jewish History*, 72 (2): 172-192, 1982.

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 ...*

\* Fortune, Stephen. *Merchants and Jews. The Struggle for British West Indian Commerce, 1650-1750* (Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 1984), Ch 6: "Jews and the Smugglers' Trade."

\* Schorsch, Jonathan. *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004), Ch 9: "The Religious Life of Slaves Belonging to 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 (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> 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)

\* Mirelman, Victor. *Jewish Buenos Aires, 1890-1930. In Search for an Identity* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1990), Ch 1: "The Jewish Immigration Flow to Argentina."

Week 11 (Monday, April/4): Latin America and the Jews in World War II

\* Lesser, Jeffrey. "Images of Jews and Refugees Admissions In Brazil, 1939-42." *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 20, N 39-40, 1995.

\* Lesser, Jeffrey. "Jewish Immigration to Brazil." In Baily, Samuel and Eduardo José Míguez (eds.) *Mass Migration to Modern Latin America* (Delaware: Jaguar Books, 2003)

\* 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)

\* Gerchunoff, Alberto. "A Jewish Gaucho." In Stavans, Ilan *The Scroll and the Cross. 1,000 Years of Jewish Hispanic Literature* (New York/London: Routledge, 2003).

\* Spitzer, Leo. *Hotel Bolivia ...*, Ch 4: "Buena Tierra."

\* Segal, Ariel. *Jews of the Amazon. Self-Exile in Paradise* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society: 1999), Ch 4: "Jewishness in Lima and Iquitos."

Week 13 (Monday, April/18): Twentieth century politics and Anti-Semitism.

Elkin *The Jews ...* (Ch 11)

\* Feitlowitz, Marguerite. *A Lexicon of Terror. Argentina and the Legacies of Torture* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1998), Ch 3: "Life Here Is Normal."

\* Gotkine, Elliot. "Starting Over." *Jerusalem Report*, December 29, 2003.

\* Kiernan, Sergio. *A tangled road to justice: the AMIA trial nine years later* (The American Jewish Committee, 2003).

\* Moya, José C. "The Positive Side of Stereotypes: Jewish Anarchists in early-twentieth-century Buenos Aires." *Jewish History*, 18: 19-48 (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004).

Week 14 (Monday, April/25): Diversity in the late Twentieth century.

\* Behar, Ruth. "Los colados." In Sheinin, David and Lois Baer Barr *The Jewish Diaspora in Latin America. New Studies on History and Literature* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996).

Elkin, *The Jews ...* Ch 6-7

Week 15 (Monday, May/2): Jews, Latin America, and the Global Era. Class Evaluation (no journal due).

Movie: *Lost Embrace* (El abrazo partido)

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