

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

Arthur Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 1-4 (for those who have the 1989 edition – pp. 13-6)

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)

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 90-111 (1989 edition - 102-123)

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

* L. Kompert, “Off to America!” in Paul Mendes-Flohr & Jehuda Reinharz (Ed.), The Jew in the Modern World, 463-465

* 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

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 111-139 (1989 edition – 123-151)

Gary L. Bunker & John Appel, “‘Shoddy’, Anti-Semitism, and the Civil War”, American Jewish History 82 (1994), 43-71

* “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

* “He is a Jew!” & “Wild Appetite for Jew-Baiting” Ibid, 108, 109

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

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 140-164 (1989 edition - 152-176)

Ewa Morawska. "A Replica of the 'Old-Country' Relationship in the Ethnic Niche: East European Jews and Gentiles in Small-Town Western Pennsylvania, 1880s-1930s", American Jewish History 77 (September 1987), 27-86.

* 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)

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 165-204 (1989 edition – 177-216)

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"

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 205-224 (1989 edition - 217-236)

Leonard Dinnerstein, "The Funeral of Rabbi Jacob Joseph, in David A. Gerber (Ed.), Anti-Semitism in American History, 275-301

* 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?

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 225-269 (1989 edition – 237-281)

Jonathan Z. Pollack, "Jewish Problems: Eastern and Western Jewish Identities in Conflict at the University of Wisconsin, 1919-1941", American Jewish History 89 (2001), 161-180

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

* Henry Ford, "The International Jew: The World's Problem", in Mendes-Flohr & Reinharz (Ed.), The Jew in the Modern World, 512-514

* Louis Marshall, Letter to M.J. Abrams, in Charles Reznikoff (Ed.), Louis Marshall: Champion of Liberty, 371

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

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 270-288 (1989 edition – 282-300)

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

Stephen H. Norwood, "Marauding Youth and the Christian Front: Antisemitic Violence in Boston and New York During World War II", American Jewish History 91 (2003), 233-267

* 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?

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 289-303 (1989 edition – 301-315)

Stuart Svonkin, Jews Against Prejudice, 41-61

* Will Herberg, Protestant-Catholic-Jew, 235-240, 254-256

* "Jewish Unemployment Problems, Chicago", in Jacob R. Marcus (Ed.), The Jew in the American World, 411-412

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

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 304-321 (1989 edition – 316-333)

Benjamin B. Ringer, "Jewish-Gentile Relations in Lakeville", in Marshall Sklare (Ed.), The Jewish Community in America, 339-359

* Arlene J. Peck, "Coming-of-Age in the South", in Marcus (Ed.), The Jew in the American World, 473-476

* J. Alvin Kugelmass, "Name-Changing – and What It Gets You", Commentary 14 (1952), 145-150

Week 14 (April 18-22): The Turbulent Sixties

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 322-337 (1989 edition – 334-349)

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

* Harry Golden, “From *Negro and Jew*”, in Maurianne Adams & John Bracey (Ed.), Strangers & Neighbors, 570-573

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

Class is cancelled on Monday, April 25 (Passover)

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 338-364 (1989 edition – 350-376)

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

* “Back Civil Rights”, New York Times, February 8, 1969

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

Hertzberg, The Jews in America, 365-376 (1989 edition – 377-388)

David Singer, “Living with Intermarriage”, in Marshall Sklare (Ed.), American Jews: A Reader, 395-409

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