

Food in Rabbinic Judaism

Spring 2016

Jewish Studies/Religious Studies 278

Instructor:

Professor Jordan D. Rosenblum

Office: 1404 Sterling Hall

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 1:00-2:00 pm; and by appointment

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Course Hours:

Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:45 pm

Prerequisite(s):

This course assumes no prior knowledge of Hebrew and/or Judaism, but a love of food is highly recommended.

Course Description:

When considering the kosher laws, people often think of the prohibitions of pork, mixing milk and meat, and eating food not prepared under rabbinic supervision. However, only the pork prohibition is explicit in the Hebrew Bible. The other two are found only in rabbinic literature. Rabbinic Judaism greatly expands upon biblical legislation, innovating a wide array of food practices. Focusing on rabbinic texts, students will explore how and why these novel approaches to food come about. In doing so, students will see how food has been shaped by – and, in turn, shapes – rabbinic Judaism. In order to complete this perspective, the course includes an examination of the modern impact of early rabbinic decisions on food practices. Come hungry to learn!

Course Goals:

Through guided reading in the classroom and at home, students will learn how to read historical documents and to use and assess various theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of food and culture. Students will further develop these analytical skills through several writing assignments, both in class and take home. Finally, students will understand the literature and historical development of rabbinic Judaism.

Classroom Etiquette:

Students are expected to arrive on time and should not engage in private conversations. Students wishing to use laptops must: (1) sit in the first three rows of class; and (2) refrain from using them for anything besides taking class notes. **There is a one-strike policy for using laptops for anything else. Should the instructor observe you playing on the internet, etc., you will no longer be allowed to use your laptop in class for the remainder of the semester.** There is no reason for a student to be talking or sending texts on a cellular phone during class time. This is distracting to both professor and students. Cellphones must be turned off and put away during class. *Students whose behavior in class is disruptive can expect a significant reduction in their final grade.*

Requirements and Grading:

(1) Regular class attendance of lectures and careful preparation of assigned texts are essential aspects of this course. Please bring the assigned texts to class each week. In grading papers and tests, I will be particularly concerned that you are learning the material and concepts that are taught in class sessions. Prior learning of Jewish sources is not a substitute for doing the work required for this course.

(2) Attendance and participation: 10%. Active involvement in class is highly important and includes attendance as well as participation in class discussion.

(3) Two papers: 20% each; 40% total. Two short papers, no more than **three** typed, double-spaced pages, will be assigned on *February 10* and *March 30* and are due by 12:00 pm on **February 26** and **April 15**.

(4) In-Class Midterm: 25%. There will be one midterm, given in class on **March 16**. It will address the readings and class discussions up to that point.

(5) Take-Home Exam: 25%. The take-home exam, due by **7:05 pm** on **May 8**, will be cumulative and will address issues covered in the readings and class discussions.

(6) You may sign up for honors credit, which can be a very productive way of exploring your own interests in relation to the topics of the course. If you do so, it is your responsibility to talk with the professor to arrange your honors work in the first two weeks of the semester.

****Students are expected to bring relevant texts to every class****

Honor Code:

Students are expected to follow the University of Wisconsin-Madison Academic Honor Code. If students have any questions about this policy, please speak with the professor.

More information on plagiarism can be found at:

http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

Extension Policy:

Extensions on papers and exams will **not** be granted. For each 24-hour period that a paper is late, the student's grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

Required Books:

(1) David Kraemer, *Jewish Eating and Identity Through the Ages* [Routledge, 2008] (*JE*)

(2) Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration* [Harvard University Press, 2003] (*HA*)

(3) Maria Balinska, *The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread* [Yale University Press, 2008] (*B*)

(4) Electronic Reserve: Learn@UW (readings marked with *)

Class Schedule:

January 20	<u>Introduction</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 1-8
January 25	<u>Food, Identity, History, Gender, and Culture</u> Reading: *Kaufman, "Debbie Does Salad," 55-60; Miliard, "Choosing Our Religion," available online at: http://thephoenix.com/boston/life/34630-choosing-our-religion/?page=7#TOPCONTENT
January 27	<u>Cookbooks as Historical Documents; Psychology and Food</u> Reading: *Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine," 3-24; *Nemeroff and Rozin, "You Are What You Eat," 50-69
February 1	<u>Rabbinic Antecedents I: Biblical Food Laws</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 9-24; *Leviticus 11; *Deuteronomy 14
February 3	<u>Rabbinic Antecedents II: Second Temple Period</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 25-37; *Philo, <i>The Special Laws</i> , 4:106-108
February 8	<u>The Rabbinic Period</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 39-54
February 10	<u>The Rabbinic Period</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 55-72 <i>Paper One Topic distributed</i>
February 15	<u>The Rabbinic Period</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 73-86
February 17	<u>Rabbinic Food in the Medieval Period I</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 87-97
February 22	<u>Rabbinic Food in the Medieval Period II</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 99-121
February 24	<u>No Class: Work on your paper</u> Paper One due February 26 at noon
February 29	<u>"Holy Kugel": Rabbinic Food in Hasidic Thought</u> Reading: *Nadler, "Holy Kugel," 193-214
March 2	<u>Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period</u> Reading: <i>JE</i> , 123-145

- March 7 Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period: Immigration and Food I
Reading: *HA*, 146-177
- March 9 Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period: Immigration and Food II
Reading: *HA*, 178-219
- March 14 Kosher Wars
Reading: *JE*, 147-172; *Marx, "Kosher Takeout," 1-6
- March 16 **MIDTERM** (in class)
- March 19-March 27 **SPRING BREAK**
- March 28 The Bagel: Historical Overview
Reading: *B*, xv-xx, 1-43
- March 30 The Bagel: Food as History; Food Politics
Reading: *B*, 44-147
Paper 2 topics distributed
- April 4 The Bagel and Matzah: (Un)Leavened History
Reading: *B*, 148-179; *Sarna, "How Matzah Became Square," 1-24; **b. Pesahim* 46a
- April 6 The Bagel: Food as Metonym
Reading: *B*, 180-195; *Ohnuki-Tierney, "Food as Selves and Others in Cross-cultural Perspective," 114-120; **Sifre Deuteronomy* 354
- April 11 Food in Jewish Literature
Reading: *Englander, "The Gilgul of Park Avenue," 109-137; *Aleichem, "A Yom Kippur Scandal," 56-62
- April 13 No Class: Work on your paper
Paper Two due April 15 at noon
- April 18 Jews and Booze
Reading: *Davis, "No Whisky Amazons in the Tents of Israel," 143-173
- April 20 Passover: Ritual Performance and Table Talk
Reading: *Passover *haggadah*
- April 25 Movie Screening: "Leon The Pig Farmer"
Reading: *Rosenblum, "Why do you refuse to eat pork?," 1-19

- April 27 Movie Screening and Discussion: “Leon The Pig Farmer”
Reading: *Abrams, “I’ll Have Whatever She’s Having,” 87-100
- May 2 Jews and Chinese Food
Reading: *Tuchman and Levine, “Safe Treyf,” 1-23; *Lee, “Why Chow Mein Is the Chosen Food of the Chosen People,” 89-106
- May 4 Conclusions: What is “Jewish Food”?
Reading: *Roth, “Toward a Kashrut Nation in American Jewish Cookbooks, 1990-2000,” 65-91
- May 8 **TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE**
7:05 pm