History 219: The American Jewish Experience: From Shtetl to Suburb  
University of Wisconsin, Madison  
Fall 2014  
M-W-F: 12:05-12:55 (1121 Humanities)

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Course Description  
A century and a half ago, the United States was a backwater of the Jewish world, then centered in Europe and the Ottoman Turkish Empire. Yet, by the 1950s, the United States became home to the largest, most prosperous, and most secure Jewish community in modern history. Why did millions of Jews come to the United States? How has life in a liberal political and capitalist economic order shaped the Jewish experience in America? In turn, how have Jews influenced American culture, politics, and society? This course surveys the history of American Jews from the 18th century to the 21st century. Topics include patterns of politics, social mobility, Jewish culture in Yiddish and English, inter-ethnic group relations, gender and sexuality, religion, and problems in community building. The course combines lectures, in-class discussions, film, and audio recordings. Readings consist of secondary and primary sources.

Books  
All assigned books are on reserve at College Library. They are also available for purchase at the Rainbow Bookstore Cooperative located at 426 W. Gilman.

The required course packet is available for purchase at the Social Science Copy Center (6120 Social Science Bldg).

# = scholarly articles in course packet
* = primary documents in course packet

Course Requirements
You are required to attend lectures and discussion sections. Failure to participate actively in the discussions will result in a failing grade for participation (see below). The assigned reading should be completed before your discussion section. Your TAs may give you brief assignments for sections.

Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult with the teaching assistant or me.

Finally, computers or any other electronic devices are not permitted during lectures and discussions.

An in-class midterm exam, a second exam, and a final exam are required.

Participation and attendance: 20%
Midterm exam (Oct. 13): 25%
Second exam (Nov. 12): 25%
Final exam (Dec. 17): 30%

The Mosse Lectures
The Mosse Lectures, sponsored by the Mosse Program in History, will take place on Sept. 9-11. Each of the three lectures will start at 4:30 p.m. in Room L140 Elvehjem Building (Chazen Museum).

You are required to attend one of the three lectures and absences will not be excused. Please make whatever arrangements are necessary with your work or class schedules to be able to attend.

This year’s Mosse Lecturer is Prof. Sarah Stein from UCLA. Her series is entitled “Misfits: Sephardi Jews, Citizenship, and the Persistence of Empire.”

The titles of each lecture are:
Sept. 11: “Citizens of a Fictional Nation: Ottoman-born Jews in France and Britain
during the First World War.”

The Kutler Lectures
The Center for Jewish Studies’ annual Kutler Lectures will take place on Nov. 3 and Nov. 4 @ 4:00 p.m in the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery (330 N. Orchard). Please make whatever arrangements are necessary with your work or class schedules to be able to attend. Attendance at both lectures is required; absences will not be excused.

This year’s Kutler Lecturer is Prof. Gary Zola (Hebrew Union College), who will speak on the following topics:
Nov. 3: “He Was Just Like One of Us’—Lincoln and American Jewry.”
Nov. 4: “The Reform Jewish Impulse in America and Germany.”

Note: due to the Mosse and Kutler lectures classes will be cancelled during the week of October 20-24. Sections will meet as usual during that week.

Lectures and Reading

Week 1 (Sept. 3-5): Introduction

Week 2 (Sept. 8-12): Becoming Citizens: Jews in Colonial and Early America
(Note: the Mosse Lectures will take place on Sept. 9, 10, 11. You are required to attend one of them.)

Sarna, American Judaism, pp. 1-61.
Course Packet:
*Documents on the political rights of Jews in the U.S (1776-1809).

Week 3 (Sept. 15-19): The Beginning of Mass Immigration
Sarna, American Judaism, pp. 62-207.
Course Packet:
*Conference of Reform Rabbis, “The Pittsburgh Platform” (1885).
*Solomon Schechter, “Catholic Israel” (1896).
*The Orthodox Jewish Congregational Union of America (1898).

Week 4 (Sept. 23-27): The Great Eastern European Migration
Tony Michels, A Fire in Their Hearts, pp. 1-25.
Course Packet:

Week 5 (Sept. 29-Oct. 3): Immigrants in Revolt
Course Packet:
*Di nyu-yorker yidishe folkstsaytung*, “Strong, Firm, and Correct Propaganda” (1886).

**Week 6 (Oct. 6-10): The Yiddish Cultural Renaissance**

Course Packet:

**Week 7 (Oct. 13-17): At Home in America?**
(Note: midterm exam, Oct. 13)

Course Packet:
**“There Is No Jewish Race!” The Maccabeen (1910).**

**Week 8 (Oct. 20-24): classes cancelled**
Note: Discussion sections will take place as usual.

**Week 9 (Oct. 27-Oct. 31): Judaism Reconstructed**

Course Packet:

**Week 10 (Nov. 3-7): Jews in American Popular Culture**
(Note: the Kutler Lectures take place on Nov. 3 and Nov. 4. You are required to attend both of them.)

Course Packet:

**Week 11 (Nov. 10-14): Jews in Popular Culture (cont.)**
(Note: second exam on Nov. 12)
Week 12 (Nov. 17-21): Years of Depression and War
Course Packet:
*David Ben-Gurion and Jacob Blaustein, “An Exchange of Views” (1950).

Week 13 (Nov. 24-26): Contentment and Its Costs: Jews in Post-War America
(Note: class cancelled on Nov. 28 for Thanksgiving.)

Course Packet:

Week 14 (Dec. 1-5): Community in Crisis
Course Packet:
**“Negro-Jewish Relations in America: A Symposium” (1966).**
**“Aviva Cantor Zuckoff, “Oppression of America’s Jews” (1971).**
**“Ezrat Nashim: Jewish Women Call for Change” (1972).**

Week 15: (Dec. 8-12): Jews and Judaism in the New Millennium
Course Packet:

Final Exam: Dec. 17@7:45-9:45 a.m. Location to be announced.