

# Food in Rabbinic Judaism

Spring 2014

Jewish Studies/Hebrew and Semitic Studies/Religious Studies 278

## ***Instructor:***

Professor Jordan D. Rosenblum

Office: Department of Hebrew and Semitic Studies, 1416 Sterling Hall

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 10:00-11:00 am; and by appointment

E-mail: jrosenblum@wisc.edu

## ***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Through guided reading in the classroom and at home, students will learn how to read historical documents and to use and assess various theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of food and culture.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 during class. While laptops are allowed in class, students should use their computers for taking notes and not for surfing the web, sending e-mails, etc. There is no reason for students to be talking or sending texts on their cellular phones during class time. This is distracting to both professor and students. *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 12* and *April 2* and are due at the beginning of class on **February 26** and **April 23**. No e-mail submissions will be accepted. For each 24-hour period that a paper is late, the student's grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

(4) Response Paper: 5%. Students are required to attend one Center for Jewish Studies (CJS) lecture during the semester (information available online at: <http://jewishstudies.wisc.edu/lectures/>) and to write a one-page response paper. The structure of the response paper is as follows: one paragraph summarizing the content and thesis of the lecture and one paragraph of your own critical assessment of the lecture. The response paper must be submitted in hard copy within one week of the lecture. *Late papers will not be accepted.*

(5) In-Class Midterm: 20%. There will be one midterm, given in class on **March 24**. It will address the readings and class discussions up to that point.

(6) Final Exam: 25%. The final exam, given on **May 12** from **10:05 am – 12:05 pm**, will be cumulative and will address issues covered in the readings and class discussions. *Students must take the final exam at the scheduled time.*

(7) 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 in hard copy 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](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 (*R*)

**\*\*All books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore\*\***

***Class Schedule:***

January 22	<u>Introduction</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>JE</i> , 1-8
January 27	<u>Food, Identity, History, Gender, and Culture</u> <b>Reading:</b> Kaufman, "Debbie Does Salad," 55-60 ( <i>R</i> ); Miliard, "Choosing Our Religion" ( <i>R</i> )
January 29	<u>Cookbooks as Historical Documents; Psychology and Food</u> <b>Reading:</b> Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine," 3-24 ( <i>R</i> ); Nemeroff and Rozin, "'You Are What You Eat,'" 50-69 ( <i>R</i> )
February 3	<u>Rabbinic Antecedents I: Biblical Food Laws</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>JE</i> , 9-24; Leviticus 11 ( <i>R</i> ); Deuteronomy 14 ( <i>R</i> )
February 5	<u>Rabbinic Antecedents II: Second Temple Period</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>JE</i> , 25-37; Philo, <i>The Special Laws</i> , 4:106-108 ( <i>R</i> )
February 10	<u>The Rabbinic Period</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>JE</i> , 39-54
February 12	<u>The Rabbinic Period</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>JE</i> , 55-72 <i>Paper One Topic distributed</i>
February 17	<u>The Rabbinic Period</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>JE</i> , 73-86
February 19	<u>Rabbinic Food in the Medieval Period I</u> <b>Reading:</b> <i>JE</i> , 87-97

- February 24      Rabbinic Food in the Medieval Period II  
**Reading:** *JE*, 99-121
- February 26      “Holy Kugel”: Rabbinic Food in Hasidic Thought  
**Reading:** Nadler, “Holy Kugel,” 193-214 (*R*)  
**\*\* Paper One due in class \*\***
- March 3            Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period  
**Reading:** *JE*, 123-145
- March 5            Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period: Immigration and Food I  
**Reading:** *HA*, 146-177
- March 10          Rabbinic Food in the Modern Period: Immigration and Food II  
**Reading:** *HA*, 178-219
- March 12          Kosher Wars  
**Reading:** *JE*, 147-172; Marx, “Kosher Takeout,” 1-6 (*R*)
- March 15-March 23   **SPRING BREAK**
- March 24          **MIDTERM** (in class)
- March 26          The Bagel: Historical Overview  
**Reading:** *B*, xv-xx, 1-43
- March 31          The Bagel: Food as History; Food Politics  
**Reading:** *B*, 44-147
- April 2            The Bagel and Matzah: (Un)Leavened History  
**Reading:** *B*, 148-179; Sarna, “How Matzah Became Square,” 1-24 (*R*); *b. Pesahim* 46a (*R*)  
*Paper 2 topics distributed*
- April 7            Movie Screening: “Leon The Pig Farmer”  
**Reading:** Rosenblum, “Why do you refuse to eat pork?,” 1-19 (*R*)
- April 9            Movie Screening and Discussion: “Leon The Pig Farmer”  
**Reading:** Abrams, “I’ll Have Whatever She’s Having,” 87-100 (*R*)
- April 14-April 16    **NO CLASS: PASSOVER**
- April 21            The Bagel: Food as Metonym  
**Reading:** *B*, 180-195; Ohnuki-Tierney, “Food as Selves and Others in Cross-cultural Perspective,” 114-120 (*R*); *Sifre Deuteronomy* 354 (*R*)

- April 23                    Food in Jewish Literature  
**Reading:** Englander, “The Gilgul of Park Avenue,” 109-137 (R);  
Aleichem, “A Yom Kippur Scandal,” 56-62 (R)  
                                  \*\* Paper 2 due in class \*\*
- April 28                    Modern Jewish Food Ethics  
**Reading:** Zoloth: “When You Plow the Field, Your Torah Is with  
You,” 81-110 (R)
- April 30                    Jews and Booze  
**Reading:** Davis, “No Whisky Amazons in the Tents of Israel,”  
143-173 (R)
- May 5                        Jews and Chinese Food  
**Reading:** Tuchman and Levine, “Safe Treyf,” 1-23 (R); Lee,  
“Why Chow Mein Is the Chosen Food of the Chosen People,” 89-  
106 (R)
- May 7                        Conclusions: What is “Jewish Food”?  
**Reading:** Roth, “Toward a Kashrut Nation in American Jewish  
Cookbooks, 1990-2000,” 65-91 (R)
- May 12                      **FINAL EXAM**  
**10:05 am – 12:05 pm**