

# **HISTORY 600: AFRICAN AMERICANS and JEWS in URBAN AMERICA**

Spring 2015  
Friday: 11:00-12:55  
Humanities 5245

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## **Course Description**

This is not a course on “Black-Jewish relations;” it does not focus primarily on how each group has interacted with or viewed the other. Rather, this seminar is a comparative investigation into the experiences of two migrant groups to northern cities for the purpose of illuminating the history of race and ethnicity in the United States. Both African-Americans and Jews were persecuted minorities in their places of origin and continued to suffer discrimination after migration. Yet their positions in American society differed in key respects. Jews were a European immigrant group who came voluntarily to the United States; most African Americans were forcibly brought to the United States as slaves. Jews enjoyed equality before the law, even while they faced much social discrimination and occasional violence; Blacks were subjected to an array of discriminatory legislation and chronic violence. With recognition of these and other differences, we will investigate in a comparative fashion how Blacks and Jews shaped their cultures and communities during a formative era in their respective histories. The seminar’s geographic focus is the urban north and the temporal focus is the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. **Note:** Because this course is a research seminar and not a survey it is unable to cover comprehensively the histories of African Americans and Jews. Instead, this seminar examines selected topics important to the histories of both groups.

## **Course Requirements**

The seminar has two major requirements: the course reading and the final research paper. The reading assignments are large and cover the history of two separate groups every week. You are required to have finished *all* the readings before each class meeting and discuss the material in class. If you do not fulfill this requirement, your final grade will be affected. Every week, two students will begin class discussion with a brief, prepared introduction (no more than 10 minutes) of the reading. Your introductions should present the main arguments of the material and orient class discussion with ideas of your own. You will be expected to hand in your introductions at the end of each class. These will be graded with a pass/fail grade. **(The pass/fail assignments will count for 10% of your total grade.)**

Note: everyone is expected to participate actively in every discussion. Failure to do so will result in an F for your participation grade. **Participation counts for 20% of your overall grade.**

You have a 5-page paper due on Friday, March 27. This will be an analysis of assigned readings. **This will account for 20% of your grade.**

A 1-page, single spaced prospectus and bibliography are due on April 10. **They will be graded as pass/fail.**

In the final weeks of the semester, you will give 15-minute presentations of your research, much like a scholarly conference paper. **This will be graded as pass/fail.**

A full rough draft of your paper is due on May 1. **This will be graded as pass/fail.**

The main written assignment is an original research paper, due on May 15. This paper must be 20-pages in length, no more or less. **The final paper counts for 50% of your grade.**

There is a course packet, which you can buy from the Social Science Copy Center (Sewell Hall, Room 6120, 1180 Observatory Drive).

# = readings in course packet

## **Readings**

**Week 1: no class**  
**(Jan. 23)**

**Week 2: Introductions**  
**(Jan. 30)**

**Week 3: no class**  
**(Feb. 6)**

**Week 4: Ghettos: Black and Jewish**  
**(Feb. 13)**

#Hasia Diner, In the Almost Promised Land: American Jews and Blacks, 1915-1935 (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977), pp. 3-27.

#Joe W. Trotter, "African Americans, Jews, and the City: Perspectives from the Industrial Era, 1900-1950," in African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century eds. V. P. Franklin, et. al. (Columbia [Missouri], 1998), pp. 193-207.

#James Grossman, Land of Hope: Chicago, Black Southerners, and the Great Migration (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 123-180.

#Moses Rischin, The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914 (Harcourt, 1962), pp. 53-94.

## **Week 5: Politics and Protest**

**(Feb. 20)**

#Winston James, Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia: Caribbean Radicalism in Early Twentieth Century America (Verso, 1998), pp. 1-8, 50-91.

#Robert A Hill, "Black Zionism: Marcus Garvey and the Jewish Question," in African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century eds. V. P. Franklin, et. al. (Columbia [Missouri], 1998), pp. 40-53.

#Tony Michels, "The Jewish-Socialist Nexus," in Jewish Radicals: A Documentary History (New York Univ. Press, 2012), pp. 1-24.

## **Week 6: The Civil Rights Movement**

**(Feb. 27)**

#Hasia Diner, "Drawn Together by Self-Interest," in African Americans and Jews in the Twentieth Century, eds. V. P. Franklin, et. al. (Univ. of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 27-39.

#Cheryl Greenberg, Troubling the Waters: Black-Jewish Relations in the American Century (Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), pp. 1-14, 114-168.

#Clayborne Carson Jr., "Blacks and Jews in the Civil Rights Movement," in Strangers & Neighbors: Relations between Blacks and Jews in the United States ed., Maurianne Adams and John Bracey, (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1999), pp. 574-589.

## **Week 7: Black Culture, Yiddish Culture, New York Culture**

**(March 6)**

Christine Stansell, American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century (Henry Holt and Co., 2000), pp. 1-39.

Ruth R. Wisse, A Little Love in Big Manhattan: Two Yiddish Poets (Harvard Univ. Press, 1988), pp. 1-20.

Cary D. Wintz, Black Culture and the Harlem Renaissance (Texas A&M Univ. Press, 1992 [second edition]), pp. 1-29, 64-86.

## **Week 8: Music**

**(March 13)**

#Jonathan Karp, "Blacks, Jews, and the Business of Race Music, 1945-1955," in Chosen Capital: The Jewish Encounter with American Capitalism, ed. Rebecca Kobrin, (Rutgers Univ. Press, 2012), pp. 141-167.

#Adam Green, Selling the Race: Culture, Community and Black Chicago, 1940-1955 (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007), pp. 51-92.

## **Week 9: no class**

**(March 20)**

## **Week 10: primary source exercises**

**(March ?)**

**Week 11: Spring Break**  
**(April 3)**

**Week 12: presentation of paper topics**  
**(April 10)**

Note: prospectus and bibliography due

**Week 13: primary source presentations**  
**(April ?)**

Note: revisions of prospectus due

**Week 14: primary source presentations**  
**(April ?)**

**Week 15: paper presentations**  
**(May 1)**

**Week 16: paper presentations**  
**(May 8)**

**Week 17: papers due**  
**(May 15)**