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Hours: Fridays, 1:00-2:30 pm and by appointment

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Class meetings: Thursdays, 6:30-8:30 p.m. in PHYS-ATMOS SCI 316

HISTORY 696F* (Spring 2014)

THE JEWS OF EARLY MODERN EUROPE

General Description

This is the “Division Seminar.” All History Department graduate students working primarily under the direction of the core faculty of the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies, and currently in residence in Tucson, are expected to take part. Those who are within the last year of writing their doctoral dissertations may enroll as auditors, read the assigned material, and participate in the discussions. Other qualified graduate students, whether working in History or other disciplines, are welcome to enroll. A working knowledge of Hebrew is highly desirable but by no means essential.

The present version of the HIST 696F seminar treats selected aspects of the history of the Jewish People from the late Middle Ages to the early Eighteenth Century, with an emphasis on developments in Europe. The course does not assume students’ familiarity with Judaica. Hence HIST 696F begins with introductory sessions (see under Reading Assignments, below). Think of them as comprising a “crash course” on Jewish culture and history from late antiquity to the Early Modern Period. The reading material for those sessions is intended to acquaint students with:

- Rabbinic (or “classical”) Jewish culture (mistakenly known as “Judaism”), which scholars of Judaica routinely approach as one of the most important matrices—or *the* most important matrix—of medieval and early modern Jewish history
- The sweep and basic structural makeup of late medieval early modern Jewish diasporic culture(s)
- Dominant, traditional Jewish notions of the structure and meaning of history.

Ultimately, the material students will discuss in the introductory sessions are intended to provide a basic cultural and historical literacy, as well as to probe tensions and ligaments between Jewish history and Jewish memory.

The core of the course focuses, mostly via monographic works, on aspects of a central theme. The latter may be described as the tension and interplay in Jewish history between historical factors that promoted the coalescence of a diasporic culture (e.g., demographic and migratory patterns; the dissemination of printed works; mystical trends; messianic fervor; fruitful attempts to codify Jewish law; the work of communal emissaries and itinerant religious authorities, etc.) and factors that promoted the fragmentation of that culture, or at least ensured its striking variety (e.g., the use of vernaculars; ethnic or sub-ethnic attachments; regional customs; class; race; gender, etc.). Each unit of the syllabus will also present a unique historical (and historiographical) *problematique*.

Given the wide span and complexity of the late medieval and early modern Jewish Diaspora, the course’s exploration will perforce be quite limited. (For instance, it will exclude an examination of “BeSh’Tian” Hasidism, an important pietistic movement that took shape in Ukraine and Poland from the mid-1700s to the mid-1800s, and

* My description of the policies, principles, and procedures in pp. 1-3 of this syllabus is based in part on Prof. Susan Karant-Nunn’s version of the HIST 696F syllabus, “Literacy in Early Modern Europe” (Fall 2004), as well as on Prof. Pia Cuneo’s version, “ARH 596/696B: Seminar in Renaissance Art: Art and Religion in Early Modern Europe” (Spring 2005).

which thrives to this day). All the same, the course will go far beyond Europe to explore its main subject in light of the centrifugal and centripetal forces that had a hand in shaping early modern Jewish society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Important phenomena originating in (or unique to) the Ottoman sphere, the Atlantic, and the Spanish Empire will be of special interest.

Among the objectives of the course are that students begin to develop an ability to teach medieval and early modern Jewish culture(s) at the undergraduate level; that they develop a comparative perspective to complement or otherwise inform their work in specific aspects and areas of early modern European history; that they form a substantive picture of European societies that includes Jews, Europe's "others," and not merely in what concerns "antisemitism" (a word that is strictly speaking anachronistic as applied to the Early Modern Centuries); and that they de-naturalize facile uses of basic terms such as "religion" and "Judaism" as they apply to Jewish history and culture(s).

Basic Procedures

We shall read the items listed under "Reading Assignments," below. Individuals will be selected or will volunteer to report on particular works and lead our discussion of those works. Details will follow in class.

At the beginning of each scheduled session, I may suggest preliminary frameworks for our analyses by commenting on the design and content of each unit of the syllabus. I may also pose questions to begin our discussions. I do not, however, intend to offer disquisitions. My main goal in the discussions, besides evaluating your preparedness, participation, and the quality of your ideas, will be to facilitate your digestion of what I trust will be informative and stimulating material. Accordingly, I expect students to "carry" the bulk of our discussions.

The seminar will meet on Thursday evenings, as specified above, until we have finished our essential business. Ordinarily, we will accomplish this no later than 8:45 p.m. Still, you should expect to be relatively flexible as to the exact timing of our sessions' adjournment, particularly toward the end of the semester, when all students (not necessarily including auditors) will present their research to the class.

Course Requirements

1. **Attendance.** Regular attendance is paramount, as is your attendance at the campus talks and other meetings of the Division's guests (more on this in class). Every unexcused absence will result in a lowering of your final grade for the course. If you must be absent for some unusual and serious reason, inform me ahead of time if at all possible. To be safe, keep records to document your status.

2. **Participation in discussions (30%).** I will evaluate each student's preparedness and the quality of his/her participation in discussions. An atmosphere of respectful, cooperative, and helpful exchange should prevail in our meetings. Criticism is desirable, but it should be constructive and politely administered. Bear in mind that the DLMRS is interested in producing constructive scholars, ones who *build* historical narratives, not cultural critics or political ideologues.

3. **Leading discussion(s)/in-class report(s) (25%).** Starting in the third week of classes, students will report on selected books and/or book-chapters and/or articles. Expect to submit a short summary of your report(s) and/or copies of any notes used in the presentation(s). The number of reports that you will be expected to prepare will depend on the number of enrollees. However, I do not anticipate that any student will be required to lead discussion more than twice.

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTS ON READING ASSIGNMENTS

The basic structure of your oral (and, for that matter, written) reports should generally follow a conventional model for published *reviews* of scholarly books in the Humanities in that it should,

- Lay out and illustrate the main purpose(s) and contentions of the assigned work(s)
- If possible, briefly identify and explain the author(s)'s methodology or methodologies and their theoretical underpinnings (implicit or otherwise)
- Assess the success or failure of the author(s) in pursuing that/those purpose(s) and contentions
- Indicate where and how the author(s) contribute(s) to early modernist research—for instance, what issues, questions, solutions, etc., the work(s) raise(s) that promise to have a lasting value to scholarship (especially as these relate to the subject of this course).
- Indicate and Illustrate particular strengths and/or weaknesses of the work(s)
- Indicate the relevance of the work(s) to a larger discourse of scholarship, be it early modernist or what have you.

Your oral presentation may, of course, be based on notes, the requisite outline, and/or a full-fledged draft of the written report. However, your delivery of the presentation should not amount to a mechanical reading of what you have written. You should “talk” through your presentation, extemporize as needed, invite comments and questions, and be prepared to field the latter as you present and illustrate your main points. Ideally, then, your presentations should not “feel” like full-fledged conference panel papers, but like presentations for round-tables or colloquia. Strive for clarity by reading your material out loud before you deliver it. It should be easy to digest aurally.

4. Prospectus. No later than the beginning of our ninth meeting of the semester (3/13), each enrolled student will submit a brief prospectus for a research/seminar paper. We shall agree on your respective topics in private consultations (plan for them!) before you submit your proposals, and make any necessary adjustments thereafter. Please note that your research topics must focus *substantially* on Jewish history proper, and not ancillary phenomena, such as the anti-Jewish or pro-Jewish views and actions of this or that Christian figure or group. In other words, you must know and grapple with aspects of Jewish history and culture(s) from within. The course should not be an excuse for you to deal with Protestants and Catholics (e.g., “Protestant Theologian X’s response to Aspects A,B, and C of Jewish thought, 1540-1565,” or “Zwingli’s views on aspect X of the Old Testament, as represented by Dominican Z who just happened to have been influenced by medieval Rabbis from Catalonia”). That said, you may certainly configure your paper so that it is of some significance to your larger intellectual interests and plans for your M.A. and/or doctoral research. This assignment is ungraded, yet my approval of your prospectus is required for your later submission of the Seminar Paper (see item 6, below).

5. Oral Reports on Research Papers and Drafts (15%). Each student will deliver a 20 min. report on his/her research topic during one or more of the last two scheduled class sessions. The report should be based on an advanced draft of the research paper that you have distributed to the class at least one full day before you deliver your report. The class will comment on all drafts and reports.

6. Seminar Paper (30%). At the end of the semester, each student will submit a fully developed research paper on his/her topic. I strongly encourage the use of foreign-language and primary sources in the construction of your work. The length of the papers will vary, but at this level of study you should aim for about 25 pages including notes and a bibliography, or about 7,500 words. The papers must conform to an accepted style. For all History students, I recommend the *Chicago Manual of Style*. Its principles are summarized in Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press). Also useful for students of the Humanities—and far more appealingly priced than the Chicago Manual—is the *MLA Handbook*. Please use a 12-point academic font and maintain reasonable margins. The papers are due by email (dlgraizb@email.arizona.edu) no later than **10:30 p.m. on Wednesday, 5/14/14**. Please note that I will grant “Incompletes” only to students who have completed all assignments other than the final paper, and who, in addition to this, cannot complete the final paper because of illness, personal emergencies, or family-related emergencies. Given the potential disruptions to my on-going and future work, I am not inclined to grant grades of “Incomplete” that will extend students’ work and my own beyond a week.

Assigned Books, Chapters, and Articles

I have requested or will request that all required books, and copies of book chapters and articles not available on-line, be emailed to you and/or placed on “traditional” reserve at the JUS Office (Marshall 420, M-F 8:30-12:30, 1:30-4:30) and/or the Division for Late Medieval and Reformation Studies (Douglas 315). Details will follow in class.

You may wish to buy some of the assigned works from private vendors. However, *it is not necessary that you purchase any books for this course*. I encourage you to read the required items in the order in which I have listed them. Any changes to our schedule of meetings and/or reading assignments will be announced in class and/or by email.

Reading Assignments

1. **Thurs. 1/16.** Introduction: Why this Course? /Rabbinic “Judaism”: Early History and Key Concepts

Shaye J. D. Cohen, “The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism,” *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*, 2nd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006), 205-223.

Lawrence Schiffman, “The Sea of The Talmud,” “The Life of Torah,” and “Epilogue: The Hegemony of the Babylonian Talmud,” *From Text to Tradition* (Hoboken: Ktav, 1991), 220-269.

Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Christianity in the Age of Constantine* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 13-58.

Joshua Berman, “What is This Thing Called Law?” *Mosaic Magazine* (December 2013), sections 1-4.

Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance* (N.P.: Behrman House, 1961), Part I (3-63).

2. **Thurs. 1/23.** Early Modern Jews: A Survey.

Dean Phillip Bell, *Jews in the Early Modern World* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008).

Moshe Rosman, “Innovative Tradition: Jewish Culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,” in David Biale, ed. *Cultures of The Jews* (New York: Schocken, 2002), 519-570. (Also published as 2: 219-268 of the paperback edition).

Recommended: David B. Ruderman, *Early Modern Jewry* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2010).

3. **Thurs. 1/30.** Cultural legacies of Medieval Ashkenaz.

David Malkiel, *Reconstructing Ashkenaz* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2009).

4. **Thurs. 2/6.** The Sepharadi Diaspora in Formation.

Jonathan Ray, *After Expulsion* (New York: NYU Press, 2013).

5. **Thurs. 2/13.** Jewish Memory, Historiosphy, and Historiography to the Sixteenth Century.

Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor* (New York: Schocken, 1982), 53-77.

Michael A. Meyer, Preface and Introduction, *Ideas of Jewish History* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1987), xi-xiv, 1-42, 105-140.

6. Thurs. 2/20. Italian Metropoles.

Kenneth Stow, *Theater of Acculturation* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

Recommended: Robert C. Davis and Benjamin Ravid, eds. *The Jews of Early Modern Venice* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 2001).

7. Thurs. 2/27. *Poyln.*

Edward Fram, *Ideals Face Reality* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1997).

8. Thurs. 3/6. Mystical Ferment in Safed.

Lawrence Fine, *Physician of the Soul, Healer of the Cosmos* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 2003).

9. Thurs. 3/13. *Judeoconvertos* and “New Jews” in Amsterdam

Miriam Bodian, *Hebrews of the Portuguese Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1999).

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10. Thurs. 3/27. The Sabbatean Explosion.

Matt Goldish, *The Sabbatean Prophets* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 2004).

11. Thurs. 4/3. *Judeoconvertos* and “New Jews” in an Age of Maritime Empires.

Jonathan Schorsch, *Blacks and Jews in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004).

12. Thurs. 4/10. Intellectual and Political Networks.

Elisheva Carlebach, *The Pursuit of Heresy* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1990).

13. Thurs. 4/17: Cultural Border-Crossing and Marginality: “Heroes” and “Villains.”

Miriam Bodian, *Dying in the Law of Moses* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2007).

Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2001).

14. Thurs. 4/24. Writing Week. (Students’ Presentations?)

15. Thurs. 5/1. Students’ Presentations.