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Office Hours : M 2-3:30, Tuesday 11:30-1 or by appointment (When I need to change an office hour you will be notified)

Fall, 2015

American Studies 3632W  
Jewish Studies 3632W  
Gender Women and Sexuality Studies 3403W  
Jewish Women in the United States

### **Course Description**

This course examines the ways American Jewish (and those who became American through immigration) women participated in, challenged, transformed and were transformed by the politics, cultures, and religious lives of Americans from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The class will pay close attention to the complex place that Jews in general, and Jewish women in particular, have held in the nation's racial, religious, and class hierarchy. Jewishness will be a critical lens through which to examine the changing nature of the basic categories of American experience, and to examine the intersection between anti-Semitism, sexism, and homophobia and their relationship to racism.

We will focus on some of the key periods in American Jewish history that marked turning points in redefining what it meant to be a Jew, and a Jewish woman. They are laid out by historical eras and focus on issues related to the period. They represent critical changes in the experience of the Jewish population related to immigration and its ending, American anti-Semitism, and changes in Jewish demographics. The historical eras are: 1) The latter third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 2) the period of mass immigration focusing particularly on the period from 1890-World War I, 3) the interwar years and 4) the period of mass social movements that stretched from the 1960s through the late 1990s.

Historians have interpreted each of these turning points differently depending on their points of view. They will serve as case studies for us to analyze closely, not only to learn about the key events, but to examine how events are interpreted. They will help us to define how history is crafted and how and why historical narratives of the same period may differ.

These differing interpretations often reflect whom historians count as important to study (wealthy vs workers; men vs women; heterosexuals vs gays, people of color vs people of European descent) in order to write history. Similarly, American historical narratives have often excluded Jews and other minorities, as well as women, similarly debating how effectively American society absorbed people of color and non-Protestant immigrants and their children.

This course satisfies **the Liberal Education requirements for Historical Perspectives and Diversity and Social Justice in the United States**. It has the following central objectives:

- \*To examine American Jewish women's history by studying the key arenas in which women acted: women's religious organizations, labor, social movements, and the family.

- \* To examine the diversity of Jewish women in the United States over this period, with special attention to social class. By examining the differences among Jews, students will have the opportunity to understand how relationships of power in minority communities are played out both between majority and minority, and within the minority group as well.

- \* To demonstrate that while highly visible and important to American Jewish culture, women were often written out of history until quite recently.

\*To introduce students to the primary documents that provide the building blocks of historical scholarship and to enable students to work with such documents to analyze, interpret and form their own understanding of historical change. Students will learn to think critically about the writing of history by understanding the uses and limitations of various sources as well as the ways in which historical questions and sources shape our understanding of American and American Jewish history.

\*To learn about anti-Semitism as it functioned in the United States, and how it changed over time.

\* To examine the intersection of anti-Semitism, racism and sexism in the United States, both between majority and minority groups, between minority groups, and within a single group.

### **Required Readings**

Books available at Coffman Union bookstore.

Rose Cohen *Out of the Shadow: A Russian Jewish Childhood*, Cornell University Press, 1995

Hasia Diner *The Jews of the United States 1654-2000*, UC Press, 2004

Melissa Klapper, *Ballots, Babies, and Banners of Peace: American Jewish Women's Activism, 1890-1940*. NYU Press 2014

Pamela S. Nadell ed. *American Jewish Women's History a Reader*, NYU Press, 2003

A packet of readings) is available from Paradigm Course Resource, 720 Washington Ave. SE; 612 612 379-4590.

Readings from the packet will appear on the syllabus marked with an asterisk \*\*\*

**All required readings are listed on the day that they are due and will be discussed that day. You will need to bring readings to class for the day that we will be discussing them.**

### **Moodle Site**

You will find all assignments, power point slides, and other matters relevant to the class on this site.

### **Writing Intensive**

This course is designated as Writing Intensive. Writing is therefore a part of the learning process and the focus on writing will be integrated into the content of the course. You will have the opportunity to write a draft of a paper to learn something about how historians write, and to discuss writing strategies in the class. Because this is not a composition class writing in this class is primarily linked to reading and thinking.

You will develop as a writer this semester. Assignments are designed to emphasize different types of writing.

**If you find writing challenging, or you are writing in a second language the Writing Center is an outstanding resource. Their website is very helpful and they have consultants who can help you. The writing Center website with all of its information and resources is <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/>**

### **Students with Disabilities**

If you have a physical, visual, hearing, learning or other disability for which we should discuss accommodation, please see the instructor immediately. Suitable arrangements can be worked out, but these often require advance planning in conjunction with the Office for Disabilities Services. Please ask for help if you need it. Further information is available from Disabilities Services McNamara Alumni Center 200 Oak St SE Suite 180, 612-626-1333.

### **Late Papers**

All papers must be handed in on time. Because of the number of papers required in the class I cannot accept late papers without a significant penalty unless you have particular excuses. If you are ill and have a doctor's excuse I will accept them without penalty. If you have a verified excuse because of a university activity there will also be no penalty. On occasion, because of personal difficulties, it may be hard to complete work on time. In that case, and only if you contact me immediately, the paper will be accepted **with a late penalty**. This will be the exception and not the rule.

### **Plagiarism**

You violate university regulations when your work is plagiarized. Not citing the source of text that you use and using the work of others will result in you receiving a 0 on written work. Students are then reported to the Student Conduct Office. This may result in academic discipline. We take this matter very seriously. The internet makes it easier to plagiarize and to catch offenders. The writing center website has information about plagiarism and how to avoid it when you are citing others' work.

### **Grading and Expectations**

You may take this class on one of two systems: A-F or S/N. In order to receive an S (passing) for this class you must have a C average. **On either scale you will be expected to complete all of the work in order to pass.** No incompletes will be given, with the exception of circumstances of illness or injury verified by a doctor.

**Two conditions for successful completion of this course are that you attend all classes and that you keep up with reading assignments, coming to class prepared to discuss. You may have two absences without penalty.**

The components of your grade are:

1. Attendance- 15 points (all students may miss two class meetings without penalty; you will receive credit for Thanksgiving and research days)
2. One Research Paper Draft (30 points), and one Final Version (20 points) 4-5 pages plus bibliography, end notes and document
3. Three Reflection Papers on Readings (4 assigned; you may choose 3, or write 4 and drop the lowest grade) 1-2 pages 30 points
4. One final Response Essay (15 points)
5. Extra Credit (5 points) described at the end of the syllabus

Point Total=110

Based on

A=90% (A- will be at 90%)

B=80% (B- will be at 80%)

C=70% (C- will be at 70%)

D=60%

### **Paper Schedule—All papers due in class**

Reflection Paper One- Handed out 9/17; Due 9/24

Reflection Paper Two- Handed out 9/29; Due 10/1

Reflection Paper Three- Handed out 10/6; Due 10/13

Reflection Paper Four- Handed out 10/20; Due 10/27

Research Paper Draft Handed out 10/29; Draft Due 11/17; Returned 11/19

Research Paper Final Version Due 11/24

Final Response Essay Due December 17, 2015 by 11:45 AM

Extra Credit Papers December 10 in class

## **Course Schedule**

(Note that reading assignments are in bold print: **Assigned readings should be completed the day of the class** for discussion)

### **Week One Course Overview**

9/8 Class 1

Introduction to class

Jews, Judaism and Jewishness—who are Jews and how is their history studied?

How do we go about the study of women, Jewish women, and the category of women?

Begin a snapshot overview of Jewish History and Diaspora

9/10 Class 2

History and the study of American Jewish Men and Women

What is Modern Jewish History? What is women's history? How does history confront sexism and anti-Semitism?

Continue a snapshot overview of Jewish History and Diaspora

**\*\*\* Read Hasia Diner, "American Jewish History," In *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*. Martin Goodman Ed. 2002, pp. 471-490.**

**Introduction," Nadell, *American Jewish Women's History*, pp. 1-5**

**Diner, pp.1-9**

### **Week Two- Week Four**

Jewish Women and the Emergence of a New American Jewish Culture, 1870s- 1910

What is anti-Semitism, the difference between religious, social, and political anti-Semitism?

American anti-Semitism, Interaction between Judaism and ideas about women

### **Week Two**

9/15 Class 3

Class does not meet because of Rosh HaShana (the Jewish New Year)

**Read: Diner, pp 71--107**

9/17 Class 4

Anti-Semitism in America; what is the relationship between racism/sexism/homophobia/anti-Semitism?

Immigration to U.S. Overview

**\*\*\* Read: Leonard Dinnerstein, "The Emergence of an Anti-Semitic Society," In *Anti-Semitism in America*, 1994, pp. 35-57.**

**Diner, 162-173**

**Document—Anti-Semitic Imagery**

**Reflection One Handed Out**

### **Week Three**

9/22 Class 5

Document Analysis continued

The Making of American Jewish Life- Where does Gender Fit in?

Judaism, Gender, and the Women's Question in America—The Progressive Era

Introduction to Judaism

9/24 Class 6

### **Reflection One Due**

Continue the women's question

Jewish Women and Change

**Read: Jonathan Sarna, "A Great Awakening: the Transformation that shaped Twentieth-Century American Judaism." In Nadell, pp. 43-63**  
**Read: Diner pp. 112-1**

**Document: \*\*\*Rebecca Gratz Letter "Women's Role in Jewish Education." in Beth Wenger, *The Jewish Americans*, 2007 pp 57-59**

#### **Week Four**

9/29 Class 7

##### **Reflection Two Handed Out**

Suffrage and Jewish Women

Social Movements and Women's Politicization

**Read: Klapper, pp 18-35**

**View: film on suffrage**

10/1 Class 8

##### **Reflection Two Due**

Alliances, Conflicts, and Differences Among Women Activists—Why?

**Read: Klapper, pp36-67**

#### **Weeks Five-Ten**

##### **Eastern European Immigration**

##### **Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century-1930s**

The Jewish Left, Labor, and the Clash of Jewish Cultures

The Struggles to End Immigration, to create workers' rights and Women's Rights

Forms of Political Activism: Consumer boycotts; Unionization; Birth Control

#### **Week Five**

##### **Immigration and gender**

##### **Work and gender**

10/6 Class 9

##### **Reflection Three Handed Out**

The immigration Debate; Scientific Racism, Racism, and Anti-Semitism

**\*\*\* Read: David Roediger, "A Vast Amount of Coercion," in *Working Toward Whiteness*, 2008, pp. 139-156**

10/8 Class 10

##### **Madison Grant, Excerpt from "The Passing of the Great Race"**

Document handed out in class--Discussion

#### **Week Six**

##### **Reflection Three Due**

10/13 Class 11

The Era of Mass Immigration and Industrialization; the "new immigrants" and Jews

**Read: Rose Cohen, Introduction , and pp. 1-65**

10/15 Class 12

The New York Clothing Industry and Jewish unions

**\*\*\*Read: Hadassa Kosak, "Jewish Immigrants and the New York Clothing Industry," *Cultures of Opposition*, 2000, pp. 61-80**

**Read: Rose Cohen 108-139**

#### **Week Seven**

10/20 Class 13

Jewish women and political activism: Housewives and laboring daughters

**Reflection Four Handed Out**

**Read: Paula Hyman, "Immigrant Women and Consumer Protest: City Kosher Meat Boycott of 1902." In Nadell pp.116-129**

10/22 Class 14 The Uprising of the 20,000

**Alice Kessler-Harris "Organizing the Unorganizable: Three Jewish Women and Their Union," in Nadell pp. 100-115**

Film and Discussion: "Heaven Will Protect the Working Girl,"

**Week Eight**

**Reflection Four Due**

10/27 Class 15

Gender as a source of alliance and conflict Across Class; Suffrage

**\*\*\*Read: Annalise Orleck, "The Emergence of Industrial Feminism," pp. 53-80; "From the Picket Line to the Ballot Box" pp. 87-113 in *Common Sense and a Little Fire*, 1995**

10/29 Class 16

Birth Control, the Body and Activism. The Interwar Years

The Private and the Political

**Read: klapper pp. 68-90**

**\*\*\*Emma Goldman "Letter 14-to the Press, 1916," Emma Goldman Papers**

**\*\*\*Margaret Sanger "A Parent's Problem or a Woman's," March 1919, *Birth Control Review*, Margaret Sanger Papers**

Hand out Paper Assignment

**Week Nine**

11/3 Class 17

**Continue Klapper** and discussion

Research Strategies for Paper Assignment

11/5 Class 18

An Overview of 1924-1948

**Read: Diner, pp.205-239**

**Week Ten**

**Overview of this Section**

Americanization and Social Class: Women, Family and Gender Transformed

The Historical Era-- Interwar Years 1920s to 1940s

Actors The children of Eastern European immigrants and second and third generation Jews

Context New prosperity and Depression, the emergent middle class

Issues Middle class ideologies of domesticity and their impact on women; resistance to ideas about womanhood; internalized anti-Semitism as a gendered issue

Week Ten-Eleven

11/10 Class 19

The Demands of the Middle Class-Gender and Class Anxiety for Young Immigrants and Native Born

**\*\*\*Read : Anna Igra "Ambivalent Bread Winners and the Public Purse." *Wives Without Husbands: Marriage, Desertion, and Welfare in New York 1900-1935*, 2006, pp44-62**

**\*\*\*Riv-Ellen Prell "Consuming Love" *Fighting to Become Americans*, pp. 88-123**

11/ 12 Class 20  
Research Day  
CLASS DOES NOT MEET

### **Week Eleven**

#### **Week Eleven**

11/ 17 Class 21  
Gender, Domesticity, Marriage and Mobility for Young Immigrants  
**Film "Hester Street," Joan Macklin Silver**  
**Draft Due**

11/ 19 Class 22  
World War II and the Holocaust  
United State responses to the Holocaust. Why were the war years the highpoint of anti-Semitism and racism in the United States?  
**View: "America and the Holocaust." PBS Documentary "The American Experience."**

### **DRAFT RETURNED**

#### **Week Twelve-Fifteen**

Overview of this Section  
Era 1954-2000 (Post War to Century End)—  
Actors Baby Boomers  
Context Suburbs; middle and upper middle class Americans, whiteness/race/gender; rights revolution (feminism, civil rights, and identity movements)  
Issues Feminism and Multiculturalism—Alliance and Identity

#### **Week Twelve**

11/24

#### **Revision Due**

Post War Suburbanization's transformation of gender, race, and Jewish Life

**\*\*\*Read: Riv-Ellen Prell, "Triumph, Accommodation, and Resistance: American Jewish Life from the End of World War II to 1967." Marc Lee Raphael ed. *The Columbia History of Jews and Judaism in America*, 2004, pp. 114-131**

**\*\*\*Elaine Tyler May, "Introduction," pp.ix- xxvi and Chapter One, "Containment at Home...," *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War*, 1999 Edition.**

11/ 26 Class 24  
Thanksgiving

Week Thirteen-Fifteen

### **Social Movements and Social Transformations**

#### **Week Thirteen**

12/ 1 Class 25  
Liberalism, Civil Rights, and American Jews—a politics of empathy and/or shared interest?  
**Read: Diner 259-276**

**Deborah Schultz , "Going South: Jewish Women in the Civil Rights Movement," in Nadell, pp.281-296.**

**\*\*\*Documents: "Traveling," Grace Paley; "Statement Excerpt on Social Values and Jewish Tradition," Heather Booth; "Excerpt from Wednesdays in Mississippi," Polly Cowan**

**Guest Lecture: Professor Elaine Tyler May, American Studies and History**

12/3 Class 26

Feminism and Jewish Feminism

Read: **\*\*\*Sara M. Evans, *Tidal Wave: How Women Changed America at Century's End*, 2003, pp 18-60**

**Read; Paula Hyman, "Jewish Feminism Faces the American Women's Movement in Nadell, pp. 297-301**

**\*\*\* Document: "Jewish Women Call for Change," pp. 338-339**

**Spend some time on a wonderful timeline that integrates the history of the Women's Movement and the Jewish Women's Movement <http://jwa.org/feminism/timeline>**

**Guest Lecture: Professor Emerita Sara Evans, History**

**Week Fourteen**

12/ 8 Class 27

Civil Rights and Feminism Summary and discussion

The Religious and Cultural-Political Issues around Gay Jews in the United States

Read:

**\*\*\*Allen Ellenzweig, "'Don't Ask, Don't Ask,' Why artists in theater are still called "Gay Commie Jew." Tablet (digital Magazine), November 6, 2012-6 pages.**

**\*\*\*Devorah Miriam, "Jerusalem Voices," in Miryam Kabokov ed. *Keep Your Wives Away from Them: Orthodox Women Unorthodox Desires*, 2010, pp36-44**

12/10 Class 28

**Final Response Essay Handed Out**

12/15 Class 29

Jewish Feminism – Reviving the Theme of Alliance and Difference in the Women's Movement

**Read; Paula Hyman, "Jewish Feminism Faces the American Women's Movement in Nadell, pp. 301-312**

**\*\*\*Document, Lettie Pogrebin, "Antisemitism in the Feminist Movement," in *Deborah, Golda and M: Being Female and Jewish in America*. "(Reprinted from *Ms. Magazine* ), pp 204-234**

**Week Fifteen**

12/14 Class 30

Class Does Not Meet

Individual Office Hours on Wednesday by appointment or email

**12/17**

**Final Response Paper due no later than 11:45 am**

**104 Scott Hall (doors close at noon)**

### **Extra Credit Opportunity**

There are so many great books and articles to read on the broad sweep of history of U.S. Jewish women's history that is the topic of the class. Some of the books you are assigned do not require all of the readings. You can receive up to five extra points if you want to read beyond the assignments. Interested in the history of women and peace movements, read another chapter of Melissa Klapper's book. Do you want to know what happens to Rose Cohen? Read additional



sections of her memoir. Check in with me about what you would like to do and we will come up with the reading and a one page writing assignment.