

**JEWISH COMMUNITIES:
IDENTITY, SURVIVAL, AND TRANSFORMATION IN UNEXPECTED PLACES**
J ST/ANTH/SOC 457 — SPRING 2013 — [US; IL]
Instructor: Alan Benjamin, Ph.D.

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Office Hours:
Tue: 2:30-3:30
Thur: 2:30-4:30
& by appointment

Prerequisite: J ST 010, HEBR 010, SOC 001, SOC 005, SOC 007, SOC 015, ANTH 001, or ANTH 045 (unless exempted)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to expand our understanding of Jewish communities by focusing on those that are, alternatively, small, situated in out-of-the-way places, culturally outside the Jewish urban mainstream, or embedded in a larger society with markedly different values and traditions.

These communities often constitute the points-of-contact between Jews and non-Jews and, in so doing, sometimes transform Jews, non-Jews, and the relationships among them. Other such communities constitute experiments in Jewish lifeways and provide mainstream Jews with pilot projects for potential (and actual) social and cultural change. This course will explore the significance of small, little-known, idiosyncratic, and anomalous Jewish communities in modern Jewish history and culture, as well as, on individual Jewish identity. We will look at the ways such communities originate, persevere, are organized, change, and decline.

The communities we will study are located both in the U.S. and elsewhere in which Jews have lived during modern times, usually (but not always) as a minority community.

The course will be organized around themes rather than specific communities, populations, or regions.

Key underlying course perspectives include:

- ❖ *A focus on the informal social and cultural processes that make, shape, and transform communities rather than their formal social structure and institutions.*
- ❖ *That (collective) identity—as perceived by those within and outside of a community—will play an intrinsic role in a community’s emergence and shape (within the parameters of the specific social-cultural environment).*
- ❖ *That communities are a kind of “frontier” across which contact with non-community “Others” takes place.*

- ❖ *Attention to the varying methodologies, analytical perspectives, and representational modes that researchers take.*

In addressing the above themes, we will explore questions, such as:

- What would it be like to start a new community?
- What would be needed for a community to survive and grow?
- How would a Jewish community be organized? What institutions would be needed?
- What sorts of interactions with non-Jews and Jews outside of the community would take place?
- Transformations: How would interactions with others affect the community's identity (and the identities of its members)? How would it affect Jews living elsewhere? How would affect the nearby non-Jews?
- What would cause a community's decline? What would happen to those who (had) live(d) there?

Looking at these understudied aspects of the Jewish experience (and research into it) will deepen and broaden our understanding of Jews, small-scale and unusual communities, and social and cultural processes generally.

REQUIRED READINGS

One book is required. All of the other course readings are available through ANGEL, in digital formats.

I suggest that you print each of the digital readings. This will make them easier to read, comprehend, and study.

The course schedule at the end of this syllabus lists the discussion dates for each of the readings.

Required Readings. Listed in the Order Assigned. (All except for the Suberman book, The Jew Store, are in ANGEL):

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

Biale, David. 2002. Conclusion, pp. 1147-1150. In, *Cultures of the Jews: a new history*, ed. David Biale. New York: Schocken.

Jewish Virtual Library. 2013. *Jewish Population of the World (2010)*.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/jewpop.html>

STARTING A COMMUNITY

Suberman, Stella. 2001. *The Jew store: a family memoir*. Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin. ISBN 10: 1-56512-330-1. ISBN 13: 9781565123304

Naftaly, Phillip R. 1991. Jewish chicken farmers in Petaluma, California 1904-1975. *Western States Jewish History* 23(3):231-247. [***Don't confuse with the 1999 piece***]

Weingarten, Murray. 1955. *Life in a Kibbutz: The Only Book of its Kind in English*, pp. 13-30. New York: The Reconstructionist Press.

Kraines, Menucha. 1959. *Gesher Haziv — yesterday and today*.

<http://www.habonimdror.org/resources/arise%20and%20build/The%20First%20Year%20Gesher%20Haziv%20Yesterday%20and%20Today.htm> Downloaded 11/18/03.

Reisman, Bernard. 1999. Alaskan Jews discover the last frontier, pp. 111-126. In, *Jewries at the frontier: accommodation, identity, conflict*, ed. Sander L. Gilman and Milton Shain. Urbana: University of Illinois.

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

Selections from: Ben-Sasson, Haim Hillel, Isaac Levitats, Haïm Z'ew Hirschberg, Daniel J. Elazar, and J. Chanes. Community. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 5. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007.

- 1) Middle Ages, by Isaac Levitats, pp. 102-103.**
- 2) Community Organization since World War II, by Daniel J. Elazar, pp. 114-120.**
- 3) Community and Polity, by Daniel J. Elazar and J. Chanes, pp. 120-121.**

Zenner, Walter P. and Shlomo Deshen. 1982. Introduction: the historical ethnology of Middle Eastern Jews, 1-34. In, *Jewish societies in the Middle East: community, culture and authority*, ed. Shlomo Deshen and Walter P. Zenner. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

COMMUNITY IDENTITY, INSTITUTIONS, AND PROCESSES

Deshen, Shlomo. 1982a. The social structure of Southern Tunisian Jewry in the early 20th century, pp. 123-135. In, *Jewish societies in the Middle East: community, culture and authority*, ed. Shlomo Deshen and Walter P. Zenner. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America. [***Don't confuse with the other 1982 Deshen reading***]

Deshen, Shlomo. 2005. Southern Tunisian Jewry in the Early Twentieth Century: Elements of French, Arab and Jewish Culture. *Journal of North African Studies* 10(2): 183-199.

Deshen, Shlomo. 1982b. Ethnicity and cultural paradigms among Southern Tunisian immigrants. In, *Distant relations: ethnicity and politics among Arabs and North African Jews in Israel*, pp. 13-31. New York: Praeger Publishers. [***Don't confuse with the other 1982 Deshen reading***]

Naftaly, Phillip R. 1999. *Jewish chicken farmers in the egg basket of the world: the creation of cultural identity in Petaluma, California, 1904-1954*, pp. 136-154. New School for Social Research: Doctoral Dissertation. [***Don't confuse with the 1991 Naftaly article***]

Kann, Kenneth L. 1993. "Politics we had plenty," pp. 83-101. In, *Comrades and chicken ranchers: the story of a California Jewish community*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Bowes, A. M. 1989. *Kibbutz Goshen: an Israeli commune*, 43-67. Prospect Heights, Illinois: Waveland Press.

Fader, Ayala. 2009. *Mitzvah girls: bringing up the next generation of Hasidic Jews in Brooklyn*, pp. 7-16 and 21-31. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Fader, Ayala. 2006. Learning faith: language socialization in a community of Hasidic Jews. *Language in Society*, 35(2): 205-229.

Goluboff, Sascha L. 2003. *Jewish Russians: upheavals in a Moscow synagogue*, pp. 16-29. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Goluboff, Sascha L. 2001. Fistfights at the Moscow Choral Synagogue: ethnicity and ritual in post-Soviet Russia. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 74(2): 55-71.

MAKING COMMUNITY IN A CONGREGATIONAL VENUE

Prell, Riv-Ellen. 1989. Introduction, pp. 12-24, The Sabbath minyan, pp. 115-137, AND Conclusion, pp. 316-321. In, *Prayer & community: the havurah in American Judaism*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press. [**In three separate files.**]

Kugelmass, Jack. 1996. Fort Apache: the Bronx, pp. 3-18, The miracle of Intervale Avenue, pp. 209-219, AND Epilogue, pp. 261-264. In, *The miracle of Intervale Avenue: the story of a Jewish congregation in the South Bronx*, Expanded Edition. New York: Columbia University Press. [**In three separate files**]

Shokeid, Moshe. 2009. *Three Jewish journeys through an anthropologist's lens: from Morocco to the Negev, Zion to the Big Apple, the closet to the bimah*, pp. 236-269. Brighton, Massachusetts: Academic Studies Press.

REMEMBERING COMMUNITY

Wolitz, Seth L. 1999. Bifocality in Jewish identity in the Texas-Jewish experience, pp. 185-208. In, *Jewries at the frontier: accommodation, identity, conflict*, ed. Sander L. Gilman and Milton Shain. Urbana: University of Illinois.

Daniel, Ruby and Barbara C. Johnson. 2002. *Ruby of Cochin: an Indian Jewish woman remembers*, pp. xv-xxvi & 3-22. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society.

Deshen, Shlomo. 1997. Near the Jerba Beach: Tunisian Jews, an anthropologist, and other visitors. *Jewish Social Studies*, 3(2): 90-118.

Any changes in the readings will be announced in class and by email, and will be made available through ANGEL, posted through the PSU library's Electronic Reserve system, or distributed in class as handouts.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) Two papers: a mid-term and a final. The Mid-term Paper will be worth 250 points (25% of the course grade), and the Final Paper will be worth 350 points (35% of the course grade). The mid-term will be due in class, Thursday March 28th. The final will be due in my mailbox (105 Weaver Building) at 10:00 a.m. Thursday May 2nd. The mid-term should be 4-6 pages and the final should be 10-15 pages long. Papers should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted in hardcopy. Full citations should be included, but will not count toward the page limit. Late mid-term papers will be penalized: *Course* grades will be reduced by 1% (10 points) for each class meeting that the mid-term paper is overdue. Final papers will not be accepted after the deadline.

The mid-term paper will ask you to discuss social and cultural processes related to communities and/or methodologies for studying communities. The final paper will ask you to further discuss social and cultural community-related processes—and/or methodologies for studying communities—and to compare the processes (or methodologies) newly raised in your final with those raised in your mid-term paper.

2) Class presentation, with accompanying paper. This assignment will be worth 200 points (20% of the course grade). The presentation, including your responses to questions, will be worth 50 points, and the paper will be worth 150 points. Your presentation and paper MUST be presented and submitted on the date you select early in the semester. *In other words, your attendance is required on that day.*

You will present on the reading(s) assigned for that day. The presentation may last up to 15 minutes. In addition, you will submit a 3-4 page paper with the information presented in class. Complete citations should be included, but will not count in the page limit. The paper should be double-spaced.

You should accomplish two objectives in this assignment. First, you should provide a descriptive overview/summary of the reading(s) for that day. Second, you should discuss the community-related social-cultural processes raised by the reading(s).

Presentation sign-up will take place in class Thursday January 17th.

3) Brief, pre-class comments on the readings. TWENTY of these are required. Each will be worth 5 points. In all, this assignment will be worth 100 points (10% of the course grade).

Each comment should be one-two sentences. You should write on one of the following three topics:

1. The community-related social or cultural processes raised in the reading(s). Write what you think the reading(s) have said about how communities work.
2. The methodology used in the reading(s). Write how the community was studied.
3. Ask a question about the community-related social-cultural processes discussed in the reading. For example, what, specifically, might you want to better understand about the process(es)?

BRING YOUR COMMENT TO CLASS.

Students who are unable to attend one of these class meetings may submit that day's comment to me through ANGEL. The comment must be submitted by that day's class to receive full credit. Comments received by the following class meeting will receive up to three points. Comments received between the subsequent class meeting and the second class meeting after they're due will receive up to one point. Comments received later will not be accepted.

The Comment requirement will begin Tuesday January 22nd. Comments will be due from that date forward on each of the days that a reading is required.

Comments will be due on the following dates:

- January: 22, 24, & 29
- February: 5, 7, 14, 19, 21, 26, & 28
- March: 12, 14, 19, 21, & 26
- April: 2, 4, 11, 16, & 18

4) Attendance. Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). Class attendance is mandatory. Up to two class meetings may be missed without an excuse. Three *points* (out of 1,000) will be subtracted for each subsequent unexcused absence, up to a maximum of 50 points. Students who arrive 15 or more minutes after class is scheduled to start will be considered "late." Three lates will equal one absence.

5) Participation in class discussions. Worth 5% of the course grade (50 points). As this is a seminar style course, I view participation in classroom discussions to be a critical component of the educational process. You are not expected to speak on each question that comes up, or for long periods. I expect everyone to speak, though, and urge you to try to risk expressing your thoughts—even if you are shy. Grading will be determined by the thoughtfulness of remarks and familiarity with the readings assigned to date. Frequent and lengthy remarks will not necessarily confer more credit.

Fully 20% of the course grade is based on the degree to which you actively engage with the readings and participate in classroom meetings. Lively, engaged, and informed discussions will make the course more valuable to all of us.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100 % [930-1,000 points]	B = 83-86.9 % [830-869 points]	C = 70-75.9 % [700-759 points]
A- = 90-92.9 % [900-929 points]	B- = 80-82.9 % [800-829 points]	D = 60-69.9 % [600-699 points]
B+ = 87-89.9 % [870-899 points]	C+ = 76-79.9 % [760-799 points]	F = 59.9 % & below [0-599 points]

Grading will be implemented through a 1,000-point scoring system. For example, an assignment worth 15% of the course grade will be worth 150 points. The above grading scale will be applied at the end of the term to each student's total points (out of the 1,000 points available).

GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic Dishonesty. The Jewish Studies Program, the Departments of Anthropology and Sociology, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, take violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe.

All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor.

Whether an assignment is fulfilled in the classroom or outside of it, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not.

Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the policy of the Jewish Studies Program to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at:
http://www.la.psu.edu/CLA-Academic_Integrity/integrity.shtml

Note to students with disabilities: Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: www.equity.psu.edu/ods/. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

Keep up with the readings. We will be discussing them in each class meeting. Part of your course grade will be based on your participation in these discussions. Please arrive to class on time and plan to stay until the end. Turn off all cell phones and pagers before class begins.

Students are responsible for submitting all assignments on time and, if not graded within a reasonable period of time, for checking whether they have been received. *No assignments other than the final paper will be accepted after the last day of classes (April 26, 2013). No extra credit will be available.*

Please *bring your comments, suggestions, complaints, and requests for help to me immediately.* I cannot make changes or help you over hurdles about which I am unaware. Feel free to discuss your papers with me prior to their submission. *I welcome conversations about any topic raised in the course.* Come by my office to chat, by appointment or during office hours.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading assignments are listed by the author's surname (and, if needed, by year published). Dates Comments are due are marked. The schedule and readings are subject to change. Check your email regularly. Any changes will be announced in class and emailed to students.

<u>MEETING & ASSIGNMENT DATES</u>	<u>REQUIRED READINGS</u>
COURSE INTRODUCTION	
Tue. Jan. 8	<i>Intro to course</i>
Thur. Jan. 10	❖ Biale ❖ Jewish population of the world [WEB SITE]
STARTING A COMMUNITY	
Tue. Jan. 15	❖ Suberman— <i>The Jew Store</i> , pp. 1-54
Thur. Jan. 17	SIGN UP FOR YOUR PRESENTATION ❖ Suberman— <i>The Jew Store</i> , pp. 55-111
Tue. Jan. 22	❖ Suberman— <i>The Jew Store</i> , pp. 112-216. Comment due.
Thur. Jan. 24	❖ Suberman— <i>The Jew Store</i> , pp. 217-298. Comment due.
Tue. Jan. 29	❖ Naftaly (1991)—Jewish chicken farmers in Petaluma, California 1904-1975 [From <i>Western States Jewish History</i>]. Comment due.
Thur. Jan. 31	NO CLASS
Tue. Feb. 5	❖ Weingarten—from <i>Life in a Kibbutz</i> , pp. 13-30 ❖ Kraines Comment due.
Thur. Feb. 7	❖ Reisman. Comment due.
Tue. Feb. 12	❖ Film: <i>The Last Marranos</i>

COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS	
Thur. Feb. 14	❖ Selections from <i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i> , pp. 102-103 & 114-121. Comment due.
Tue. Feb. 19	❖ Zenner & Deshen. Comment due.
COMMUNITY IDENTITY, INSTITUTIONS, & PROCESSES	
Thur. Feb. 21	❖ Deshen (1982a)— <i>The Social Structure of Southern Tunisian Jewry in the Early 20th Century</i> [Don't confuse with the other 1982 Deshen reading] ❖ Deshen (2005)— <i>Southern Tunisian Jewry in the Early Twentieth Century: Elements of French, Arab and Jewish Culture</i> Comment due.
Tue. Feb. 26	❖ Deshen (1982b)— <i>Ethnicity and cultural paradigms among Southern Tunisian immigrants</i> [Don't confuse with the other 1982 Deshen reading]. Comment due. ❖ Film: <i>Iran Jews</i> (?)
Thur. Feb. 28	❖ Naftaly (1999)—Social Organization and Social Interactions, from <i>Jewish chicken farmers in the egg basket of the world: the creation of cultural identity in Petaluma, California, 1904-1954</i> , pp. 136-154. Comment due.
Mon.-Fri. Mar. 4-8	NO CLASS: SPRING BREAK
Tue. Mar. 12	❖ Kann. Comment due.
Thur. Mar. 14	❖ Bowes— <i>Kibbutz Goshen</i> , pp. 43-67. Comment due.
Tue. Mar. 19	❖ Fader—from <i>Mitzvah Girls</i> , pp. 7-16 & 21-31 ❖ Fader (2006) Comment due.
Thur. Mar. 21	❖ Goluboff—from <i>Jewish Russians</i> , pp. 16-29 ❖ Goluboff (2001) Comment due.
MAKING COMMUNITY IN A CONGREGATIONAL VENUE	
Tue. Mar. 26	❖ Prell [<i>In three separate files</i>]. Comment due.
Thur. Mar. 28	MID-TERM PAPER DUE ❖ Film: <i>Jews and Buddhism</i>
Tue. Apr. 2	❖ Kugelmass—from <i>The Miracle of Intervale Avenue</i> , pp. [<i>In three separate files</i>]. Comment due.

<i>Thur. Apr. 4</i>	❖ Shokeid—from <i>Three Jewish Journeys</i> , pp. 236-269. Comment due.
<i>Tue. Apr. 9</i>	❖ Film: <i>Trembling before G-d</i>
REMEMBERING COMMUNITY	
<i>Thur. Apr. 11</i>	❖ Wolitz. Comment due.
<i>Tue. Apr. 16</i>	❖ Johnson, pp. xv-xxvi & Daniel, pp. 3-22—from <i>Ruby of Cochin</i> . Comment due.
<i>Thur. Apr. 18</i>	❖ Deshen (1997). Comment due.
<i>Tue. Apr. 23</i>	❖ Film: <i>Delta Jews</i>
<i>Thur. Apr. 25</i>	<i>Course Summary</i>
<i>Thur. May 2</i>	FINAL PAPER DUE (Due 10:00 a.m. in my mailbox [105 Weaver Bldg.].)