

SECULAR JEWISH CULTURE

Spring 2015

T: 11:45-1:40, R: 12:50-1:40

1142 McCarty A

Instructor: Jack Kugelma

Office: 201 Walker Hall

Hours: Wednesday 1:00-3:00 or by appointment Tel. 2-9245

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Course Description:

In their encounter with modernity, Jews confronted unprecedented challenges that required them to redefine themselves in non-traditional ways. Central to this process of rearticulating Jewish identity was the production of a new body of Jewish texts remarkable in its heterogeneity. This class explores the key texts of Jewish culture as it developed many of these outside the boundaries of religious life and forms. Throughout the course we read selections from a range of sources from within Jewish cultural environments in order to orient ourselves towards the various expressions of Jewish history, politics, literature, and art. No prior coursework in Jewish studies is required.

Objectives:

To introduce students to the depth and breadth of Jewish culture through key texts of modern Jewish historical, political, literary and artistic experience
To engage in the study of Jewish society from an academic perspective
To study the secular expressions of Jews in a variety of cultural contexts
To investigate the diversity of Jewish strategies in acculturating and contributing to non-Jewish milieux
To foster critical reading, writing and analytical skills

Requirements:

Attendance and Participation: This seminar is designed to be highly participatory; students are expected to engage actively in class discussions at every meeting. Accordingly, attendance and participation in all aspects of this class are mandatory. Timely, thorough and careful reading of each day's assignment is a crucial element of participating thoughtfully and openly. **Come to class with at least two prepared questions about the readings**, and ready to engage in further discussion. Bring the reading with you to each class. In order to participate fully you must be present in both body and mind. Regular and lively participation by all students will make this class more interesting, entertaining, and valuable. Informed questions along with active discussions of class materials will factor into the evaluation of your participation grade. Because attendance has a direct impact on your participation, more than two unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade.

Grading: As a way of engaging more deeply with the themes and topics of this class, you will keep a journal in which to respond to the readings as well as the class discussions based upon those readings. Journal entries (two to three pages) should briefly summarize

the material and critically engage with main themes and ideas. You can refer to previous lectures and reading materials covered in the class as well, if you want. Journals will be due on the following dates and are to pay specific attention to the readings indicated:

February 9 (based on *Rome and Jerusalem*)

March 2 (based on *Solomon Maimon*)

March 16, (based on Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye the Dairyman*)

March 23 (based on *The Rise of David Levinsky*)

April 20 (based on *Operation Shylock*)

For the readings not covered in the journals, shorter, one-paragraph summaries are due at the beginning of class each Tuesday

Failure to complete any of the required assignments of the course will result in a lower grade. Attendance is taken at the beginning of each class. Two or more missed classes without written excuse will result in a lowered grade. Extra credit and/or make-up for missed classes can be done by attending and submitting a short written report on any of the JST sponsored public lectures and events including the upcoming Jewish film festival. Check the JST web site (www.jst.ufl.edu/events) for the spring schedule of public lectures. New ones will be added throughout the semester.

Additional Note: Please read and be familiar with the University of Florida's definition of and policy regarding plagiarism as described in the Code of Student Conduct. The first of many pages that outline students' responsibilities and obligations can be found at the following UF website. Please read it carefully:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html>. Intentional plagiarism of any source will result in a failing grade for the course. If you do not understand plagiarism or what constitutes it, please ask.

If you have a disability that requires special arrangements (e.g., note- and/or test-taking), please register with UF's Office of Students with Disabilities and contact the instructor **within the first two weeks of class**. Every effort will be made to accommodate those with registered disabilities.

N.B.: Turn off all pagers, cell phones, wireless PDAs and other electronic communication devices before class. Anyone who wishes to take notes with a laptop should sit up front. I do check periodically and will eject anyone doing email or surfing the web during lectures and discussions.

Also, some books are at the University book store but most can be ordered very cheaply on line. I'll be giving you shorter readings to go with some of the films. They'll either be hand outs or available on line.

SYLLABUS

January 6, 8 Robert Kawashima, The Hebrew Bible (First three books of Genesis)

January 13, 15 Introduction

January 20, 22 Vassili Schedrin,
Fifth century BCE
Babylonian Exile: from geographic to cultural identity

January 27, 29 Vassili Schedrin,
Second century BCE
Hellenism: Jewish responses to external culture. A case of social fragmentation

February 3, 5 Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: the Clash of Ancient Civilizations*.
Readings: Pp47-62; 97-108; 148-152; 155-195.

February 10, 12 Dragan Kujundzic, Spinoza (Selected Readings)

February 17, 19 The Haskalah
Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*. Philadelphia: University of
Pennsylvania Press, 2002, pp90-101.

February 24, 26 Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*

March 3, 5 Spring Break

March 10, 12 Sholem Aleichem, *Tevye the Dairyman*

March 17, 19 Esther Romeyn
Reading: Abe Cahan, *The Rise of David Levinsky*

March 24, 26

March 31, April 2, Screening: *Leon the Pig Farmer*
Reading: Jack Kugelmass, "'I'm a Gentile!' Border Dramas and Jewish Continuity." In
Goldberg, et. al. *Dynamic Belonging: Contemporary Jewish Collective Identities*, pp223-
236.)

April 7, 9 No classes Passover
Please make sure that you read Philip Roth, *Operation Shylock*

April 14, 16 Lecture and discussion *Operation Shylock*, Discussion and Summary

April 21 Summary