

Course #: JST 3930; Building: FAC 0120; Time: Tu Period 7; Th Period 7-8
Spring 2013

Jewish Life Cycle through Israeli Film

Anthropological Perspectives

Dr. Chen Bram

Office hours: Walker Hall, Tuesday 11:30- 13:00; 13:30- 14:00, or by appointment

Rethinking issues such as **Marriage and Love among the Jews!** Jewish life in Israel and Jewish Diasporas! The plurality of Jewish rites and experiences; & **anthropology** and **rites de passage!**

Language: **English** (Hebrew or any other language is not needed for this course)



The course will examine life-cycle and holiday celebrations and as they have been recorded by ethnographers and as they are portrayed in contemporary Israeli feature films. We will discuss different rituals and celebrations relating phases in a person life cycle (birth, education, marriage, various social and cultural phases, and death), as well as to movement through the Jewish calendar and Jewish holidays.

Lastly successful Israeli films suggested fresh look on Jewish life cycle celebrations and rituals. They imply multicultural approach, combining a colorful portray of traditions from different Jewish Diasporas (such as Georgian, Moroccan, Ultra-Orthodox communities etc), with an updated and critical observation of Jewish and Israeli society. While offering an interesting and fun experience to Israeli and international audience, these films also took life -cycle celebrations as an anchor to relate to central themes: Identity, family and community, complexities of Israeli society, and the place of religion in modern society. These issues were central also in anthropological discussions of Jewish “Rites de passage” and holidays. The course will use both perspectives: we will watch relevant Films and discuss rituals and celebrations of Jewish life cycle (birth, education, marriage, death etc) and holidays.

The readings and class materials will reflect changes in these celebrations that have taken place over time, as well as how they fit into Jewish life in Israel and in different parts of the world. Discussions will also show how these celebrations are linked to communal institutions and to other practices such as pilgrimages. Another theme will be the very appearance of the notion of "life-cycle" as a major axis around which Jewish life is organized. This will lead to a consideration of recent developments such as the growing place of women in life-cycle rituals, and the emergence of the individual in Jewish consciousness.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation and attendance (30%) (Further explanations under "Assignments", below)
A class presentation (20 %)
Final assignment/ final exam (50%) {we will discuss this in details in class};
(Graduate students will write a paper in lieu of a final exam)

REQUIRED READINGS

Reading requirements will include 1 to 2 compulsory article(s) for each lesson. one assignment (20%, see below) and a final exam/ assignment (50%). There is an option of up to 10% bonus for introducing an article in class (from the additional literature list). No former knowledge is required for this course.

H. Goldberg book (see below) will serve as a reader (a few copies of e-book was invited by the library, students can choose if they want to use them or by the book), but there will reading from other sources as well.

Goldberg Harvey E. *Jewish passages: cycles of Jewish life* Berkeley : University of California Press, 2003 [e-book+ UF LIBRARY WEST, Judaica Libr BM700 .G613 2003]

Detailed List of subjects and reading to be announce at the beginning of the term; see below some of the readings and list of films. We will watch at list 7 films (every second week) during this course.

Introduction and first two chapters of Goldberg (2003) book are the reading material for the first 2 weeks.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Please not that the list below is not final – some items might be replaced. Final list of compulsory reading and additional reading will be announced.

Abramovitch, Henry. "The Jerusalem Funeral as a Microcosm of the 'Mismmeeting' Between Religious and Secular Israelis." In Perspectives on Israeli Anthropology. Edited by Esther Hertzog, Orit Abuhav, Harvey E. Goldberg and Emanuel Marx, 503-527. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010.

Carmeli, Yoram and Rina Roth. "The Cake and the Plate: Family and Community in a Kibbutz's Bar-Mitzvah Ceremony." International Journal of Comparative Family and Marriage 1 (1994): 49-63.

Cooper, Alanna E. "Rituals of Mourning among Central Asia's Bukharan Jews: Remembering the Past to Address the Present." In Revisioning Ritual: Jewish Traditions in Transition. Edited by Simon Bronner, 290-314

Gamliel, Tova. "Textual Categories and Gender Images in a Women's Wailing Performance." Social Analysis 51 (2007): 23-54.

Elliot Horowitz, "The Eve of Circumcision: A Chapter in the History of Jewish Nightlife," Journal of Social History 23 (1989):45-69.

Katz, Nathan and Ellen Goldberg. The Last Jews of Cochin: Jewish Identity in Hindu India. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1993. Chapter 11

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Learning from ethnography: Reflections on the nature and efficacy of youth tours to Israel," in H. Goldberg, S. Heilman and B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. The Israel Experience: Studies in Youth Travel and Jewish Identity, edited an introduction by Barry Chazan (Jerusalem, ACBP Foundation, 2002, typescript).

Koren, Irit. "The Brides's Voice: Religious Women Challenge the Wedding Ritual." Nashim 10 (2005): 29-52.

Liefer, Daniel I. and Myra Liefer, "On the Birth of a Daughter," in The Jewish Woman: New Perspectives, ed. Elizabeth Koltun (New York: Schocken, 1976), pp. 21-30.

Zborowski, Mark. "The Place of Book-Learning in Traditional Jewish Culture" in Childhood in Contemporary Cultures, ed M. Mead and M. Wolfenstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955), chap. 8.

Goldberg, Harvey E. "Cultural Change in an Israeli Immigrant Village: The Twist in Moshav Porat." In Perspectives on Israeli Anthropology. Edited by Esther Hertzog, Orit Abuhav, Harvey E. Goldberg and Emanuel Marx, 31-39. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010.

Prashizky, Anna. "Changing Women's Roles in Jewish Alternative Weddings in Modern Israel." Sociological Papers 14 (2009): 82-102

Sered, Susan Starr with Romi Kaplan and Samuel Cooper. "Talking about Miqveh Parties, or Discourses of Gender, Hierarchy and Control." In Women and Water: Menstruation in Jewish Life and Law. Edited by Rahel R. Wasserfall, 145-165. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1999.

Films

Halakhe / Avigail Shferver 2008 (50 min.)

Campfire / Joseph Sider 2004

Shivaa – Seven days of mourning / 2008 103 min. Ronit Elkabatz and Shlomi Elkabatz

Bar- Mitzvah / Boris Thomashefsky 2009

"Late Marriage"/ Dover Kosashvili (2001)

Ushpizin / Gidi Dar 2004 90 min.

Passover Fever / Shemi Zarkhin 1995

Shchor / Shmoel Haspary 1994

Additional Bibliography

Bahloul, Joëlle. "What You Remember and Whose Son You Are; North African Jewish Families and their Past." In Essays in the Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society. Edited by S. Fishbane and J.N. Lightstone, 217-230. Montreal: Concordia University, 1990.

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Cohen, Shaye J. D. "Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised?," Gender & History 9:560-578, 1997.

Goldberg, Harvey E. "Coming of Age in Jewish Studies, or Anthropology Is Counted in the Minyan," Jewish Social Studies (n.s.) 4:29-64, 1998.

Goldberg, Sylvie-Anne. Crossing the Jabbok: Illness and Death in Ashkenazi Judaism in Sixteenth-through-Nineteenth-Century Prague, trans. Carol Cosman (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), chap 4, pp. 75-98.

Goldberg, Harvey E. (ed.) Judaism viewed from within and from without : anthropological studies Albany, N.Y. : State University of New York Press, c1987. BM520.2 .J83 1987

Goldberg, Harvey E. The life of Judaism Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

Greenspoon, Leonard J., ed. Rites of Passage: How Today's Jews Celebrate, Commemorate, and Commiserate. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2010.

Fenton, Paul "The Symbolism of Circumambulation in Judaism and Islam - A Comparative Study." The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy 6 (1997): 345-369.

Kugelmass, Jack. The miracle of Intervale Avenue : the story of a Jewish congregation in the South Bronx (New York: Schocken, 1986), pp. to be determined

Myerhoff, Barbara. Number Our Days (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), chap. 1, pp. 1-39.

Rubin, Nissan. "Death Customs in a Non-Religious Kibbutz." In Israeli Judaism: The Sociology of Religion in Israel. Edited by Shlomo Deshen, Charles S. Liebman, and Moshe Shokeid, 323-334. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995.

Additional Films

Turn left at the end of the world / Avi Nesher 2004 108 min.

Sweet Mud / Dror Shaul 2006

Coming of Age- Adult Bar Mitzvah / Bonnie Burt 1988

White walls/ Meital Abuksis 2005 (50 min.) Sapir collage Graduate films 2004- 2006

The Buganas/ 2006 Etty Bugana Bachar. Sapir collage Graduate films 2004- 2006

Pinhas / Pini Tavgar

Srugim 2008 (TV film)

ASSIGNMENTS

Active participation - 30%

Each student will submit remarks regarding the compulsory reading material. This can relate to additional questions that one have after reading; thoughts/ analysis of the reading etc. Length of each remark should be 3-5 sentences. The assignment will be sent by mail to professor (mail address for this will be given in class). In addition, all students are required to actively participate in class (but there is place also for shy students...!) and to write remarks about reading

In addition, students will write twice a course feedback (1/2 to 1 page), in the 5th week and the 10th week of class. Feedback essay will include in short: (a) what "works" for you and what does not in this class; (b) Suggestions how to improve the class. The idea behind this is to bring more students involvement and dialogue during class.

A class presentation (20 %)

This assignment can be done also together with another student (in pairs).

Students will present in class one item from the complementary reading list (after discussion with professor). The presentation should include reference to at least one additional bibliographical item. The length of the presentation should be 10 to 15 minutes- not more. In addition to the presentation the students should send the presentation by mail to professor and submit a one-page written summary of the questions raised by that item, as discussed in class, and one question relating to an issue that remains unclear, in his/her view.

Final assignment/ final exam (50%)

Detailed instructions will be given following discussion in class.
(should be hand to Professor during the last week of class).