

## SECULAR JEWISH CULTURE

Spring 2013

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

TUR 1105

Instructor: Jack Kugelmass

Office: 201 Walker Hall

Hours: Wednesday 1:00-3:00 or by appointment

Tel. 2-9245

Email: [jkugelma@ufl.edu](mailto:jkugelma@ufl.edu)

### 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:

January 22 (based on *Leon the Pig Farmer*)

February 19 (based on the readings and lecture “Spain and Aftermath”)

March 12 (based on Solomon Maimon’s *An Autobiography*)

March 19, Sholem Aleichem’s *Tevye the Dairyman*)

April 16 (based on *The Rise of David Levinsky*)

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

Emailed attachments are not acceptable. 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 public lectures. Check the JST web site ([www.jst.ufl.edu/events](http://www.jst.ufl.edu/events)) for the spring schedule of public lectures. New ones will be added throughout the semester so check periodically.

**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.

<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 must sit up front. I do check periodically and will eject anyone doing email or surfing the web during lectures and discussions.

Also, no books are at the University book store but 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 8, 10 Introduction/ Screening: *The Tribe*

January 15, 17 Screening: Leon the Pig Farmer  
Jack Kugelmass, "'I'm a Gentile!'" Border Dramas and Jewish Continuity." In Goldberg, et. al. *Dynamic Belonging: Contemporary Jewish Collective Identities*, pp223-236.)

January 22, 24 Robert Kawashima, The Hebrew Bible (Selected readings)

January 29, 31 Martin Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: the Clash of Ancient Civilizations*. Readings: Pp47-62; 97-108; 148-152; 155-195.

February 5, 7 Nina Caputo, Spain and its Aftermath, the *conversos* (Selected Readings)

February 12, 14 Dragan Kujundzic, Spinoza (Selected Readings)

February 19, 21 The Haskalah

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

Yisroel Aksenfeld, *The Headband*. In *The Shtetl*. Joachim Neugroschel, ed. New York: The Overlook Press, 1979, pp49-172.

February 26, 28 Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*

March 5, 7 Spring Break

March 12, 14 Sholem Aleichem,

Hillel Halkin, ed. *Tevye the Dairyman and The Railroad Stories*

March 19, 21 Eric Kligerman, Franz Kafka (Selected Texts)

March 26, 28 Passover, no class

April 2, 4 Screening: *East and West*

Reading: Jeffrey Shandler, "'Ost und West, Old World and New: Nostalgia and Anti-Nostalgia on the Silver Screen.'" In *YIVO Annual*, Vol 2, 1993, pp153-188.

April 9, 11 Esther Romeyn *The Rise of David Levinsky*

Reading: Esther Romeyn, "Eros and Americanization: David Levinsky and the Etiquette of Race." In Jack Kugelmass, ed. *Key Texts in American Jewish Culture*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003, pp. 25-45.

April 16, 18 Screening: *The Jazz Singer*

Discussion of Readings: Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: Jewish immigrants in the Hollywood Melting Pot*. Pp73-121.

April 23 Summary