**AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY**

**Bagels, Bloomingdales and Broad City:**

**How Jews Became a Part of American Economics, Politics, and Culture**

**Michigan State University**

**HIST 317**

**Spring 2020**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will trace the development of the American Jewish community from its origins in 1654, when 23 Jewish refugees fled Brazil and landed by mistake in the city that would become New York, to the present, when American Jews have become such a successful and well-integrated ethnic and religious community that bagels, schmucks and Seth Rogen have become familiar parts of popular American culture. Composed of many different groups, including Ashkenazic and Sephardic, Reform, Orthodox and Conservative, Reconstructionist, feminist, atheist, and secular, the American Jewish community is not easily typed, and we will devote some of the class to examining battles over what it means to be an American Jew. Focusing on successive waves of immigration, we will also explore the changing ways in which Jews have been included as integral members of the American nation, as well as the ways that they have been excluded as outsiders.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Shari Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier* (2017)

Rose Cohen, *Out of the Shadow* (1995; orig. pub. 1918)

Edward Cohen, *The Peddler’s Grandson* (1999)

Letty Cottin Pogrebin, *Deborah, Golda and Me* (1991)

*HST 317 Document Packet*: only available at the Student Bookstore (SBS) 421 Grand River Ave., 351-4210: if the packet is not immediately available, ask for Michele—it will take 24 hours to produce, so please plan accordingly

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (2004)

All texts are available at the Student Bookstore.

All texts are on 2-hour reserve at the Main Library (2W).

**REQUIRED FILMS:**

*Hester Street* (1975), dir. Joan Micklin Silver

*The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg* (1998), dir. Aviva Kempner

*Gentleman’s Agreement* (1947), dir. Elia Kazan

*Annie Hall* (1977), dir. Woody Allen

*Broad City* (episode TBA)

*Soon By You* (episode TBA)

All films will be available on reserve at the Digital and Multimedia Center (DMC) at the Main Library (4W). Films on reserve must be viewed in the DMC. For hours and other information about the DMC, please check their website: <https://lib.msu.edu/general/library-hours-cal/digital-and-multimedia-center/2020-01/>

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

**Course participation: 20 percent**

Course participation includes ***attendance***, ***preparation*** and ***participation***.

***Attendance:*** I do not take attendance, but I do expect you to attend class regularly. You are responsible for anything you miss while you are absent.

***Preparation***: You must read the material due every day for class. You are also responsible for bringing in the texts due each day. (if you do not plan to buy books, please be prepared for class discussion with detailed notes)

***Participation***: You need to participate in class discussions each day. Participation can mean asking a question, answering a question, or offering an opinion. You cannot remain silent in class and get a good grade for participation. Moreover, you must be engaged and focused in class lecture: you cannot text, surf the web, checking Facebook, or talk with friends during class and still receive a good grade for participation. Participation also includes respectful engagement with others in class: students who are rude to the professor or dismissive of other students’ comments will see their participation grades reduced.

***Grading scale for participation:***

4.0 You attend class every day, are always prepared, follow lecture attentively, and you participate in class conversation (large group as well as small group) at least once a day.

3.0 You attend class frequently (although you may have been absent 2 or 3 days), and you sometimes participate in class conversation

2.0 You attend class regularly (although you may have been absent 4 or 5 days), and you are generally awake in class, but you never participate in class discussions.

1.0 You are frequently absent from class or you are actively disruptive in class (doing the crossword puzzle, doing work for other classes, texting on your phone, surfing the web, passing notes or talking to other students, sleeping, etc.)

0.0 You only show up to class to drop off or pick up assignments; I couldn't pick you out of a lineup.

**Papers: 40 percent (2 papers, each worth 20 percent)**

There are three possible paper options in this class. You **must** complete the first paper option; you may then choose one of the next two paper options.

**Paper 1 is due Monday, February 3, at noon**

**Paper 2 is due Friday, February 28, at 5 pm**

**Paper 3 is due Monday, April 6, at noon**

**Response questions: 15 percent**

For most of your readings, I will post on D2L a set of questions for the readings that are due in class. **Your responses to these questions are due posted to the class dropbox on D2L by noon the day of class**.

I will only grade these responses with a check or check minus (you'll receive a minus only if you turn in the responses late, or if it's clear you haven't done the reading or haven’t thought at all about your answers).

I am interested in seeing you think about the questions. You should write roughly two or three sentences to answer each question—a paragraph maximum.

You will **not** be graded on writing style, organization or content.

Just as with formal papers, response questions should be written in your own words, but you **must** offer specific examples and quotations and cite pages from the text to help you answer the questions. **You will lose credit** if you do not use 1) specific quotations and 2) your own language to interpret those quotations.

Note that response questions are sometimes due on Monday and sometimes due on Wednesday—please note the correct dates and plan accordingly.

Grading scale for response questions:

There are 10 sets of questions.

You get 10 points for a check; 5 points for a check minus

If you get 100 points, you get a 4.25

If you get 95-99 points, you get a 4.0

If you get 90-94 points, you get a 3.75

If you get 85-89 points, you get a 3.5

If you get 80-84 points, you get a 3.0

If you get 75-79 points, you get a 2.75

If you get 70-74 points, you get a 2.5

If you get 65-69 points, you get a 2.0

If you get 60-64 points, you get a 1.5

If you get 55-59 points, you get a 1.0

If you get fewer than 55 points, you get a **0.0** for this portion of your grade

Response questions will **not** be accepted later than one week past their due date.

**Final exam: 25 percent**

**Your final exam is a take home exam.**

More information will be posted closer to the due date.

**Final exam is due to D2L Tuesday, April 28, at 5:45 pm.**

**POLICIES:**

**Guidelines for submitting writing assignments:**

All writing assignments are due to the appropriate D2L drop box.

You **must** first compose any assignment on a Microsoft Word document. You will be penalized if your assignment is lost through D2L and you do not have a backup Microsoft Word document (be sure to save all documents).

Please make sure that you use a Microsoft Word document; **please do not submit PDFs or any other formats.**

**Lateness:**

Late papers will be graded down 0.5 each day they are late. Weekends are counted as late days. You may not hand in late papers more than one week after their due date. Final exams cannot be handed in late.

**Rewrite:**

If you receive a 3.25 or lower on a paper, you may rewrite it within a week of receiving it back from me. You are not required to speak with me about your rewrite, but it is strongly recommended. If you do not follow my suggestions in your rewrite, your grade may be dropped, rather than raised.

**Plagiarism:**

Please see the document posted to D2L for a definition of plagiarism.

Plagiarism can result in a grade of 0.0 for a paper or in a grade of 0.0 for the class, depending on the circumstances. Do not plagiarize.

**Religious holidays:**

Please see me about any conflicts between class and religious holidays as early as possible. I am happy to give extensions, early assignments, and other help in making up work.

**Disabilities:**

Please see me as early as possible if you have any learning disabilities. I am very happy to accommodate your needs in any way necessary.

**D2L:**

This class makes extensive use of D2L (www.d2l.msu.edu) for posting assignments and other class materials. If you are having trouble accessing D2L, please contact (517) 432-6200 or 1-844-678-6200: the help line is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

**A failure of D2L is not an excuse for failing to turn in an assignment**. You should visit D2L regularly and print out assignments early so that if D2L crashes the day before an assignment, you are not caught unawares. If D2L fails to accept your submission, send a copy of your assignment to my email so that you can still receive credit. You will still need to submit to D2L, however; contact their help line to ensure that you can submit.

**Library class:**

One day this semester, we will hold class in the MSU Main Library, to look at the library’s special collection of antisemitic literature. I will announce the date within the first week of the semester. You should make every effort to attend this class; you will need to turn in a response question set based on our work during this session. Please talk to me ahead of time if this poses any problem.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

--You are responsible for bringing in all texts to be discussed each day. If you do not purchase books, please bring photocopies of articles or extensive notes.

--Days marked with an asterisk (\*) are days where we will be doing in-class reading; you should **not** read these texts beforehand.

--Documents labeled “Document 1,” “Document 2,” etc. are available in the Document Packet found at the Student Bookstore

Monday, January 6: *Introduction to Class*

Wednesday, January 8: *Background of Jewish History*

Monday, January 13: *1st wave of immigration, 1654-1820*

Wednesday, January 15: *1st wave of immigration, 1654-1820*

**Reading and Response Questions Due:**

**Document 1:** Mark I. Greenberg, “One Religion, Different Worlds,” from Marcie Cohen Ferris and Eric Goldstein, eds. *Jewish Roots in Southern Soil*

**Document 2**: Ellen Smith, “Portraits of a Community,” from Pam Nadell, ed., *American Jewish Women’s History*

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**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY:**

Friday, January 17, 10-11:30 am, Wells Hall, B-342: Susie Linfield, “The Lion’s Den: Zionism and the Left from Hannah Arendt to Noam Chomsky”

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Monday, January 20: **Class cancelled for Martin Luther King Day**

Wednesday, January 22: *2nd wave of immigration, 1820-1880*

**Reading and Response Questions Due:**

Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier*, pgs. 1-122

Monday, January 27: *2nd wave of immigration, 1820-1880: Reforming Judaism*

*Paper-writing workshop*

**Nothing is due today, but please look over the paper assignment before class**

Wednesday, January 29: *A third wave of immigration, 1880-1920*

**Readings Due:** **Cohen**, ***Out of the Shadow***, 9-14; 29-32; 41-52; 57-65; 69-80

**No response questions are due today**

Monday, February 3: *Jewish immigrants and gender roles*

**Paper 1 due at noon**

\*In-class reading: **Document 3**, "A Bintel Brief"

Wednesday, February 5: *Jewish immigrants and gender roles*

In-class viewing: ***Hester Street***

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**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY:**

Thursday, February 6, 7-8:30 pm, Wells Hall, B-342: “Yiddish Between Worlds,” a panel conversation between Dov-Ber Kerler, Jack Kugelmass, and Eli Rosenblatt

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Monday, February 10: *Jewish immigrants, labor and urban life*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

**Cohen, *Out of the Shadow***, 81-145; 149-69; 199-258; 310-313

Wednesday, February 12: *Jewish immigrants, labor and urban life*

Monday, February 17: *Jewish immigrants, race and ethnicity*

Guest speaker: Devin Naar, University of Washington

**Reading and response questions due:**

**Primary documents from Stein and Cohen, eds., *Sephardi Lives*** (posted on D2L)

**“A Guidebook for Sephardic Immigrants,”** found at <https://jewishstudies.washington.edu/sephardic-studies/a-guide-for-sephardic-immigrants/>

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**EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITY:**

Monday, February 17, 8-9:30 pm, Kellogg Center Auditorium:Devin Naar, “Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece: The Fate of Salonica, ‘Jerusalem of the Balkans,”

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Wednesday, February 19: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1945: antisemitism and middle-class arrival*

Monday, February 24: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1945: antisemitism and middle class arrival*

**In-class viewing: *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg***

Wednesday, February 26: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1945*

**Friday, February 28: Paper 2 due to D2L by 5 pm**

Monday, March 2 and Wednesday, March 4: **class cancelled for spring break**

Monday, March 9: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1945: Conservative Judaism and Zionism*

**Reading and Response Questions due**:

**Document 4: Goldstein, “The Scapegoat”**

**Special Collections document**

Wednesday, March 11: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1945: our brothers’ (and sisters’) keepers?*

Monday, March 16: *The Decline of Antisemitism (?): impact of the Holocaust*

**Viewing and Response Questions due:**

***Gentleman’s Agreement***

Wednesday, March 18: *The Decline of Antisemitism (?): Jews become suburban*

Monday, March 23: *The Decline of Antisemitism(?):Jews "become white"*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

**Cohen, *Peddler’s Grandson*, 19-84**

Wednesday, March 25: *Jews and civil rights*

Monday, March 30: *Jews and civil rights*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

**Cohen, *Peddler’s Grandson*, 85-163**

Wednesday, April 1: *American Jewish culture in the 1970s: anxieties over continuity*

Monday, April 6: *American Jewish culture in the 1970s: insiders and outsiders*

**Paper 3 due to D2L by noon**

In-class viewing: ***Annie Hall***

Wednesday, April 8: **Class cancelled for Passover**

Monday, April 13: *Feminism and Judaism*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

**Pogrebin, *Deborah, Golda and Me*, 3-81; 203-34**

Wednesday, April 15: *Feminism and Judaism*

Monday, April 20: *Changing Religious Identities:* *Havurot and* *Ba’al T’shuva*

**Reading and Response Questions Due:**

**Document 5: Roiphe, *Lovingkindness*, 1-3; 6-7; 17-21**

**Visit the following website and read at least six entries in the following blog:** [**http://baalteshuvablog.wordpress.com/tag/baal-teshuva/**](http://baalteshuvablog.wordpress.com/tag/baal-teshuva/)

**View *Broad City* (episode TBA)**

***Soon by You* (episode TBA)**

Wednesday, April 22: *American Jews and popular culture today*

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**Final exam is due to D2L Tuesday, April 28, at 5:45 pm.**

**No late exams will be accepted**