**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 2021**

**MW, 12:40-2 pm**

Professor Kirsten Fermaglich (pronounced fur-*may*-glish)

Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Phone: (517) 485-6015

Office hours: TR, 3-4 pm, or by appt.

**Both class discussions and office hours will be held in my personal Zoom meeting space:**

<https://msu.zoom.us/j/9019778081>

Meeting ID: 901 977 8081

Passcode: seinfeld

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will trace the development of the American Jewish community from 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, as well as many different racial and gender identities, including Black, Latino, Asian, gay, lesbian, and transgender, 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:**

Laura Leibman, *The Art of the Jewish Family* (2020)

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

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

Additional documents will be posted on D2L as needed.

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS:**

Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism* (2004)

All books have been ordered at the Student Bookstore (SBS), 421 Grand River Ave., 351-4210. Here is a link to buy the books through the Bookstore:

[https://sbsmsu.com/ePOS?wpd=1&width=100%25&term=S21M&store=539&step=5&qty=1000&listtype=begin&go=Go&form=shared3%2Ftextbooks%2Fno\_jscript%2Fmain.html&design=539&department=HST&course=317&colspan=3&cellspacing=1&cellpadding=0&campus=MAIN&border=0&bgcolor=%23cccccc&action=list\_courses&section=1&Go=Go](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https:/sbsmsu.com/ePOS?wpd=1&width=100*25&term=S21M&store=539&step=5&qty=1000&listtype=begin&go=Go&form=shared3*2Ftextbooks*2Fno_jscript*2Fmain.html&design=539&department=HST&course=317&colspan=3&cellspacing=1&cellpadding=0&campus=MAIN&border=0&bgcolor=*23cccccc&action=list_courses&section=1&Go=Go__;JSUlJSU!!HXCxUKc!njYr5_4VnMSyRLxMNS0qLfs2ifSW9tyqOFVgbIvWkg1-BwHtYB0pCO6qbkLMbYk$)

All books are also on 72-hour reserve at the Main Library, and available as e-books through the Library. Here is a link to the Library Reserve list:

<http://catalog.lib.msu.edu/search/r?SEARCH=HST317>

**REQUIRED FILMS/TV SHOWS:**

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

Accessible on Vimeo, Amazon Fandor (available for Amazon Prime members)

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

Will be screened for you

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

Available on Amazon Prime, Directv, etc.

*Broad City* (“Florida” episode)

Available on Youtube

*Soon By You* (“The Shabbat Meal” episode)

Available on Youtube

PLEASE NOTE: You will need to rent *Hester Street* and *Gentleman’s Agreement* on your own. They are available on Amazon Prime, Vimeo and other streaming services for about $3.99 each. Please take this into account when you consider your budget for this class.

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

**Course participation: 20 percent**

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

***Attendance:*** I will take attendance through the Zoom chat function, and I expect you to attend class each day. Of course, I understand that things sometimes happen: people get sick, there are family emergencies, etc. Do send me a note when you can’t come to class. If you face a major issue that will keep you out of class for more than three days, please come speak with me about it. You are responsible for anything you miss while you are absent.

***Preparation***: You must read the material due every day for class. Please be sure to have the texts accessible 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. 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. You can participate either by raising your hand and talking in class, or, if you feel uncomfortable speaking on camera, I urge you (and will encourage you during class) to offer questions or comments in the Chat function while we speak.

Here is a grading scale to help you understand your class participation grade:

***Grading scale for class participation:***

4.0 You attend Zoom class every day (with maybe 1 or 2 sick days), are always prepared and attentive, and you participate in conversation constructively and regularly through either discussion or Chat function (at least once per day)

3.0 You attend class frequently (although you may have been absent 3 days), and you sometimes participate constructively in class conversation through Zoom discussion or Chat.

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 through either Zoom discussion or Chat.

1.0 You are frequently absent from class or you are actively disruptive in class (clearly not engaged in class, rudely dismissing others’ ideas during class discussion or over the Chat function, etc.)

0.0 You never attend class at all.

**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 Friday, February 19, at noon**

**Paper 2 is due Friday, March 19, at noon**

**Paper 3 is due Friday, April 9, 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.

Note that response questions are due on Wednesdays in the first half of the semester, before our scheduled “Wellness Days,” and then on Mondays in the second half of the semester after those “Wellness Days”—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

**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 Monday, April 26, at 2:45 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 0.25 each day they are late. Weekends are counted as late days.

**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.

**ONLINE POLICIES**

**D2L:**

This class makes extensive use of D2L ([www.d2l.msu.edu](http://www.d2l.msu.edu)) for posting assignments and other materials. Please be sure tovisit D2L regularly and print out assignments early so that if D2L crashes the day before an assignment, or if you lose Internet capabilities, you are not caught unaware. If you have trouble with D2L, please contact the helplines below.

**If you are having trouble accessing D2L when your paper is due, you should email me the paper so that you do not risk turning in your paper late.**

**Zoom:**

We will be using Zoom for our class meetings. If you have difficulties accessing Zoom, or you get kicked off Zoom easily (or have any other troubles with Zoom at all), please let me know as soon as you can so I can help you figure out your troubles, and we can troubleshoot how you can still participate in class.

**If you are having trouble accessing Zoom, please contact the helplines below first and then email or call me as soon as possible so that we can figure out how to ensure that you can still participate in class.**

**Email:**

I will use email to communicate with you about class matters. Please be sure that you check email at least once a day on weekdays. In return, please know that I check email at least once a day on weekdays and will make every effort to respond to you within 24 hours of your message. I do not regularly check email on weekends, however, so please be aware that I may not respond to Friday afternoon or Saturday emails until Sunday night or Monday morning.

**Recordings:**

I will record our Zoom meetings of this course and make them available to students registered for this class. This is intended to supplement the classroom experience for everyone. In doing so, I expect that you will follow appropriate University policies and maintain the security of passwords used to access recorded lectures. You may not reproduce these recordings, share them with anyone not in the class, or upload them to other online environments. Doing so may result in disciplinary action. If I plan to use the recordings beyond this class, I will notify anyone identifiable in the recordings to request consent beforehand.

**Technical support:**

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course or to report a problem, you can:

Visit the MSU Help site at [http://help.msu.edu](http://help.msu.edu/) Visit the Desire2Learn Help Site at [http://help.d2l.msu.edu](http://help.d2l.msu.edu/) Call the MSU IT Service Desk at (517) 432-6200, (844) 678-6200, or e-mail at [ithelp@msu.edu](mailto:ithelp@msu.edu). The Help line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**General understanding that things can go wrong in an online class in the middle of a pandemic:**

We are living through tough and frankly unprecedented times. Stuff happens. I give you

deadlines here because you need them and I need them for the class to be successful, but if you

are living in difficult circumstances (taking care of a parent or sibling; having troubles accessing

Zoom or the Internet; dealing with grief, anxiety or stress; etc.), please let me know. I am happy to work with you on whatever you need.

**CLASS SCHEDULE:**

--You are responsible for having accessible all texts to be discussed each day. If you do not purchase books, please make scans or photocopies, or take extensive notes.

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

Monday and Wednesday, January 11-13: Reading and Reflection period: no class held

Monday, January 18: **Class cancelled for Martin Luther King Day**

Wednesday, January 20: *Introduction to Class*

Assignment due: 1-2 page reflective essay on a personal object (this will not be graded, but I will want you to turn it in, and we will talk about it).

Monday, January 25: *Background of Jewish History*

Wednesday, January 27: *A first wave of immigration, 1654-1820: gender, race, ethnicity*

**Reading and Response Questions Due:**

Leibman, *Art of the Jewish Family*, introduction, chapters 1 and 3 (pp. 1-54; 88-132)

Monday, February 1: *A first wave of immigration, 1654-1820: gender, race, ethnicity*

Wednesday, February 3: *A second wave of immigration, 1820-1880*

**Reading and Response Questions Due:**

Leibman, *Art of the Jewish Family*, chapters 4 and 5 (pp. 133-209)

Monday, February 8: *A second wave of immigration, 1820-1880: Reforming Judaism*

Wednesday, February 10: *A third wave of immigration, 1880-1920*

*Paper workshop*

**Readings due:**

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

**There are no response questions due this week; please read these pages to help you with lecture. Also please look at the paper topic and come prepared to talk about it.**

Monday, February 15: *A third wave of immigration, 1880-1920*

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

*\*In-class reading:*

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

**Friday, February 19: Paper 1 due at noon**

Monday, February 22: *Jewish immigrants, labor and urban life*

Wednesday, February 24: *Jewish immigrants, labor and urban life*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

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

Monday, March 1: *Jewish immigrants and gender roles*

*\*In-class reading*:

"A Bintel Brief" (posted on D2L)

**Wednesday, March 3: class canceled for not-spring break. Enjoy!**

Monday, March 8: *Jewish immigrants and gender roles*

**Viewing and Response Questions due:**

***Hester Street***

Wednesday, March 10: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1948: secular Judaism, Conservative Judaism and Zionism*

Monday, March 15: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1948: antisemitism and middle-class arrival*

**Viewing, Reading, and Response Questions due**:

**Goldstein, “The Scapegoat” (posted on D2L)**

***The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg* (posted on D2L)**

Wednesday, March 17: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1948: our brothers’ keepers*

**Friday, March 19: Paper 2 due at noon**

Monday, March 22: *Uneasy Years, 1920-1948: impact of the Holocaust*

**Viewing and Response Questions due:**

***Gentleman’s Agreement***

Wednesday, March 24: *The Decline of Antisemitism (?): Jews “become white”*

Monday, March 29: *The Decline of Antisemitism (?): Jews become suburban*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

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

Wednesday, March 31: *Jews, civil rights, and race*

Monday, April 5: *Jews, civil rights, and race*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

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

**Images of Black Hebrew Israelites from Judith Weisenfeld’s *New World A’Coming* (posted on D2L)**

Wednesday, April 7: *Feminism and Judaism*

**Friday, April 9: Paper 3 due to D2L by noon**

Monday, April 12: *Feminism and Judaism*

**Reading and Response Questions due:**

**Pogrebin, *Deborah, Golda and Me*, chapter 2 (posted on D2L)**

Wednesday, April 14: *The More Things Change?: the endurance of Orthodoxy*

Monday, April 19: *The More Things Change?: the endurance of Orthodoxy*

**Reading and Response Questions Due:**

**Roiphe, *Lovingkindness*, 1-3; 6-7; 17-21 (posted on D2L)**

**View *Broad City* (“Florida” episode)**

***Soon by You* (“The Shabbat meal” episode)**

Wednesday, April 21: *The More Things Change?: the persistence of racism and antisemitism*

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