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**HISTORY 383**  
**SHAPING THEIR DESTINIES:**  
**WOMEN AND JEWISH HISTORY**  
*CRN 20625*  
Spring 2009 – MW 1 – 2:15  
ACD 104

**Course Description:** What was it like to be both a woman and a member of a minority group, in the various places where Jews have lived? How did Jewish women of the past find a balance between tradition and change, between life inside and outside of the family? What does it mean to study “Jewish history”? This course will provide an overview of Jewish history in various parts of the world by focusing on the lives of women. Rather than attempting to cover Jewish history everywhere and at all times, we will focus on several case studies in order to (a) illustrate the diversity of circumstances in which Jews lived; and (b) examine the many constraints faced by and choices available to Jewish women. We will begin by surveying the status of Jewish women in the ancient and medieval world before turning to the period from 1500 to the present. In examining the status of women, we will also cover important themes and changes affecting Jewish history, such as religious tradition, emancipation, assimilation, anti-Semitism, immigration, Zionism, the Holocaust and feminism. Special focus will be placed on the ways in which Jewish women managed their multiple identities, whether as Jews, women, or inhabitants of their respective countries. This course meets the History major’s theme designations in Women/Gender and Race/Ethnicity; it also fits in the Comparative/World History area.

**Course learning goals:** Students enrolled in the course will:

1. Receive an overview of Judaism and of Jewish history.
2. Learn about the role of gender in history, and the special nature of women’s experiences, with a focus on Jewish history.
3. Learn to think about history as lived experience, and to study it from a variety of angles.

**Course contract:** I promise to do my utmost to make this course as interesting and intellectually challenging as possible. In return, students who enroll in it agree to the following terms.

1. Class attendance is mandatory. If you are chronically absent, your overall grade (not just your class participation grade) will be significantly lowered.
2. Students must do all required readings and assignments, and think carefully about how the texts relate to each other.
3. Students must arrive at class ready to discuss texts or films, and participate actively and thoughtfully in discussions. Class participation not only keeps the course interesting, but is essential for demonstrating that you are keeping up with course assignments, and developing the oral communication skills worthy of a college graduate.
4. Students must treat each other and the instructor with courtesy and respect, and maintain their focus on the material.

## COURSE READINGS

Required readings for sale in bookstore: The following required anthologies are available for purchase at the University Store, and on reserve in the library.

1. Judith Baskin, *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, \*2<sup>nd</sup>\* edition [called **Baskin** on syllabus]
2. Pamela Nadell, *American Jewish Women's History Reader* [called **Nadell** on syllabus]
3. Emily Taitz, Sondra Henry and Cheryl Tallan, *The JPS Guide to Jewish Women, 600 BCE to 1900 CE* [called **JPS** on syllabus-->NOTE: if you wish to save money, you may choose to read the selections from this book on reserve instead]

### Other required readings:

1. Complimentary book: Neil Gabler, Frank Rich, and Joyce Antler, *Television's Changing Image of American Jews* [a free copy will be provided to all enrolled students, courtesy of the Norman Lear Center at USC's Annenberg School for Communication].
2. Reserves: Several of the course readings will be available on Reserve in the library (RES).
3. On-line documents. Occasionally, we will use sources which are available on line. Web URL's are listed on the syllabus or will be provided.
4. Films: You will choose one film to attend from the San Diego Jewish Film Festival (a coupon for one free ticket will be provided to each student). There will be a few other films shown in class; if you want to watch them again (or if you miss class), they will be on reserve in the Media Library.

### Optional Text:

Diana Hacker, *Bedford Handbook for Writers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition)

--I will use codes from this text when making suggestions on your papers. If you do not wish to purchase it, there is a **copy on reserve** in the library, under my **History 202** course. It provides extremely useful explanations and exercises which can help you generate ideas for papers and express yourself clearly and forcefully (it will also be useful for any other classes which require papers).

Class WebCT site: Log in at [courses.csusm.edu](http://courses.csusm.edu) with your normal campus username and password to get to the Hist. 383 site. Syllabus and assignment guidelines (as well as our **first two readings only**) will be posted there.

E-mail policy: Students are invited to come to office hours, which is the best means of discussing questions on course material. If you cannot attend office hours, I am happy to respond to emails M-F, and will make every effort to respond by the next business day (unless otherwise announced). Please note that **I am unable to answer individual requests about what was covered in class for students who are absent**; please consult a classmate.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS/GRADING

1) Regular attendance and active participation in class: Active participation in discussions will constitute 20% of your grade.

2) Informal Assignments: We will occasionally have informal assignments in which you will reflect on course materials. These will either be in-class, or announced the previous class for you to bring the next time (15% of your grade). The **film festival write-up** is one such assignment, and will count separately as 5% of your grade. Grades for these assignments are based on the following scale: √+ (outstanding work, equiv. to an A)/√ (acceptable work, equiv. to a B; feel free to come in if you want to improve your writing/reading skills); √- (equiv. of a C; suggests that reading is not being done carefully, or you are having difficulty explaining yourself; you are encouraged to come in for extra help); or NC (for work that was not done or which raises academic honesty concerns).

3) Quiz: We will have one quiz on **Feb. 18**, focusing on basic terms in Judaism and Jewish history (20% of your grade).

4) Teaching (About) Jewish Women's History Paper (15% of grade): You will analyze a selected exhibition at the Jewish Women's Archive ([www.jwa.org](http://www.jwa.org)). The paper should be approx. 4 pages (1000 words). More guidelines will be given in advance of the due date. The paper is **due at the beginning of class on Mon., March 11**.

5) Term Paper: Students will choose one additional article (not on the syllabus) from the bibliographies to be provided, and write a 6-7 page paper (1500 - 1800 words) presenting the argument of that article, and explaining how it compares to other course materials. More guidelines will be given in advance of the due date. The paper is due on **Wed., April 29** (25%).

### *Notes on both papers:*

1. In fairness to all students and so that all students work under the same time constraints, no extensions will be given. For each day a paper is late, the grade will drop by one whole grade.

2. The vast majority of CSUSM students do their work honestly, and expect all will be graded on merit. In order to ensure fair grades for all and to make sure you are capable of doing your own work, **plagiarism will not be tolerated**. Anyone attempting to plagiarize in this course (something both dishonest and cowardly) **will be referred to the Dean of Students and could face expulsion**. You are responsible for knowing what plagiarism is; see the University Policy on Academic Honesty in the course catalog; the relevant sections of the Bedford Handbook; the website at [library.csusm.edu/plagiarism/](http://library.csusm.edu/plagiarism/); or ask me in advance.

*ADA statement.* Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations must be approved for services by the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS). This office is located in Craven Hall 4300, and can be contacted by phone at (760) 750-4905, or TTY (760) 750-4909. Students authorized by DSS to receive reasonable accommodations should meet with me during my office hours to ensure confidentiality.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### **COURSE INTRODUCTION: WOMEN AND JEWISH HISTORY**

W Jan 21)     **Introduction to Course**

M Jan 26)     **Women and Jewish Historiography: An Overview**

Reading

- Paula Hyman, *Tikkun* article (posted on [webct.csusm.edu](http://webct.csusm.edu); under “Readings”)
- Shulamit Magnus, “Out of the Ghetto, Integrating the Study of Jewish Women into Study of the Jews” (posted on [webct.csusm.edu](http://webct.csusm.edu); under “Readings”)

W Jan 28)     **Overview of Jewish History/What is Judaism?**

Reading

- Jews in Modern World, ed. Rubinstein, 1-12 (RES)
- Leo Trepp, Judaism 1-7 (RES)
- [www.MyJewishLearning.com](http://www.MyJewishLearning.com) (overview sections on “Jewish Daily Life” and whatever else you like from levels II and III)

Optional

- Louis Jacobs, *The Jewish Religion: A Companion* (e-book; search in library catalog)

M Feb 2)     **Women in Judaism/Bible, an Introduction**

Reading

- Niditch, “Portrayals of Women in the Hebrew Bible,” in Baskin
- JPS, ch. 1, Buried Treasures

Optional: [www.myjewishlearning.com/ideas\\_belief/genderfeminism/Fem\\_Traditional\\_TO/Fem\\_InBible.htm](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/ideas_belief/genderfeminism/Fem_Traditional_TO/Fem_InBible.htm); [www.myjewishlearning.com/ideas\\_belief/genderfeminism/Fem\\_Traditional\\_TO.htm](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/ideas_belief/genderfeminism/Fem_Traditional_TO.htm); Preface, 15-23 to Baskin

W Feb 4)     **Women in the Bible, continued**

**\*\*Film Festival:** The 17<sup>th</sup> Annual San Diego Jewish Film Festival will be held from 2/4 – 2/15/09, in La Jolla/UTC, Carmel Mountain and Mission Valley. Schedules will be distributed (see also <http://sdcjc.lfjcc.org/sdjff/2009/>). You will receive one free ticket, and will choose one of the following films: *At Home in Utopia/Unattached*, *Beau Jest*, *\*Blessed Is the Match*, *Lemon Tree*, *Noodle*, *\*Plus Tard (One Day You’ll Understand)*, *\*Praying in Her Own Voice*, *\*The Secrets*, *\*Yoo-hoo*, *Mrs. Goldberg*, *The Woman from Sarajevo* (those with asterisks are especially recommended). You will then do a one- to two-page write-up about the film and what you got out of it.

### **UNIT ONE: WOMEN IN THE BIBLE/PRE-MODERN HISTORY**

M Feb 9)     **Women in Judaism continued**

\*Panel on Reform, Conservative and Orthodox views of Women in Judaism, with Rabbi Lisa Goldstein and Mrs. Leah Bogopulsky\*

W Feb 11) **Women in Medieval Europe and Islam**

Reading:

- JPS: 47-53, 60-3 (boxes only), 73-6 (*optional*: rest of chs. 3 and 4)
- Baskin on Medieval Europe and Islam in Baskin
- Barnavi on “The Church, the State and the Jews”: [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history\\_community/Medieval/TheStory6321666/Christendom.htm](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history_community/Medieval/TheStory6321666/Christendom.htm)

history\_community/Medieval/TheStory6321666/Christendom.htm

Optional:

[http://www.myjewishlearning.com/ideas\\_belief/genderfeminism/Fem\\_Traditional\\_TO/Fem\\_Medieval.htm](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/ideas_belief/genderfeminism/Fem_Traditional_TO/Fem_Medieval.htm)

**UNIT TWO: TRANSITION TO MODERNITY**

M Feb 16) **Women in Early Modern Europe: Focus on Spain**

Reading: Melamed, in Baskin; plus \*WebCT docs: Inquisition primary source; Glikl of Hameln; Italian women’s prayer

Optional: Adelman on Italy, Weissler on Women’s Prayers in Baskin; JPS 129-133

W Feb 18) **Continued, plus Quiz** [no new reading]

M Feb 23) **Haskalah**

Reading: JPS, 199-203; Galchinsky (on England), in Baskin

Optional: Hertz (on salon women), in Baskin

Assignment: \*Film Festival Write-Up Due\*

W Feb 25) **Responses to Emancipation**

Reading: Kaplan (on Germany) in Baskin

Optional: Malino (N. Africa), Hyman (E. Europe), both in Baskin

M Mar 2) **Women in Islamic Countries, through the 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Reading: JPS, ch. 7 (165-9, 171-189 [can skip boxes; Malchi (174-5); Reyna Nasi (182-3)]; 193-4, 196 (women in Syn)

W Mar 4) **Emancipation Continued**

**UNIT THREE: POPULATION MOVEMENTS AND NEW REALITIES  
IN THE UNITED STATES, EUROPE AND ISRAEL**

M Mar 9) **The Golden Land? Immigration in America**

Reading: JPS, 237-243; Hyman on kosher meat riots *or* Kessler-Harris on unions (can skim 106-110, read rest), in Nadell (choose one, or read both)

W Mar 11) **East Side/West Coast**

Reading:

- Toll on Jews in West (RES)

- *Bintel Brief* excerpts (RES)
- Annie Meyer, “The Scientific Mother” (handout)
- +FIRST PAPER DUE

M Mar 16)     **Zionism/Israel**

Reading:

- Docs. on Szold and Senesh (RES; listed as *Umansky/Ashton #1*)
- Bernstein on Israeli women, in Baskin (can skip 298-mid 299, 302-6)
- Optional: Antler on Szold/Am. women’s Zionism (in Nadell)

W Mar 18)     Continued

Reading:

- Plough Woman selections (RES)
- +Film on Golda Meir

M Mar 23)     **European Life Before the Holocaust: *Yidl mit un fidl***

W Mar 25)     **Yidl continued**

Assignment: Plan ahead for final paper; choose articles and order ILL if necessary; for more on the film, see <http://www.jwa.org/exhibits/wov/picon/>

M Mar 30)

W Apr 1)                   \*No class; SPRING BREAK \*

M Apr 6)       **Holocaust**

W April 8)

Assignment: Ofer/Weitzman, Introduction to Role of Gender in the Holocaust (RES); readings from <http://www.theverylongview.com/WATH/>; + writeup (more details to follow)

M Apr 13)     **Acculturation in America**

Reading:

- Jenna Joselit, *Wonders of America*, ch. 2 (RES)

**UNIT FOUR: JEWISH LIFE IN POSTWAR AMERICA**

W Apr 15)     **Acculturation in America II: From Diaries to Food**

Reading:

- Brumberg on girls’ diaries (in Nadell)
- Ferris on Southern Jewish food (in Nadell; can skim 270-5)

M Apr 20)     **The American Jewish Woman: Stereotypes and Realities**

Reading:

- Schultz, on Jewish women in civil rights movement (in Nadell)
- Antler essay in Gabler/Rich/Antler, *Television’s Changing Image of American Jews*
- Prell, on JAP stereotypes (in Nadell)

W Apr 22) **Holocaust II**

\*Guest Speaker: Mrs. Agathe Ehrenfried\*

M Apr 27) **The American Jewish Woman: Stereotypes and Realities** continued

(No new reading)

W Apr 29) **Feminism I**

Reading:

· Feminist texts (RES; listed as *Umansky/Ashton #2*)

· Paula Hyman essay, at [http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history\\_community/](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/history_community/Modern/IntellectualTO/feminism.htm)

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+ SECOND PAPER DUE

M May 4) **Feminism II/Class Wrap-Up**

Reading: TBA

W May 6) **Cook-Off**

Assignment: Alone or with a partner, make a non-meat dish from Claudia Roden's *Book of Jewish Food* [will be on reserve in the library]-->also make a small sign about the origins of the dish/Jews from that region (NOTE: if you have a special circumstance which prevents you from cooking, speak to me about an alternate assignment)