

Concordia University
 Department of Religion
 RELI 391/4 Winter 2003
 Thursday 18:00 - 20:15

WOMEN IN JEWISH HISTORY:
 ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL

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 Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-3 or by appointment

DESCRIPTION

Silenced and invisible, Jewish women do have a "herstory" that is both different from and illuminating of Jewish history. The course will survey the role and presence of women in Jewish history from ancient through medieval periods. While offering a feminist critique of Jewish historiography, its main purpose is to give voice to the stories of Jewish women rarely ever heard. The course will begin with the biblical period briefly. It will not deal with biblical figures, only what we can learn about the social history of the times. It will conclude with the beginnings of the modern era.

Through readings, assignments and class discussion, we will attempt to develop an appreciation for the women themselves; how they saw themselves, what they accomplished, how they experienced history, and what being Jewish meant to them. We will not examine what the religious tradition proclaimed about or legislated for these women. They were a vital force in the life of the community and their heritage has too often been ignored. Uncovering or revealing their experience is our task.

Required Texts:

Baskin, Judith, R. Jewish Women in Historical Perspective. 1998 Wayne State.
 Lowenthal, M., translator, The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln. 1977. Harper. Revised.
 Course pack. All required articles are in the course pack.

Additional Texts - useful for research paper:

A. Levine, Women Like This, 1991.
 Brooten, Bernadette. Women Leaders in the Ancient Synagogue. 1992. Scholars Press.
 Davis, Natalie Zemon, Women on the Margins, 1995
 D. Sawyer, Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries, 1996.
The Memoirs of Gluckel. Written by Herself. 1962.
 Henry, S. and E. Taitz, Written Out of History. revised, Biblio Press.
 Kelly, Joan, Women, History and Theory, 1984.
 Kaufman, M. The Woman in Jewish Law and Tradition, 73-108.
 L. Epstein, Sex Laws & Customs in Judaism.
 Meyers, Carol. Discovering Eve. 1988. Oxford University Press.
 Perdue, L etc. Families in Ancient Israel, 1997.
 Roth, Cecil. The House of Nasi: Dona Gracia. 1947. J.P.S.
 Tal Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine. 1996
 Tal Ilan, Integrating Women into Second Temple History,
 Valler, S. Women and Womanhood in the Talmud. 1999.
 Zolty, S. And All Your Children Shall Be Learned, 1993, Aronson.

There are many more sources available. Use the library and the religion index. Use the resources of the Encyclopedia Judaica, S. D. Gotein A Mediterranean Society, and Salo Baron's multi volume history of the Jews.

Requirements:

Participation - attendance and classroom discussion- is required.

Required reading MUST be done before each class.

Students must do the assigned readings before coming to class and are expected to participate in class discussion. Doing the readings is not considered a substitute for attending the seminars. The instructor reserves the right to lower the grade if students' miss a significant proportion of classes.

Short critical essay	20%
Due: February 6	
Research proposal and bibliography due	February 27
Research paper	40%
Due: March 18	
Final take home exam	40%
Due: April 25	

Grading:

A : Superior grasp of material, excellent analysis and thought provoking presentation.

B : Good understanding, clear and orderly presentation.

C : Adequate grasp of material, reasonably clear.

D : Evidence of reading, inadequate comprehension.

F : Absence of evidence that required work was done. An "F" indicates that the student did not do the assignment or that the material handed in lacks evidence that the work was done.

Code of conduct

Submitting work that is not your own in any form is a serious offence. Please familiarize yourselves with university regulations contained in the Concordia Undergraduate Calendar concerning academic misconduct (i.e. plagiarism and multiple submission) and other offences of conduct (i.e. discrimination, harassment, violent or threatening behaviour). Any improper use of another's work will be reported to the Dean's office.

Student Services

Please see Concordia's web site under Student Learning Services for extra help and for more information and examples on appropriate citing practices

Topical Outline

I. Introduction: History and Herstory: Problems in recording and interpreting.

January 9

Read: Baskin, Introduction.

"Gender & Jewish History". 1988, Paula Hyman. Tikkun. 3:1.

B. Greenberg. "Jewish Women Coming of Age".

Recommended: Joan Kelly, Women, History and Theory.

II. Women of the Biblical Period

January 16

Read: Baskin, ch. 1 (Susan Niditch).

"In the Days of Yael: Reclaiming The History of Women," JoAnn Hackett in Immaculate & Powerful by C. Atkinson et. al.

C. Meyers, "Everyday Life: Women in the Period of the Hebrew Bible," in Women's Bible Commentary, eds. Newsom and Ringe.

S. Grossman, "Women in the Jerusalem Temple," 15-38 in Grossman and Haut, Daughters of the King, 1992.

Recommended: C. Meyers. Discovering Eve.

III. Late Antiquity: The Diaspora

January 23

Read: Baskin, ch. 2 (Ross Kraemer);

Brooten, Women Leaders in The Ancient Synagogue, 5-33, 139-148.

Safrai, H. "Women and the Ancient Synagogue," 39-50, in Daughters of the King.

Recommended: Tal Ilan, Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine. 1996
Integrating Women into Second Temple History.

ch. 1, L. Epstein, Sex Laws & Customs in Judaism.

A. Levine, Women Like This, 1991.

IV. Talmudic Times

January 30

Read: Baskin, ch. 3 (Judith Romney Wegner);

J. Hauptman, "Images of Women in the Talmud" in Reuther, Religion & Sexism.

Tal Ilan, "The Quest for the Historical Beruriah, Rachel and Imma Shalom," AJS Review 22 (1997) 1-17.

Shulamit Valler, "Business Women in the Mishnaic and Talmudic period" Women in Judaism, 2:2(Spring 2001).

Recommended: D. Goodblatt, "The Beruriah Traditions," JJS 1975, 68-85.

A. Goldfeld, "Women as Sources of Torah", in Koltun, Jewish Women.

J. Wegner, Chattel or Person.

V. The Middle Ages

February 6

Read: Baskin, ch. 4.

A. The Muslim World

Read: Baskin, ch. 5 (Renee Levine Melammed).

J. Adler, "Al-Kahina: A Judeo-Berber Deborah"

S. Reguer, "Women in the Synagogue in Medieval Cairo," in Daughters of the King.

R.L. Melammed, "He said, She Said: A Woman Teacher in Twelfth-Century Cairo," AJS Review 22 (1997) 19-35.

February 13

B. The Inquisition and Crypto-Jewesses

Read: "Donna Gracia" in Kauffman The Woman in Jewish Law and Tradition.

R. Levine Melammed, "The Lives of Judaizing Women after 1492" in Heretics or Daughters.

No School February 20

February 27

C. Europe & The Crusades

Read: J. Baskin, "Dolce of Worms."

I. Epstein, "The Jewish Woman in Responsa Literature" in L. Jung, The Jewish Library: Woman.

Ivan Marcus, "Mothers, Martyrs & Moneymakers" in Conservative Judaism 38:3, 1986.

J Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World, 115-120, 301-3.

Recommended: Joanne Greenberg, The King's Persons, 1963.

March 6

D. Italian Women

Read: Baskin, ch. 6. (H. Adelman)

H. Adelman, "Religious Practice Among Italian Jewish Women," in Judaism in Practice, 2001.

March 13

E. Ashkenazic Women: Prayers and Diarists

Read: Baskin, ch. 7; Chaviva Weissler.

Emily Taitz, "Women's Prayers," in Daughters of the King, 59-71.

March 20

F. The Women of England

Read: Baskin ch. 9.

"The Jewish Woman in Medieval England," in Adler, Jews of Medieval England, 1939, 17-45.

March 27 Read Gluckel, no class.

April 1

G. The Memoirs of Gluckel

Recommended: Davis, Women on the Margins, 5-62.

V. Entering the Modern World

April 8

Read: H. Rabinowicz, "Lady Rabbis & Rabbinic Daughters".

C. Roth, "Outstanding Jewish Women in Western Europe".

J. Katz, "The family," in Tradition and Crisis.

Recommended: Baskin, ch. 8,10, 12.

VI. Conclusion

Read: Baskin, ch. 15.