

**Professor Paola Tartakoff**  
E-mail: tartakof@rci.rutgers.edu

Office: 116 Miller Hall, 14 College Ave.  
Office Hours: Fri, 8:30-10:30

**JEWISH SOCIETY AND CULTURE I:  
THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL EXPERIENCE**  
Rutgers University, Spring 2011

History 506:271 / Jewish Studies 563:201 / Middle Eastern Studies 685:208

Mon/Wed 1:10-2:30  
Murray 210

**PROVISIONAL SYLLABUS**

**Course Description:**

Required for majors and minors in Jewish Studies, this course examines the social, intellectual, and religious life of the Jewish people from Israel's beginnings through to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. It starts with an overview of the history of Israel from c. 1400 B.C.E. to the end of the Babylonian Captivity. Next it turns to the Second Temple Period, focusing on Israel's encounter with Hellenism, Jewish eschatological hopes, and Jewish life under Roman rule. The course then explores the Jewish experience in the early medieval period. Topics in this section include the rise of rabbinic Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the world of the Babylonian academies, and Jewish life under Visigothic and Muslim rule. The last portion of the course examines Jewish life under Christian rule in Sepharad and Ashkenaz. It emphasizes important trends in medieval Jewish thought and spirituality and traces the evolution of medieval anti-Judaism.

**Learning Goals:**

- Students will acquire an overview of major developments in the history of the Jewish people from Israel's beginnings to 1492.
- Students will learn to analyze primary sources critically.

**Required Texts:**

- *The Jews: A History*, ed. John Efron et al. (Prentice Hall, 2009). ISBN: 0131786873. \$53.33. Available at the Rutgers University Bookstore (Ferren Mall, One Penn Plaza, 732-246-8448) and on reserve at Alexander Library
- **Coursepack (CP)**. Available at the Rutgers University Bookstore (Ferren Mall, One Penn Plaza, 732-246-8448).

**Recommended Text:**

- Hebrew Bible and New Testament in English, including the Apocrypha. I recommend the New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, Third Edition (Oxford, 2001). You can also access the assigned biblical readings online at:  
<http://www.biblegateway.com/versions/index.php?action=getVersionInfo&vid=31&lang=2#books>.

**Additional readings** will be posted on Sakai (<https://sakai.rutgers.edu> -- click on 'JSC1S09' and then on 'Resources').

**Grading:**

- Participation: 10%
- 2 Written Assignments (4-5 pages each): 20% each, 40% total
- Midterm Exam: 25%
- Final Exam: 25%

## SCHEDULE OF LECTURES and LIST OF KEY READINGS

### I. Early Israel (Efron, 1-48)

#### 1. Wed 1/19: Introduction

#### 2. Mon 1/24: From Abraham to Moses

- Efron, 1-10
- Genesis 9:8-17; 12:1-7, 10; 17:1-8; Exodus 19; 20:1-6; 32
- CP, 1-10
- Optional: Jon D. Levenson, "Chosenness and its Enemies," *Commentary* (December 2008): 25-31 (Sakai).

#### 3. Wed 1/26: The Promised Land

- Efron, 11-24
- Joshua 24:2-3; Exodus 12:12; 15:11; 20:1, 3; Psalm 82:1; CP, 11-12

#### 4. Mon 1/31: Idolatry and Division

- Efron, 25-48
- 2 Samuel 7:8-16; 1 Kings 18:21-40; 2 Kings 23:3; Dt 6:5; 2 Kings 22:11-13; Dt 28:15-68
- CP, 13-15

#### 5. Wed 2/2: Exile and Prophecy

- 1 Kings 17; 18:16-40; 2 Kings 2:9-12; Jeremiah 7:16-34; 11:1-7; 13:15-27; 31 (skim); 37:15-21; Isaiah 1
- CP, 16-22

### II. The Second Temple Period (Efron, 49-82)

#### 6. Mon 2/7: Return and Renewal

- Ezra 1:2-4; Isaiah 44:28-45:5; Nehemiah 8:1-9; Ezra 3:10-13
- CP, 22-26

#### 7. Wed 2/9: Hellenistic Jewish Thought

- Efron, 49-69
- Letter to Aristeas (Sakai)
- CP, 27-28

#### 8. Mon 2/14: Eschatology and the Maccabean Revolt

- Daniel 12:1-3, 13; 2 Maccabees, chapters 6 and 7
- CP, 29-34

#### 9. Wed 2/16: Judea under Roman Rule. *Paper 1 (Maccabees and Masada) due.*

- Efron, 70-82
- Josephus on the Fall of Masada (CP, 35)
- Yohanan ben Zakkai and the Destruction of Jerusalem (CP, 36-37)

- The Jewish Sects (CP, 37-38)

### III. The Early Middle Ages (Efron, 82-146)

#### 10. Mon 2/21: Birth of Christianity

- Efron, 82-91
- Luke 1-24 (skim); John 18:28-19:16; Romans 2 and 3
- CP, 48-58

#### 11. Wed 2/23: The Rise of Rabbinic Judaism

- Efron, 92-115
- CP, 39-46
- Optional: Shaye J. D. Cohen, "The Matrilineal Principle," in *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Berkeley, 1999), 263-307 (Sakai).

#### 12. Mon 2/28: Early Islam

- Efron, 116-121
- The Qu'ran on the Children of Israel (CP, 62-63)
- The Pact of Umar (CP, 63-65)
- The Itinerary of the Rhadanite Merchants (CP, 65-66)
- CP, 59-61

#### 13. Wed 3/2: The Gaonate, the Exilarchate, and Jewish Sectarianism

- Efron, 121-127
- "Nathan the Babylonian on the Installation of the Exilarch" (CP, 64, 66)
- Excerpt from the *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* of Saadia Gaon (CP, 67)
- "A Karaite Refutation of Saadia's Defense of Rabbinic Judaism" (CP, 67-68)

#### 14. Mon 3/7: MIDTERM.

#### 15. Wed 3/9: Jewish Life in Early Medieval Spain

- Efron, 127-136
- Laws of the Visigoths (CP, 74)
- Optional: Excerpt from Bernard Bachrach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Sakai)

### SPRING BREAK: March 12-20

#### 16. Mon 3/21: The Golden Age of Jewish Literature

- "A Spanish Jewish curriculum of Jewish and secular studies" (CP, 78-79)
- Dunash ibn Labrat, "The Poet refuses an invitation to drink;" Samuel Ha-Nagid, "The Moment;" Solomon ibn Gabirol, "On Leaving Saragossa;" Judah Halevi, "My heart is in the East" (CP, 80-82)
- Letter from Hasdai ibn Shaprut to the king of the Khazars (CP, 76-77)
- Optional; excerpt from Judah Ha-Levi, *The Kuzari* (CP, 82-83)

#### 17. Wed 3/23: Medieval Jewish Philosophy

- Efron, 136-146
- TBA

#### 18. Mon 3/28: Maimonides

- Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Book of Knowledge, The Foundations of the Torah, Chapter 1 (CP, 83-84)
- Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, Part 3, Chapter 51 (CP, 84-85)
- “Solomon ibn Adret on the Place of Philosophy and Mysticism in Judaism” (Sakai)

### IV. The Later Middle Ages (Efron, 147-183)

#### 19. Wed 3/30: Jewish Culture in Medieval Ashkenaz

- Efron, 147-173
- “The Charter of Bishop Rudiger of Speyer” (CP, 87)
- The Testament of Eleazar of Mainz (CP, 99)
- Excerpts from the Responsa of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg (CP, 100)
- Optional: Jacob Katz, “Men of Enlightenment,” in *Exclusiveness and Tolerance: Studies in Jewish-Gentile Relations in Medieval and Modern Times* (London, 1961), 114-128 (Sakai).

#### 20. Mon 4/4: Crusade Massacres and the Blood Libel

- Seltzer, 355-360
- Excerpt from *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Samson* (CP, 101-102)
- Bernard of Clairvauz on Protecting the Jews (CP, 102-103)
- “The Accusation of Ritual Murder at Blois” (CP, 106)

#### 21. Wed, 4/6: The Jewish-Christian Debate

- Excerpts from the Hebrew and Latin accounts of the Barcelona Disputation (CP, 112-118)

#### 22. Mon, 4/11: *Conversos* and the Spanish Inquisition

- Efron, 174-183
- Solomon Alami on the massacres of 1391 (CP, 122-123)
- “Inquisitorial Trials of Inés López,” (CP, 127-129)

#### 23. Wed, 4/13: Conversion to and from Judaism. *Paper 2 (Conversion and Reversion) due.*

- Herman-Judah (CP, 119-121)
- Baruch’s Confession (Sakai)
- Rite of Re-Judaization (CP, 121)

#### 24. Mon 4/18: Film: “The Disputation”

#### 25. Wed 4/20: NO CLASS, START OF PASSOVER

#### 26. Mon 4/25: NO CLASS, END OF PASSOVER

#### 27. Wed 4/27: The Expulsion of 1492

- Excerpt from Ben Zion Netanyahu, *Origins of the Inquisition* (Sakai)
- “Charter of Expulsion of the Jews” (CP, 130-132)
- Jewish Account of the Expulsion (CP, 124-125)

## 28. Mon 5/2: Conclusions and Review

**FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 10, 12-3 p.m.**

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Attendance and Participation: 10% of your grade.
  - Attendance will be taken at every class.
  - More than 3 unexcused absences will lower your grade by one letter (e.g., A to B). In order to excuse an absence: e-mail instructor in advance and/or bring documentation (e.g. doctor's note) to next class.
  - You are responsible for all of the material that is covered in lecture, some of which will *not* correspond to the readings. If you arrive late, leave early, or miss a class, *it is your responsibility to get the notes from a classmate.*
  - In addition to being expected to attend class, you are strongly encouraged to participate in class: ask questions and share your reactions. It goes without saying that quality, and not quantity, is what counts.
  - *If the instructor notices that you text-message, pass notes, surf the internet, talk to your neighbor, or read other materials during class, your grade will suffer.*
  
- Reading:
  - The assigned reading is mandatory. *You may be tested on material that appears in the reading and was not mentioned in lecture.*
  - You are responsible for bringing assigned primary sources to class – whether this means printing material from Sakai or an on-line Bible or bringing your Bible or coursepack.
  - You are very strongly encouraged to take good notes on class discussions of readings.
  
- Two papers (4-5 pages):
  - These will involve the careful analysis of primary sources.
  - *Late work will be penalized 1 full grade (i.e., B to C) for every day it is late.*
  - Spelling, grammar, and presentation all count. A paper that has not been carefully proofread or that is sloppy in any way will not receive an 'A'.
  - Papers **MUST** adhere to the following format:
    - 12 pt. Times or Times New Roman font
    - Double spaced
    - 1 or 1.25 inch margins
    - No extra spaces between paragraphs
    - Single-spaced headings
    - Pages **MUST** be numbered
    - Paper must have a title
    - No separate cover page
    - Double-sided printing is OK
  - In addition, papers must adhere to guidelines listed on 'how to write a good history paper' (Sakai)

- Midterm and final:
  - These may include a map section, fill-in-the-blanks with key terms, short answers, passage identifications, and essays.
  - You will be tested on lecture material *as well as on all assigned readings*.
  - The final will be cumulative.
- Pop Quizzes:
  - The instructor reserves the right to administer pop quizzes on assigned readings.
- Grading policy:
  - If you believe an error has been made in grading your work, please bring it to the instructor's attention, and she will review the situation. Once it has been verified that no error has been made, **GRADES ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE**.
  - Be advised that 'A's are reserved for truly excellent work.
  - Work that is serious and solid, but not exceptional, earns a B or B+.
  - Letter grades are assigned as follows: A = 90 and above; B+ = 87-89; B = 80-86; C+ = 77-79; C = 70-76; D = 60-69; F = 59 and below

**PLEASE NOTE:**

- Class announcements (ex: changes in assignment, cancellation of class) will be sent to your Eden accounts. *Be sure to check your Eden accounts regularly.*
- You may *not* record lectures unless you have documented special learning needs *and* permission from the instructor.
- Spelling always counts.
- The History Department at Rutgers has established a set of guidelines setting forth the department's policy on appropriate classroom etiquette. If you engage in any kind of rude and inappropriate behavior, the instructor will ask you to leave the classroom and you will be marked absent. *The second time you are asked you to leave, the instructor will contact your dean.*
- Any student who cheats on a quiz or exam or who fails to properly cite all sources consulted in preparing written assignments, *including material found on the internet*, will be subject to the severe penalties mandated by University regulations, which include suspension from the university and a permanent record on your transcript. For details see: <http://teachx.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html>
- There will be absolutely no make-up exams. *Check and mark your calendars to make sure you will not have a conflict.*