

**UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA**

**HISTORY 140-001**

**FALL, 2006 T-TH 1:30-2:20 p.m.**

**A HISTORY OF JEWISH CIVILIZATION: FROM LATE ANTIQUITY TO  
THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY**

**INSTRUCTOR:** David B. Ruderman      **OFFICE HOURS:** Tues. 2:30-4:00 p.m.  
**OFFICE:** College Hall 306b and CAJS, 420 Walnut      **PHONE:** (215) 238-1290  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course is designed as one of three basic introductory courses in Jewish history, presenting a preliminary account of the field to students not majoring in the subject or to those who seek a broad introduction before electing more advanced or specialized courses. No prior background is assumed; all readings are in English.

**COURSE FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS**

Regular attendance at all class meetings is essential. Required readings should be completed prior to class meetings. The class meetings on Tuesday and Thursday will generally follow a lecture format. The lectures are intended to introduce, clarify, supplement, or argue with the readings but not to duplicate them. The third hour of section meetings with Benjamin Fisher will be devoted to discussion, to further evaluation of critical issues raised in the lectures, and to close reading of assigned primary or secondary readings.

The course requires a mid-term examination and final [which essentially covers the second half of the course]. In addition two small papers [5-7 pages in length] are due on November 2 and December 7. The first should be a close analysis of a primary source [or group of related sources] in its [their] historical context. The second should be a critical review of a major secondary work in Jewish history not assigned as required reading [A suggested list of such works will be handed out later in the semester]. Students are expected to complete only the required assignments. Some additional bibliography will be offered for optional reading. You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with some of these works as well.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** [To be purchased at Penn Book Center, 34<sup>th</sup> street and Samson]  
David Biale, ed. Cultures of the Jews  
Norman Stillman, The Jews of Arab Lands  
W. H. Hallo, D. B. Ruderman, M. Stanislawski, Heritage: Civilization and the Jews  
Source Reader  
Jeremy Cohen, ed., Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict [This is now out of print but several copies will be put on reserve]  
Jacob Katz, Exclusiveness and Tolerance [If you want to read this on reserve and not purchase it, several copies will be available]

Other required reading available as a xeroxed packet for purchase from Campus Copy Center

**RECOMMENDED:**

Robert Chazan, Church, State and Jew in the Middle Ages [A source reader]  
Kenneth Stow, Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe [a new survey and interpretation]  
Cohen, Mark, Under Crescent and Cross: the Jews in the Middle Ages [a recent comparison of Jews under Islam and Christendom]  
Chazan, Robert, The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom [a new synthesis soon to appear]  
Robert Brody, The Gaonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture [a recent synthesis]  
Bernard Lewis, The Jews of Islam [An eloquent and useful overview]  
Eli Barnavi, Miriam Eliav-Feldon, A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People [good maps and illustrations] [**highly recommended**]

**SOME OTHER USEFUL REFERENCE WORKS:**

Robert Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought [a basic introduction to Jewish history and thought in one volume]  
H.H. Ben Sasson, et al, A History of the Jewish People [section on medieval period]  
Haim Beinart, The Atlas of Medieval Jewish History  
Thérèse and Mendel Metzger, Jewish Life in the Middle Ages: Illustrated Hebrew Manuscripts of the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Centuries  
Israel Abrahams, Jewish Life in the Middle Ages [classic work written some 90 years ago]  
Jacob Marcus, The Jew in the Medieval World [source reader]  
Bibliographical Essays in Medieval Jewish Studies, especially essays by Mark Cohen, Ivan Marcus, Kenneth Stow [Somewhat out of date]  
S.D. Goitein, Jews and Arabs [a standard introductory survey]  
H. Beinart, ed., The Sephardic Legacy [synthetic essays]  
D. Ruderman, ed. Essential Papers on Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy  
J. Israel, European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism 1500-1750

**September 7:**

Course Introduction: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Study of Jewish History

**September 12:**

The Rabbinic Legacy: Jewish Civilization Prior to the Rise of Islam

**REQUIRED:**

Isaiah Gafni, "Babylonian Rabbinic Culture," in Biale, pp. 223-65

**September 14:** Judaism and Islamic Origins:

The Political, Social, and Economic Position of Jews to the Tenth Century

**September 19:** The Gaonic Age: The Jewish Community of Bagdad and its Institutions; The Office of the Exilarch; the Academies; the Cairo Genizah

REQUIRED

S.D. Goitein, A MEDITERRANEAN SOCIETY, I, pp. 1-28 [You might also want to read A. Udovitch's forward to vol. 5, pp. ix-xviii]

Reuven Firestone, "Jewish Culture in the Formative Period of Islam" in Biale, pp. 267-302

Stillman, pp. 3-53, 113-120, 149-151, 157-164

For discussion, Stillman, 171-75

**September 21:** Saadia Gaon and Bagdadian Jewry of the Tenth Century: The Karaite Schism

**September 26:** Introduction to the Philosophy of Saadia

REQUIRED:

S.W. Baron, "Saadia's Communal Activities," ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH HISTORY, pp. 95-127

Alexander Altmann, et al, THREE JEWISH PHILOSOPHERS, pp. 11-22, 25-47, 93-105

Brody, THE GEONIM OF BABYLONIA, pp. 83-99, 235-48

For discussion: Marcus, THE JEW IN THE MEDIEVAL WORLD, pp. 233-38, 287-92

**September 28:** The Rise of the Spanish Jewish Community: Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, Samuel Ibn Nagrela, The Jewish Courtier Class, The Spanish Jewish Poet and His Clientele

REQUIRED:

Stillman, pp. 53-63, 210-16, 226-28

Raymond Scheindlin, "Merchants and Intellectuals, Rabbis and Poets: Judeo-Arabic Culture in the Golden Age of Islam," Biale, pp. 313-86

For discussion: Abraham Ibn Daud, SEFER HA-QABBALAH [The Book of Tradition], ed. G.D. Cohen, pp. 63-77

**October 3-5:** Jewish Philosophy and Anti-Philosophy in Medieval Spain: Yehudah Ha-Levi and Moses Maimonides, the Maimonidean Legacy and its Critics

REQUIRED:

S. W. Baron, "Yehudah Ha-Levi: An Answer to an Historical Challenge," in ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH HISTORY, pp. 129-48

Isadore Twersky, A MAIMONIDES READER, pp. 1-29, 33-48. 64-65, 71-76, 222-27, 341-49

I. Heinemann, et al, THREE JEWISH PHILOSOPHERS, pp. 27-41, 72-75, 116-119, 126-29

**October 10-12:** a. The Emergence of the Jewish Community under Medieval Christendom: Legal, Economic, and Social Relations in Northern Europe. b. The Church and the Jews from Late Antiquity to the Crusades

**REQUIRED:**

Katz, EXCLUSIVENESS AND TOLERANCE, pp. 3-63 [read quickly]

Cohen, ESSENTIAL PAPERS, pp. 193-230

Rosemary Ruether, "Anti-Semitism and Christian Theology," in AUSCHWITZ: BEGINNING OF A NEW ERA, pp. 79-92

S.W. Baron, "The Jewish Factor in Medieval Civilization," [first published in PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF JEWISH RESEARCH 12(1942): 1-48] republished in ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH HISTORY, pp. 239-67

Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 73-82, 93-94.

**RECOMMENDED:**

Oded Irshai, "Confronting a Christian Empire: Jewish Culture in the World of Byzantium," Biale, pp. 181-221

**October 17-19:** The Crusades and Their Impact on Jewish-Christian Relations; Jewish Responses to the Crusades: The Hebrew Crusade Chronicles

**REQUIRED:**

Katz, pp. 82-92

Cohen, ESSENTIAL PAPERS, pp. 260-75, 469-83

Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 122-29, 134-36

Ivan Marcus, "A Jewish-Christian Symbiosis: The Culture of Early Ashkenaz," pp. 449-516 [to be read though Oct 21]

**October 26-31:** Types of Jewish Piety in the Medieval Christian World: Tosaphist, Pietist, Philosopher, Mystic

**REQUIRED:**

K. Stow, ALIENATED MINORITY, pp. 135-56

Katz, pp. 93-105

Isadore Twersky, "Aspects of the Social and Cultural Life of Provençal Jewry," in JEWISH SOCIETY THROUGHOUT THE AGES, ed. H.H. Ben Sasson and S. Ettinger, pp. 185-207

G. Scholem, MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM, pp. 1-39

Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 144-48

For discussion: G.D. Cohen, "Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim," in STUDIES OF THE LEO BAECK INSTITUTE, 1967, pp. 117-156

**November 2:** The Jewish Christian Debate in the Middle Ages: Paris and Barcelona

**REQUIRED:**

Katz, pp. 106-113  
Chazan, CHURCH, STATE AND JEW, pp. 265-76  
R. Chazan, DAGGERS OF FAITH, pp. 88-103  
H. Maccoby, JUDAISM ON TRIAL, pp. 153-62  
Cohen, ESSENTIAL PAPERS, pp. 484-513

**November 7:** Towards an Understanding of the Causes of Medieval Anti-Semitism in the late Middle Ages; The Popular Image of the Jew in the Christian World

**REQUIRED:**

Cohen, ESSENTIAL PAPERS, pp. 276-341  
Gavin Langmuir, "Medieval anti-Semitism," in THE HOLOCAUST; IDEOLOGY, BUREAUCRACY AND GENOCIDE, eds H. Friedlander and S. Milton, 1982, 27-36.  
Marc Saperstein, "The High Middle Ages: Violence and a Persecuting Society," in MOMENTS OF CRISIS IN JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS, pp. 14-25, 68-71  
Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 129-34

**November 9:** Some Notes on the History of the Medieval Jewish Family

**REQUIRED:**

Stow, ALIENATED MINORITY, pp. 196-209  
Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 139-43  
Judith Baskin, ed., JEWISH WOMEN IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE, pp. 94-114

**November 14:** The Spanish Inquisition and the Marrano Problem: The Expulsion from Spain and its Aftermath

**November 16-21:** Jewish Culture in Renaissance Italy; the Reformation and Counter-Reformation and their Impact on Jewish Life, the Era of the Ghetto

**REQUIRED:**

Benjamin Gampel, "A Letter to a Wayward Teacher: The Transformation of Sephardic Culture in Christian Iberia," Biale, pp. 389-447  
C. Roth, "Jewish Society in the Renaissance Environment," in H.H. Ben-Sasson and S. Ettinger, JEWISH SOCIETY THROUGHOUT THE AGES, pp. 239-50  
Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 148-76. 194-96

**RECOMMENDED:**

Elliott Horowitz, "Families and their Fortunes: The Jews of Early Modern Italy," Biale, pp. 573-636

**November 28-30:** Kabbalah and Society in the 16th Century; The Messianic Movement of Shabbetai Zevi

S. Schechter, "Safed in the Sixteenth Century in Judah Goldin, THE JEWISH EXPRESSION, pp. 258-321 [also published in S. Schechter, STUDIES IN JUDAISM, pp.231-96]

Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 180-88

G. Scholem, MAJOR TRENDS IN JEWISH MYSTICISM , pp. 287-324

M. Idel, "Religion, Thought and Attitudes: The Impact of the Expulsion on the Jews," in E. Kedourie, ed., SPAIN AND ITS JEWS, pp. 123-39

**December 5:** The Eastern European Jewish Community in the 16th-17th Centuries

REQUIRED:

Moshe Rosman, "Innovative Tradition: Jewish Culture in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth," Biale, pp. 519-70

Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 176-80, 188-94, 204-07

**December 7:** Amsterdam and the Marrano Diaspora in the 17th Century

Ruderman, HERITAGE, pp. 196-204

Yosef Kaplan, "Bom Judesmo: The Western Sephardic Diaspora," Biale, pp. 639-669

**December 11 [tentative]:** Tour of Rare Book Room of Center for Advanced Judaic Studies and Review for Final Exam