

Last updated 6 Feb 2015

JDST 212 Medieval and Early Modern Jewish History

Winter 2015

CRN 23272

TR 2:00-3:50 in Villard 300

Professor David Wacks (wacks@uoregon.edu)

Office hours in Friendly 105C, T 10-12

This class is a required course for the Major and Minor in Judaic Studies

For more information see <http://pages.uoregon.edu/jdst/degree-programs/>

This course fulfills the General Education requirement for Arts and Letters and the Multicultural requirement for Category B: Identity, Pluralism, and Tolerance.

Description: This class is intended to serve as a broad introduction to Jewish history in the medieval and early modern periods. The class will examine some of the central themes and patterns in Jewish history as we will focus on the development of the major Jewish communities both in Christian Europe and the Arab Muslim world observing the main similarities and differences between them. We will devote our attention especially to the ways in which Jewish culture and identity (collective and individual) were constructed in these various communities during the medieval and early modern periods, as well as to the relationship between Jewish and non-Jewish cultures and communities during this time.

Learning objectives: By the term end, students will be able to:

- Identify, describe and explain Jewish experiences, achievements and challenges in the medieval and early modern periods in Islam and Western Christendom.
- Explain how Jewish communities have transformed throughout time and in different places.
- Read and critically analyze primary sources and current scholarly literature, applying appropriate theoretical and methodological tools in the academic study of Judaism.
- Make an effective and valid argument in speech and writing: one that successfully establishes a premise and supports the premise with appropriate and persuasive evidence.

Texts: The following texts are available for purchase in the UO Duckstore and are on reserve at Knight Library. All other assigned readings are available in a course reader available at the UO Duckstore. Students must bring assigned texts to class.

- Cohen, Mark. *Under Crescent & Cross*. 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Cole, Peter. *Selected Poems of Shmuel Hanagid*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Modena, Leon. *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah*. Trans. Mark Cohen. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Nuland, Sherwin. *Maimonides*. New York: Nextbook/Schocken, 2005. ISBN 0805242007.
- Roth, Cecil. *Doña Gracia of the House of Nasi*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1977.
- Schama, Simon. *The Story of the Jews: Finding the Words: 1000 BC-1492 AD*. New York, NY: Ecco, 2013.

Requirements:

- 10% Attendance.** At the beginning of class students will sign an attendance sheet. Students may miss any two (2) sections for any reason. Further absences (for any reason) will deduct 3 points per absence to a total of 10 points.
- 30% Summaries of readings or reading questions** (17, lowest 4 dropped). For each class, students will complete one of the following two assignments:
- 1) **Summary:** summarize all readings (1 paragraph per reading) and pose at least one question per reading. Submit to Blackboard before class and bring printed copy to class. See rubric and model for details.
 - 2) **Reading questions:** write 5 distinct, specific questions about concepts or ideas (not factual details) covered in the readings. See Rubric for details.
- 35% Essays** (3). Three short essays (min. 600 words) explaining a single aspect of a primary text. See rubric and model for details. Submit in PDF format to Blackboard.
- 15% Film adaptation.** In working groups assigned by the instructors, students will script, produce, and film an original adaptation of a primary text from the syllabus. Submit to Blackboard in .mp4 format. See rubric for details.

Program of Studies

T 06 Jan	Intro	Schama (173-229)
R 08 Jan	Intro	Schama (230-291)
T 13 Jan	Jews in Islam: Law	Cohen (52-74); Stillman (159-161, 165-166, 167-168, 171-176, in Reader)
R 15 Jan	Jews in Islam: Economics	Cohen (88-103); Stillman (192-193, 208-209, 210-211 in Reader).
F 16 Jan	Essay 1	Topic: Analysis of one primary source text on Jews in Islam. Due on Blackboard by 5:00pm.
T 20 Jan	Islamic Sefarad	Catlos, <i>Infidel Kings</i> part I (Reader). Cole, <i>Selected Poems of Shmuel Hanagid</i> , Introduction, "On Fleeing His City," "The Apple," "The Gazelle," "the Fawn," "Where's that Coy Gazelle,"
R 22 Jan	Islamic Sefarad	Cole, <i>Selected Poems of Shmuel Hanagid</i> , "The House of Prayer," "Your Years are Sleep," "How I Helped the Wise," "Rouge in Appearance," "Take the Crystal," "Gazing through the Night," "The Child at One or Two," "I Quartered the Troops for the Night," "The Market."
T 27 Jan	Maimonides	Nuland, <i>Maimonides</i> 1-76; Maimonides, <i>Commentary on the Mishnah</i> 1-23 and 81-111 (Reader).
R 29 Jan		Conference travel - class canceled
T 03 Feb	Maimonides	Nuland, <i>Maimonides</i> 77-154; Maimonides, <i>Guide for</i>

		<i>the Perplexed</i> 184-204 (Reader)
R 05 Feb	al-Andalus	Schama (327-373); Cohen (30-52)
F 06 Feb	Essay 2	Topic: Analysis of one poem by Shmuel Hanagid or one text by Maimonides. Due on Blackboard by 5:00pm
T 10 Feb	al-Andalus	Cohen 163-194; Stillman (214-225, in Reader).
R 12 Feb	Christian Iberian and Exile	Schama (374-413); Homza, <i>The Spanish Inquisition</i> (1-26, Reader)
T 17 Feb	Italy-Ottoman	Roth, <i>Doña Gracia</i> (3-50)
R 19 Feb	Italy-Ottoman	Roth, <i>Doña Gracia</i> (51-81)
T 24 Feb	Italy-Ottoman	Roth, <i>Doña Gracia</i> (81-121)
R 26 Feb	Italy	Lisa Calevi on Venice; "Fear of Touching" (Blackboard); "Cum Nimis Absurdum" (Blackboard); Modena (3-18)
T 03 Mar	Purim in Italy	<i>Book of Esther</i> (Blackboard); Tennen, "Megillat Ester in Ottava Rima" (Reader)
R 05 Mar	Italy	Modena (19-38; 78-106); skype with Federica Francesconi
T 10 Mar	Italy	Modena (106-142).
R 12 Mar	Film Screening	Screening of student film adaptations
F 13 Mar	Essay 3	Topic: Analysis of a section of Modena's autobiography or Mordecai Dato's Esther poem. Uploaded to Blackboard by 5pm.

Tech: All electronic devices must be powered off and stowed before entering classroom. Any student operating an electronic device during class will be asked to leave.

Assignments: All assignments are to be completed individually; any evidence of collaborating with or plagiarizing from other students is considered Academic Misconduct and will be reported (see below). Late assignments will be deducted 10 points (from 100) per calendar day.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism: The University Student Conduct Code (available at conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

You must use correct MLA format in all assignments when citing sources:

<http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/citing/mla.html>

Documented Disability:

Appropriate accommodations will be provided for students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability and require accommodation, arrange to meet with the course instructor within the first two weeks of the term. The documentation of your disability must come in writing from the Disability Services in the Office of Academic Advising and Student Services. Disabilities may include (but are not limited to) neurological impairment, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, chronic medical conditions, emotional/psychological disabilities, hearing impairment, and learning disabilities. For more information on Disability Services, please see <http://ds.uoregon.edu/> or contact Hilary Gerdes, 346-1155. If you are not registered with Disability Services and would still like to share with me any limitations you may have in meeting course requirements please do not hesitate to do so.