

## *Course Syllabus*

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### **Course Information**

<i>Course Number/Section</i>	Hist 4378
<i>Course Title</i>	Topics in American History: The Jewish Experience in America
<i>Term</i>	Spring 2008
<i>Days &amp; Times</i>	Monday and Wednesday, 9:30-10:45
<i>Room</i>	CB1.110

### **Professor Contact Information**

<i>Professor</i>	Nils Roemer
<i>Office Phone</i>	972-8832769
<i>Email Address</i>	nroemer@utdallas.edu
<i>Office Location</i>	JO 5.516
<i>Office Hours</i>	By appointment

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### **Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

No prior background is assumed or required.

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### **Course Description**

The United States has often been described as an exceptionally hospitable place for Jews. We will explore the creation and evolution of American Jewish culture and investigate the impact of successive waves of migration upon the making of American Jewry. We will study the process of cultural renewal and religious reform, assimilation, anti-Semitism, American Jewish responses to the Great Depression, the Holocaust, and the interaction between Israel and American Jewish communities in the postwar period. We will pursue these issues by investigating a variety of textual, visual, and audio sources. By studying the American Jewish experience, students will gain also an important insight into the making of American history.

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### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

The course aims to introduce you to aspects of modern American Jewish cultures and to study American history from the perspective of a minority. You will learn about the American Jewish experience and the extent to which Jews have also left their mark on American society and culture. Students will discuss the variety and complexity of Jewish existence in America. They will interpret the changing political and cultural world of Jewish life and culture and study the dynamics of exclusion and inclusion. Students will develop their critical and analytical skills in assessing historical debates and sources.

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## **Required Textbooks and Materials**

Hasia R. Diner, *The Jews of the United States* (2004); ISBN-10: 0520248481  
Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), ISBN:  
0814325483

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## **Assignments & Academic Calendar**

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### **Course Requirements/Evaluations Criteria**

Attendance and class participation, three papers ranging from five to six pages, a mid-term, and a final examination.

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### **Examination**

There will be a mid-term and a final. The final will not be comprehensive.

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### **Essays**

One interpretation of a primary source, a research essay, and research project on Jews in Dallas are required. The primary source, the topic of the research essay and project will be chosen in consultation with me.

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## **Suggested Course Materials**

*Source Readers* Nancy Green ed., *Jewish Workers in the Modern Diaspora* (1998)  
Milton Hindus, *The Jewish East Side, 1881-1924* (1996)  
Abraham Karp, ed., *Golden Door to America. The Jewish Immigrant Experience* (1976)  
Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd Edition (1995)  
Isaac Metzker ed., *A Bintel Brief* (1981)  
Jacob Marcus Rader ed., *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996)

### *Histories of American Jewry*

Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (2004)  
Hasia R. Diner, *A New Promised Land: A History of Jews in America* (2003)

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## Course Schedule

### 1. Introduction (January 7)

### 2. Early America (January 9)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 13-40

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 1: 1-2, 4,6, and 11

### 3. Becoming American (January 14)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 41-67

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 2: 12-13, 16, and 18-20

### 4. Central European Immigration (January 16)

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 3: 23

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 71-111 (especially 82-88)

Avraham Barkai, *Branching Out: German-Jewish Immigration to the United States, 1820-1914* (1994), 125-190

L. Kompert, "Off to America," (1848) Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (1995), 463-65

Schapes, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875*, 141-148, 157-160, 198-200, and 252-263

Blau, Joseph L. and Salo W. Baron, *The Jews of the United States, 1790-1840*, 791-797, 802-824, and 869-874

MLK day, January 21

### 5. The Civil War (January 23)

Eli Evans Stephen V. Ash, "Civil War Exodus: The Jews and Grant's General Order No 11, *The Historian* 44 (August 1982), 505-523

Sarna, *American Judaism*, 112-134

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 3: 24 and 25: I

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 162-164

Schapes, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875*, 428-476, and 481-509

### 6. Religious Modernization and Americanization (January 28)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 112-134

Michael Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (1988), 225-295

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 2: 17, and 19

"The Pittsburgh Platform" (1885) in *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (1995), 468-69

#### 7. Across the Atlantic: Eastern European Immigrant Culture (January 30)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 88-99

Jonathan Frankel, "The Crisis of 1881-82 as a Turning Point in Modern Jewish History,"

David Berger, ed., *The Legacy of Jewish Migration: 1881 and Its Impact* (1983), 9-22

Schapes, *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875*, 538-539, 543-550, and 550-552

Allon Schoener, *Portal to America: The Lower East Side, 1870-1925*, 53-68 and 101-140

#### 8. Jews in New York (February 4)

Alan M. Kraut, *Silent Travelers. Germs. Genes, and the 'Immigrant Menace'* (1994), 136-165

Abraham Cahan: "The Russian Jew in America"

(<http://tenant.net/Community/LES/cahan5.html>)

Ida M. Van Etten: "Russian Jews as Desirable Immigrants"

(<http://tenant.net/Community/LES/vanetten.html>)

William Dean Howells: "An East Side Ramble"

(<http://tenant.net/Community/LES/howells1.html>)

Jacob Riis: "The Jews of New York" (<http://tenant.net/Community/LES/jacob4.html>)

#### 9. Into the Melting Pot (February 6)

Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*, 159-175

Paula Hyman: "Gender and the Immigrant Jewish Experience in the United States,"

Judith Baskin, ed., *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective* (1991), 222-242

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 4: 36

Abraham Cahan: "Yekl – A Tale of the New York Ghetto"

(<http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/cahan/yeekl.htm>)

Cahan: "The Imported Bridegroom" (<http://www.ibiblio.org/eldritch/cahan/imbq.htm>)

No Class February 11

No Class February 13

Primary Source Interpretation is Due (February 18)

#### 10. Brothers in Arms (February 18)

Irving Howe *World of Our Fathers*, 287-324 (2005), 69-124

Susan A. Glenn *Daughters of the Shtetl* (1990), 167-206

Tony Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts: Yiddish Socialists in New York* (2005), selection

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 4: 37; I and III, 41

11. Midterm (February 20)

12. Interwar Years (February 25)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 205-215, 222-258

Leo Ribuffo, "Henry Ford and the International Jew," *American Jewish History* 69 (June 1980), 437-477

Jonathan D. Sarna, "American Anti-Semitism," *History and Hate*, ed. David Berger, 115-128

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), part 5: 44, I

Henry Ford, "The International Jew: The World's Problem," (1920) *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, ed. Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz (1995), 512-14

13. Culture and Acculturation (February 27)

Andrew Heinze, *Adapting to Abundance: Mass Consumption. Jewish Immigrants and the Search for American Identity* (1990), 89-133

Beth Wenger, *New York Jews and the Great Depression* (1996), 197-206

Bernard F. Dick: "Citizen Zukor: Pioneer and Power Monger," *Variety*, July 15, 2002

Irving Saposnik: "Jolson, Judy, and Jewish Memory," *Judaism* (Fall 2001)

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), Part V: 47#II

*Yiddish Radio Project: "Yiddish Melodies In Swing"*

(<http://www.yiddishradioproject.org/exhibits/ymis/>)

14. Swinging America (March 3)

Neal Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (1989), 1-7 and 120-150

Michael Alexander, *Jazz Age Jews* (2001), 167-179

Film: *Jazz Singer*

15. Jews in Dallas (March 5)

Class Presentations (Group A)

Spring Break, March 10-15

16. World War II and the Holocaust (March 17)

Diner, Hasia R., *The Jews of the United States*, 215-222

Laurel Leff, "A Tragic 'Fight in the Family' - The *New York Times*, Reform Judaism and the Holocaust," *American Jewish History* 88.1 (2000), 3-51

Rafael Medoff, "'Our Leaders Cannot Be Moved' - A Zionist Emissary's Reports on American Jewish Responses to the Holocaust in the Summer of 1943," *American Jewish*

*History* 88:1 (2000), 115-126

David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945* (1998), 288-307, and 311-330

Leonard Dinnerstein, *Antisemitism in America* (1994), 128-149

#### 17. Remembering the Holocaust (March 19)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 261-265

Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999), 85-123

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), Part V: 44 # III; 53 #I and Part VI: 63 #II - IV

“Reunion,” *Yiddish Radio Project* (<http://yiddishradioproject.org/exhibits/reunion/>)

‘Reunion’ with Siegbert Freiberg”

“Other Radio Broadcasts about the Holocaust”

#### 18. Antisemitism in America (March 24)

Robert Rockaway and Arnon Gutfeld: “Demonic Images of the Jew in the 19th Century United States,” *American Jewish History* 89.4 (2002): 355-381

Glen Jeansonne and David Luhrssen: “Minister of Hate: Gerald L. K. Smith,” *History Today*, December 2001

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), Part IV: 43); Part V: 44 # II; and 45 #II, IV

Film: *Gentlemen’s Agreement*

#### 19. Israel’s Power (March 26)

Lawrence Grossman, “Transformation through Crisis – The American Jewish Committee and the Six-Day War,” *American Jewish History* 86.1 (1998) 27-54

Earl Raab, “The Jewish Community and American Public Policy,” *Judaism* (Fall 2001), 465–478

Marcus, *The Jew in the American World: A Source Book* (1996), V: 49 #I; 53 #II, III; Part VI: 63 #I, V

#### 20. Suburbs and the Civil Rights Movement (March 31)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 259-304

Sarna, *American Judaism*, 306-355

Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in America: From Centuries of an Uneasy Encounter: A History* (1989), 316-333 and 350-376

#### 21. American Jewish Literature (April 2)

Isaac Bashevis Singer, "Gimpel the Fool," "The Little Shoemakers," "Short Friday," "A Friend of Kafka," "A Day in Coney Island," "Old Love," *Collected Stories* (2004), 3-14, 38-56, 188-197, 277-286, 372-380, 421-433

Phillip Roth, "The Conversion of the Jews," Emanuel Litvinoff, ed., *The Penguin Book of Jewish Short Stories*, 189-205

Bernard Malamud, "Man in the Drawer," Emanuel Litvinoff, ed., *The Penguin Book of Jewish Short Stories*, 297-342

Rebecca Goldstein, "The Legacy of Raizel Kaidesh," Joyce Antler, ed., *America and I: Short Stories by Jewish American Women*, 281-289

## 22. Jews in Dallas (April 7)

Class Presentations (Group B)

## 23. Nostalgia for the Past (April 9)

Beth S. Wenger, "Memory As Identity: The Invention of the Lower East Side," *American Jewish History* 85:1 (1997) 3-27

Stephen J. Whitfield, "Our American Jewish Heritage: The Hollywood Version," *American Jewish History* 75 (March 1986): 322-340

Matthew Frye Jacobson: "A Ghetto To Look Back To: *World of Our Fathers*, Ethnic Revival, and the Arc of Multiculturalism," *American Jewish History* 88.4 (2000) 463-474

Cynthia Ozick, "Envy: or Yiddish in America," John Felstiner, ed. *Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology* (2001), 858-896

Film: *Fiddler on the Roof*

Research essay is due (April 14)

## 24. Memory Lane (April 14)

Film: *Hester Street*

## 25. American Hasidism (April 16)

Diner, *The Jews of the United States*, 310-314

Jerome Mintz, *Hasidic People: A Place in the New World* (1992), 27-50

Sue Fishkoff *The Rebbe's Army: Inside the World of Chabad-Lubavitch* (2003), 9-32 and 46-65

Film: *Fires in the Mirror*

## 26. Jews and the Popular American Culture (April 21)

Stephen Whitfield, "Declarations of Independence: American Jewish Culture in the Twentieth Century," David Biale, ed. *Cultures of the Jews* (2002) 3: 1099-1114

Josh Kun: "The Yiddish Are Coming – Mickey Katz, Antic-Semitism, and the Sound of Jewish Difference," *American Jewish History* 87.4 (1999), 343-374

Martha A. Ravits, "The Jewish Mother: Comedy and Controversy in American Popular Culture," *Melus* (March 22, 2000), 3-31

Irving Saposnik, " 'Joe and Paul' and Other Yiddish-American Varieties," *Judaism* (Fall 2000), 437-448

Internet

*Yiddish Radio Project*: "Commercials On Yiddish Radio: 'Joe and Paul – the Barton Brothers' "

(<http://www.yiddishradioproject.org/exhibits/commercials/>)

Philip Roth: *Portnoy's Complaint* (Audio-excerpt - 1969)

(<http://www.salon.com/audio/2000/10/05/roth/>)

27. Final Exam (April 23)

28. Conclusion (April 28)

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### **Grading Policy**

Two papers (each 20%), two exams (each 20%), and one project on Jews in Dallas (20%). Grades are based on clarity, analysis, understanding of the subject, and creativity. In addition, you must comply with university policies regarding dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism.

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### **Course & Instructor Policies**

Attendance and class participation. *Make-up exams are possible only in special cases.* Late papers will lose 10% of their value for every day they are late – after ten days the grade is 0.

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### **Technical Support**

If you experience any problems with your UTD account you may send an email to: [assist@utdallas.edu](mailto:assist@utdallas.edu) or call the UTD Computer Helpdesk at 972-883-2911.

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### **Field Trip Policies**

#### **Off-campus Instruction and Course Activities**

*Off-campus, out-of-state, and foreign instruction and activities are subject to state law and University policies and procedures regarding travel and risk-related*



*activities. Information regarding these rules and regulations may be found at the website address [http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel\\_Risk\\_Activities.htm](http://www.utdallas.edu/BusinessAffairs/Travel_Risk_Activities.htm). Additional information is available from the office of the school dean. Below is a description of any travel and/or risk-related activity associated with this course.*

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## **Student Conduct & Discipline**

The University of Texas System and The University of Texas at Dallas have rules and regulations for the orderly and efficient conduct of their business. It is the responsibility of each student and each student organization to be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations which govern student conduct and activities. General information on student conduct and discipline is contained in the UTD printed publication, *A to Z Guide*, which is provided to all registered students each academic year.

The University of Texas at Dallas administers student discipline within the procedures of recognized and established due process. Procedures are defined and described in the *Rules and Regulations, Series 50000, Board of Regents, The University of Texas System*, and in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*. Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations (SU 1.602, 972/883-6391) and online at <http://www.utdallas.edu/judicialaffairs/UTDJudicialAffairs-HOPV.html>

A student at the university neither loses the rights nor escapes the responsibilities of citizenship. He or she is expected to obey federal, state, and local laws as well as the Regents' Rules, university regulations, and administrative rules. Students are subject to discipline for violating the standards of conduct whether such conduct takes place on or off campus, or whether civil or criminal penalties are also imposed for such conduct.

## **Academic Integrity**

The faculty expects from its students a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrate a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work.

Scholastic Dishonesty, any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are

attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

Plagiarism, especially from the web, from portions of papers for other classes, and from any other source is unacceptable and will be dealt with under the university's policy on plagiarism (see general catalog for details). This course will use the resources of turnitin.com, which searches the web for possible plagiarism and is over 90% effective.

### **Copyright Notice**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted materials, including music and software. Copying, displaying, reproducing, or distributing copyrighted works may infringe the copyright owner's rights and such infringement is subject to appropriate disciplinary action as well as criminal penalties provided by federal law. Usage of such material is only appropriate when that usage constitutes "fair use" under the Copyright Act. As a UT Dallas student, you are required to follow the institution's copyright policy (Policy Memorandum 84-I.3-46). For more information about the fair use exemption, see

<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/intellectualproperty/copypol2.htm>

### **Email Use**

The University of Texas at Dallas recognizes the value and efficiency of communication between faculty/staff and students through electronic mail. At the same time, email raises some issues concerning security and the identity of each individual in an email exchange. The university encourages all official student email correspondence be sent only to a student's U.T. Dallas email address and that faculty and staff consider email from students official only if it originates from a UTD student account. This allows the university to maintain a high degree of confidence in the identity of all individual corresponding and the security of the transmitted information. UTD furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The Department of Information Resources at U.T. Dallas provides a method for students to have their U.T. Dallas mail forwarded to other accounts.

### **Withdrawal from Class**

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, I cannot drop or withdraw any student. You must do the proper paperwork to

ensure that you will not receive a final grade of "F" in a course if you choose not to attend the class once you are enrolled.

### **Student Grievance Procedures**

Procedures for student grievances are found in Title V, Rules on Student Services and Activities, of the university's *Handbook of Operating Procedures*.

In attempting to resolve any student grievance regarding grades, evaluations, or other fulfillments of academic responsibility, it is the obligation of the student first to make a serious effort to resolve the matter with the instructor, supervisor, administrator, or committee with whom the grievance originates (hereafter called "the respondent"). Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance must be submitted in writing to the respondent with a copy of the respondent's School Dean. If the matter is not resolved by the written response provided by the respondent, the student may submit a written appeal to the School Dean. If the grievance is not resolved by the School Dean's decision, the student may make a written appeal to the Dean of Graduate or Undergraduate Education, and the dean will appoint and convene an Academic Appeals Panel. The decision of the Academic Appeals Panel is final. The results of the academic appeals process will be distributed to all involved parties.

Copies of these rules and regulations are available to students in the Office of the Dean of Students, where staff members are available to assist students in interpreting the rules and regulations.

### **Incomplete Grade Policy**

As per university policy, incomplete grades will be granted only for work unavoidably missed at the semester's end and only if 70% of the course work has been completed. An incomplete grade must be resolved within eight (8) weeks from the first day of the subsequent long semester. If the required work to complete the course and to remove the incomplete grade is not submitted by the specified deadline, the incomplete grade is changed automatically to a grade of F.

### **Disability Services**

The goal of Disability Services is to provide students with disabilities educational opportunities equal to those of their non-disabled peers. Disability Services is located in room 1.610 in the Student Union. Office hours are Monday and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.; Tuesday and Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; and Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The contact information for the Office of Disability Services is:  
The University of Texas at Dallas, SU 22

PO Box 830688  
Richardson, Texas 75083-0688  
(972) 883-2098 (voice or TTY)  
[disabilityservice@utdallas.edu](mailto:disabilityservice@utdallas.edu)

If you anticipate issues related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with the Coordinator of Disability Services. The Coordinator is available to discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that formal, disability-related accommodations are necessary, it is very important that you be registered with Disability Services to notify them of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. Disability Services can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her professors of the need for such an accommodation. Disability Services provides students with letters to present to faculty members to verify that the student has a disability and needs accommodations. Individuals requiring special accommodation should contact the professor after class or during office hours.

### **Religious Holy Days**

The University of Texas at Dallas will excuse a student from class or other required activities for the travel to and observance of a religious holy day for a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property tax under Section 11.20, Tax Code, Texas Code Annotated.

The student is encouraged to notify the instructor or activity sponsor as soon as possible regarding the absence, preferably in advance of the assignment. The student, so excused, will be allowed to take the exam or complete the assignment within a reasonable time after the absence: a period equal to the length of the absence, up to a maximum of one week. A student who notifies the instructor and completes any missed exam or assignment may not be penalized for the absence. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

If a student or an instructor disagrees about the nature of the absence [i.e., for the purpose of observing a religious holy day] or if there is similar disagreement about whether the student has been given a reasonable time to complete any missed assignments or examinations, either the student or the instructor may request a ruling from the chief executive officer of the institution, or his or her designee. The chief executive officer or designee must take into account the legislative intent of TEC 51.911(b), and the student and instructor will abide by the decision of the chief executive officer or designee.

***These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***

