

AMERICAN JUDAISM: THOUGHT & CULTURE
REL/JSP 338

Spring 2014
T/TH 12:30-1:150, 205 HL

Zachary Braiterman

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PAGES CAFE, LIBRARY

Syllabus

In this course, students explore the relation between culture and religion across a diverse range of American Jews and Jewish communities. Particular attention is paid to the process of acculturation and assimilation and to the reinvention of Judaism. Interdisciplinary in method, we look at religious thought, history, sociology, journalism, politics, literature, and film in order to identify and assess formative forces shaping American Judaism and Jewish culture.

Course Requirements:

- reading, class attendance, & class participation
- weekly written critiques (due every Tuesday) (250 words max!) (counts as pass/fail)
- 1 short paper (5 pages)
- take home class final paper (10-12 pages)

Please note:

NO cellphones, computers, ipads or other electronic devices will be permitted in class.
All examinations will need to be uploaded to Turnitin, an online anti-plagiarism program

Required texts (available at bookstore):

- Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States*
- Abraham Heschel, *Man is Not Alone*
- Alfred Kazin, *A Walker in the City*
- Lis Harris, *Holy Days*
- Joseph Soloveitchik, *Lonely Man of Faith*
- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath*
- Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*
- A course reader, available at The Copy Center @ Marshall Sq. Mall (reader #1003)

Readings:

INTRODUCTION

1/14 Introduction to course

IMMIGRATION & IMMIGRANTS

1/16 Diner, chp.3. Abraham Cahan. *The Rise of David Levinsky* p.1-65 in Course Reader

1/21 Abraham Cahan p.93-111 in Course Reader. Steven Brumberg. *Going to America. Going to School* in Course Reader

THE "SECOND" GENERATION"

1/23 Kazin, *Walker in the City*

1/28 Kazin, *Walker in the City*

1/30 Diner, pp.222-258;. Mordecai Kaplan. Judaism as a Civilization p.108-25, 151-9, in Course Reader.

2/4 Mordecai Kaplan. Judaism as a Civilization p. 209-24, 173-85, 431-59 in Course Reader

THE "THIRD GENERATION"

2/6 Diner, chp.7

2/11 American synagogue architecture, see selections from Louis Kahn

2/13 Abraham Joshua Heschel. *Man is Not Alone*. Chapters 1, 3, 7, 8, 9

2/18 Heschel. *Man is Not Alone*. Chapters 23-26

2/20 Soloveitchik *Lonely Man of Faith*

SHABBAT

2/25 Kaplan. *The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion* in Course Reader

2/27 Heschel. *The Sabbath* in Course Reader

VICARIOUS JUDAISM

3/4 The Holocaust: selections from Laura Levett, *American Jewish Loss after the Holocaust* in COURSE READER

3/6 Diner, pp.321-330; The State of Israel: Peter Beinart TBA

*** MIDTERM PAPER DUE ***

NEGOTIATING DIFFERENGE IN AMERICA

3/18 Cynthia Ozick, "Yiddish or Envy in America," Philip Roth "Eli the Fanatic," and Grace Paley, "The Loudest Voice" in Course Reader

3/20 Diner, pp. 334-42; Blacks and Jews: Baldwin, Podhertz, West, Gates, hooks, and Eisen in Course Reader

HASIDISM AND "TRADITION"

- 3/25 Diner, pp.305-18; Lis Harris. *Holy Days*
- 3/27 Lis Harris. *Holy Days*
- 4/1 Haym Soloveitchik, "Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy" in COURSE READER

FEMINISM

- 4/3 Diner, pp. 350-8; Ozick and Plaskow from *On Being a Jewish Feminist* and Marcia Falk, "Notes on Composing New Blessings" in COURSE READER
- 4/8 Blu Greenberg, selection from *Women and Judaism* in COURSE READER and David Hartman, selections from *A Living Covenant* in COURSE READER
- 4/10 Rachel Adler, selections from *Engendering Judaism* in COURSE READER
- 4/15 NO CLASS: PASSOVER

JEWISH ART (AND RITUAL)

- 4/17 selections from *Too Jewish* in COURSE READER
- 4/22 Arnild Eiesn, "Leviticus" in COURSE READER
- 4/24 Kushner, *Angels in America*
- 4/29 Kushner, *Angels in America*

FINAL PAPER DUE LAST DAY OF EXAMS BY EMAIL