INTRODUCTION
TO JEWISH CIVILIZATIONS

HJCS 276 / JUDAIC STUDIES 205
MON 3:00-5:00 P.M. – WED 3:00-4:00 P.M.

269 DENNISON

INSTRUCTOR: GABRIELE BOCCACCINI

GRAD. INSTRUCTOR: RAMI KIMCHI

SYLLABUS: www.umich.edu/~gbocca/syllabi.htm

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

WINTER 2003
PART 1 – BEGINNINGS
(Text-book: ch. 1, pp. 3-51)

(a) Mon Jan 6 – Introduction to the Course (Gabriele Boccaccini)
Movies: « The Ten Commandments » (Cecil De Mille, 1923)
« The Ten Commandments » (Cecil De Mille, 1956)
« The Prince of Egypt » (Brenda Chapman, 1998)
The three fictional movies on the life of Moses show how the biblical story of the Exodus adapts to different times, capturing the imagination of three different generations. The story turns from the miraculous saga to the national drama, from the religious to the secular. But it is the character of Moses who undergoes the most amazing mutation, rejuvenating from the old prophet of miracles of the 1920s, to the masculine and energetic leader (Charles Heston) of the 1950s, to the compassionate and democratic youngster of the 1990s.

(b) Wed Jan 8 - Lecture: “The Origins of Israel: A Scholarly View” (Gabriele Boccaccini)
(c) Discussion sessions: “Heritage: The Power of the Word” (Doc)

PART 2 – THE MAKING OF THE DIASPORA
(Text-book: ch 2, pp 53-85)

(a-b) Mon Jan 13 – Movie : “The Eighth Day” (Yehuda Wurtzel, 1989, 23m)
During the religious persecution of Antiochus IV in 167 BCE, a mother summons a Maccabee physician to circumcise her son. The father, a Hellenized Jew named Micha, forbids the ceremony. Spotted by soldiers, the family hides overnight with the Maccabees. There, during that night, Micha must decide whether or not to bind his son to his people.

Lectures: “Second Temple Judaism” (Gabriele Boccaccini)
“Rabbinic Judaism” (Yaron Eliav)
(c) Discussion sessions: “Heritage: The Shaping of Tradition” (Doc)

PART 3 – A REJECTED PEOPLE
(Text-book: ch 3, pp 87-139)

Public theological debates, or “disputations” were frequently arranged in the Middle Ages between Christian and Jewish theologians to convince the Jews to convert. One of the most famous of these debates took place in Spain before King James of Aragon in Barcelona in 1263 between the monk Pablo Christiani (himself a Jew converted to Christianity) and Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (a leading Jewish philosopher and cabbalist). The Disputation recreates the extraordinary exchange, which brought to light the basic differences between the two religions.

[ Mon Jan 20 – Martin Luther King Day – no class ]
(b) Wed Jan 22 – Lecture: “Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages” (Stefanie Siegmund)
(c) Discussion sessions: “Heritage: The Crucible of Europe” (Doc)
(a) Mon Jan 27 – Movie: “The Golem” (Paul Wegener, 1920, 117m)
Atmospheric drama recreates the legend of the Golem, a hulking monster-like creature made from clay by Rabbi Loew in 16th century Prague to defend the Jews in the ghetto against pogroms. Complications arise, however, when the monster rebels against his creator, then falls in love with the Rabbi's daughter. Directed, written by and starring Paul Wegener. Photographed by Karl Freund. Silent with English title cards and musical accompaniment

(b) Wed Jan 29 – Lecture: “The World of Jewish Medieval Mysticism” (Elliott Ginsberg)
(c) Discussion sessions: “Heritage: Search for Deliverance” (Doc)

PART 4 – INTO THE MODERN WORLD
(Text-book: ch 5, pp 199-253)

(a) Mon Feb 3 – Movie: “Prisoner of Honor” (Ken Russell, 1991, 115m)
In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French artillery, was convicted of betraying military secrets and sentenced to life imprisonment. Four years later, the evidence used in his trial was exposed as a forgery, but it was not until 1906 that Dreyfus was exonerated. The case focused world attention on antisemitism in an enlightened democratic nation. *Prisoner of Honor* dramatizes the reopening of the case by Col. Georges Picquart (played by Richard Dreyfuss), the new head of Counterintelligence, whose code of honor is stronger than his personal distaste for Jews.

(b) Wed Feb 5 – Lecture: “Emancipation, Acculturation, Secularization” (Todd Endelman)
(c) Discussion Sessions: “Heritage: Roads from the Ghetto” (Doc)

(a) Mon Feb 10 – Movie: “The Jazz Singer” (Alan Crosland, 1927, 89m)
*The Jazz Singer* was the first feature film to utilize synchronous sound. In a quasi autobiographical story, the famous Jewish Jazz singer Al Jolson plays Jackie Rabinowitz, a young man who adores jazz—“the sacred music” of the new America. But Jackie’s intense desire to sing jazz conflicts with his father’s wish that his son follow in his footsteps as a cantor. With audiences clamoring for his talent, Jackie must choose between honoring his parents (and his Jewish religious culture) and the American dream. Based on the play by Samson Raphelson.

(c) Discussion Sessions: “Heritage: The Golden Land” (Doc)

[ Thursday Feb 13, 7:30-9:00pm – Midterm ]

(a) Mon Feb 17 – Movie: “Ivan and Abraham” (Yolande Zauberman, 1993, 105m)
Tale of flight and friendship set in a 1930s Polish shtetl. Abraham, a volatile Jewish boy, and Ivan, an older Christian boy, are inseparable friends. As religious and political tensions mount, Abraham’s grandfather forbids him to see Ivan, and the boys flee to the vast and perilous countryside. In Yiddish, Polish, Russian and Gypsy dialect with English subtitles.

(b) Wed Feb 19 – Lecture: “Processes of Secularization in Eastern European Jewry” (Mikhail Krutikov) (c) Discussion Sessions: “Image Before My Eyes” (Doc)

[ Winter Recess: no classes ]
PART 5 – THE DARKEST HOUR
(Text-book, ch 6, pp 255-301)

(a) Mon Mar 03 – Movie: “Der ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)” (Fritz Hippler, 1940, 68m)
Perhaps the most infamous movie in the history of cinema. An anti-semitic propaganda film produced in 1940 by the German Nazi party, with the goal to “prepare” their own public opinion to the most radical anti-Jewish laws and ultimately to the Holocaust. Interprets Jewish life and history from the viewpoint of Nazi ideology. In German with English subtitles.
Lecture: “The Holocaust” (Mitchell Hart)
(b) Wed Mar 05 – Lecture: “The Lost World of Yiddish Culture and Civilization” (Vera Szabo)
(c) Discussion Sessions: “Heritage: Out of the Ashes (II)”

(a) Mon Mar 10 – Movie: “Border Street” (Aleksander Ford, 1948, 122m)
Border Street, one of the first post-war films to depict the Holocaust, captures the fervor and terror of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, as seen through the eyes of four youths. Bronek and Wladek are gentile who consider the occupation an affront to their Polish heritage. For Jews David and Jadzia, fighting back is their only choice. In Polish with English subtitles.
(-) Mon Mar 10 (at 7:30pm, Michigan League Ballroom) = Special Session: “The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Jewish Context of Early Christianity” (Lawrence Schiffman, New York University)
(b) Wed Mar 12 – Lecture: “The Rise of Zionism” (Mark Tessler)
(c) Discussion Sessions: “Heritage: Out of the Ashes” (Doc)

(a) Mon Mar 17 – Movie: “Au revoir, les enfants” (Louis Malle, 1987, 103m)
During the Nazi occupation of Europe, local populations responded to actions against the Jews by collaborating, rescuing, or standing by. All these attitudes are captured in Au revoir, les enfants, Louis Malle’s autobiographical story of the year 1944, when the headmaster of his Catholic boarding school decided to shield several Jewish children in the midst of Nazi-occupied France. One of the Catholic boys overcomes his prejudices to become friend with one of the Jewish boys. The story of tolerance and friendship unfolds at a deliberate pace, leading up to an emotionally devastating finale. In French with English subtitles.
(c) Discussion Sessions: “Weapons of the Spirit” (Doc)

PART 6 – “TO BE A FREE NATION…”
(Text-book: ch 7, pp 303-353)

(a) Mon Mar 24 – Movie: “The Search” (Fred Zinnemann, 1948, 105m)
Poignant drama of American soldier (a young Montgomery Clift) caring for concentration camp survivor in postwar Berlin, while the boy’s mother desperately searches all Displaced Person’s Camps for him. Beautifully acted and directed, with astonishing views of ruined postwar Germany. Won a Best Story Academy Award and a special prize for Ivan Jandl for outstanding juvenile performance. The first American movie on the Holocaust is still considered by critics one of the best ever made on the subject.
(b) Wed Mar 26 – Lecture: “Zionism and Post-Zionism” (Rami Zimchi)
(c) Discussion Sessions: “The Long Way Home” (Doc)
Mon Mar 31 – Movie: “Cinema Egypt” (Rami Kimchi, 2001)

*Cinema Egypt* portrays the experience of Sephardic Jews in the 20th century through the life story of Henriette Azar (73). Henriette, mother of director Rami Kimchi, having left an Egyptian village for Alexandria as a young girl, immigrated to Israel at 24. The film is interspersed with scenes from Egyptian classical fiction film “Leila the Village Girl” (Egypt, 1941), by the Jewish Egyptian filmmaker, Togo Mizrahi. These clips reflect Egyptian life of Henriette’s time and emphasize the artistic collaboration between Jews and Arabs with Egyptian culture.

Wed Apr 2 – Lecture: “Jews in Eastern Europe after WW2” (Mikhail Krutikov)
(c) Discussion Sessions: “At The Crossroad” (Doc)

Mon Apr 7 – Movie: “A Call to Remember” (Jack Bender, 1997, 100m)

Drama about two Holocaust survivals who found each other and married in America at the end of the War—and then learn, in the 1960s, that the woman’s older son may have survived the death camp. The movie explores the impact that the news have on the life of the couple and on that of their two children born after the War. Written by Max Eisenberg, based on his experience as the son of Holocaust survivors.

Wed Apr 9 – Lecture: “Religious and Secular Trends in Contemporary American Jewry” (Anita Norich)
(c) Discussion Sessions: “Heritage: Into the future”

Mon Apr 14 – Movie: “Madame Rosa” (Moshe Mizrahi, 1997, 105m)

Madame Rosa is an aging Jewish prostitute who earns her living raising other prostitutes’ children, when they can no longer tend to them. Her spirit is renewed by her love for an Arab boy abandoned in her care. Simone Signoret’s magnetic performance led the movie to win Best Foreign Film Oscar. In French with English subtitles.

Wed Apr 16 – Conclusion: “The Varieties of Jewish Civilizations” (Gabriele Boccaccini)
(c) Discussion Sessions:

Final Exam: Mon April 21, 1:30-3:30pm, 269 Dennison

Instructor

Dr. Gabriele Boccaccini (PhD University of Turin, Italy),
Associate Professor of Second Temple Judaism and Christian Origins at the University of Michigan since the Fall of 1992.


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Office hours: immediately after class, or MW 12:00-2:00pm (office), or by appointment
Literature (available at ACCU-Copy, 518 E William):

(2) Handouts by the Instructor

Grading System and Requirements

1. Read this section of the syllabus very carefully. The syllabus is like a contract between the student and the instructor, which we all are bound to respect.

2. ATTENDANCE. The course is based on lectures by the Instructor and guest-lecturers, weekly discussion sessions with the G.S.I., a midterm, a research paper and a final written. Regular attendance is compulsory. If you happen to miss a session, it is your responsibility to ask the Instructor or the G.S.I. or a classmate for information about what was discussed in class. Students whose attendance has been poor (that is, have missed 15-25% of either lectures or discussion sessions without justification) will see their final grade reduced of half point. Students who have not attended the class regularly (that is, have missed more than 25% of either lectures or discussion sessions without any justification), or have not fulfilled each and all the requirements of the course, will not be graded and will receive a NR report.

3. GRADING SYSTEM. The final grade is based on four elements:

(a) Participation 10%
   - Attendance: Regular [Poor (-half point); Insufficient (=NR)]

(b) Midterm 20%
   - 100 multiple-choice questions

(c) Research paper 30%
   - 10-15 pages, plus annotated bibliography

(d) Final Exam 40%
   - 200 multiple-choice questions

(a) Quality of participation in class and discussion sessions makes 10% of the final grade. The evaluation will be made conjunctly by the Instructor and the G.S.I. on the basis of the student's attention, attendance, comments, questions, commitment for an enjoyable environment, etc.

Outstanding (A+ = 100%)
Good (A = 95%)
Average (B = 84%)
Poor (C = 73%)
Very Poor (D = 62%)

(b) The midterm exam [20% of the final grade] is a series of 100 multiple-choice questions from the lectures, movies and discussion sessions (Part 1-2-3) and the textbook (chs 1-2-3 and 5). The results of the tests will be discussed in class and in the discussion sessions. The grade is determined proportionally to the amount of questions correctly answered [unanswered questions will be counted as incorrect], as follows:

A+ (100%-98%)  A (97%-93%)  A- (92%-90%)
B+ (89%-87%)  B (86%-82%)  B- (81%-79%)
C+ (78%-76%)  C (75%-71%)  C- (70%-68%)
D+ (67%-65%)  D (64%-60%)  D- (59%-57%)
F (56% or less)
The Instructor's goal is to help the deserving student, who may have some initial difficulties, to improve their grade. If your grade is B or less, after restudying the material and if you wish to do so, you will be given the opportunity to retake the exam (50 old questions + 20 new questions), by the following three weeks. If your grade is F, you must submit a written petition (via e-mail) to the Professor and receive written permission (via e-mail) to continue the class, provided that your attendance is good. Failure to fulfill each and all above-mentioned requirements, results into an NR (no report).

By retaking the exam, you may receive a maximum increase of 10 points in the percentage of your grade, depending on the number of correct answers, as follows:

- 50 or less: no increase
- 51 to 55: 3-point increase
- 56 to 60: 5-point increase
- 61 to 65: 8-point increase
- 66 to 70: 11-point increase

For example, if the percentage of your grade was 60% (D) and in the retake you answer correctly 67 questions, your grade will be calculate as 71% (C) [60% + a 11-point increase]; if you answer correctly 63 question, your grade will be calculate as 68% (C) [60% + a 8-point increase]; if you answer correctly 58 questions, your grade will be calculate as 65% (D+) [60% plus a 5-point increase]; etc. etc. In no case, however, the final percentage of your midterm will be calculated more than 87% (B+). If for example, the percentage of your grade was 80% (B-) and you get a 11-point increase, your final percentage will still be calculated as 87% (B+) [not 91% (A-)].

(c) The research paper [30% of the final grade] focuses on a subject of your choice, approved by the G.S.I. Both documentaries and books must be considered as sources. A draft copy or prospectus may be submitted in advance to the G.S.I. by March 31, 2003. The final draft is made of an average 10-12 pages, plus at least a 2-page annotated bibliography and filmography, and is due by April 16, 2003. The final evaluation will be made conjunctly by the Instructor and the G.S.I.

(d) The final exam [40% of the final grade] is a series of 200 questions aimed to a general review of the entire course. The exam will present 160 new questions, covering all the parts of the class with special emphasis on the second half of the course, and will include 40 questions from the midterm. The grading system will follow the same criteria as the midterm exam, but no possibility of retaking will be offered.

VERY IMPORTANT !! If you have any questions or something goes wrong, or you realize that your attendance is going to be poor or insufficient, please do not wait until the very last moment to express yourself. I will be always available to talk to you immediately after the class or during my office hours or, if necessary, scheduling a meeting at a different time. We can find together a solution to (almost) every problem. But, please, don't ask the impossible when there is no more time.

!! BE SMART AND RESPONSIBLE: ENJOY THE CLASS !!
INFORMATION SHEET                  TO BE FILLED OUT BY THE STUDENT
AND RETURNED AT THE END OF JANUARY

YOUR NAME (printed): _____________________________________________
last           first          middle

STUDENT ID: ___________________  YOUR E-MAIL _____________________

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND:

OTHER CLASSES IN RELIGION:

MOTIVATIONS FOR ATTENDING THE COURSE:

FIRST IMPRESSIONS, COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, QUESTIONS:

(USE THE BACK OF THE SHEET FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS)

I READ VERY CAREFULLY THE SYLLABUS. I FULLY UNDERSTAND THE GRADING SYSTEM AND THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE CLASS. IN PARTICULAR, I AM AWARE THAT ATTENDANCE IS COMPULSORY,
THAT POOR ATTENDANCE WILL AFFECT MY FINAL GRADE, AND THAT I WILL NOT BE GRADED (NR
REPORT) IF I MISS MORE THAN 25% OF EITHER LECTURES OR DISCUSSION SESSIONS WITHOUT
JUSTIFICATION.

____________        _________________________________
(date)                (signature)

(to be filled out by the Professor)

|            |  Research |   Final   |  Commit.  ||   Final   ||
|  Mid-term  |    paper  |   exam    |  Partic.  ||   grade   ||
|    (20%)   |    (30%)  |   (40%)   |   (10%)   ||   (100%)  ||
|            |           |           |           ||           ||
|            |           |           |           ||           ||
|            |           |           |           ||           ||

Attendance:   R   (regular);   P   (poor);   I   (insufficient)