

Post-Holocaust American Jews and Judaism, Spring 2018
MWF 1:55-2:45
REL3938/JST3930
Turlington 2305
Prof. Rachel Gordan, Dept. of Religion
Office: Anderson Hall, Room 130
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Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-6 pm, and by appointment

The Holocaust was the most catastrophic event in contemporary Jewish history. Although the loss of Jewish lives occurred in Europe, the Holocaust had grave and transformative effects for American Jews and Judaism. In one way or another, after World War II, American Jewish communities and leaders realized that they were now leaders of world Jewry. In the past, American Jews had looked to Europe as the center of Jewish learning; now, that leadership role belonged to American Jews.

In addition to a shift in power, other changes occurred among American Jews that affected American Judaism. In the immediate postwar years, Judaism became one of “the big three” religions in America, alongside Protestantism and Catholicism. One of the major questions we will explore in this class is how and why this change took place in the United States, and what it meant for both Jews and American culture.

While a course on “Post-Holocaust Jews” could certainly continue to the present, we will be focused on the immediate postwar era. We will be using a mix of primary and secondary sources.

In addition to learning about post-Holocaust Jews and American culture, you will also have the opportunity to broaden your academic horizons, learn valuable lessons regarding the study of religion and culture, and, it is hoped, improve your analytic and presentation skills. This course is open to everyone. There are no pre-requisites, and no knowledge of religious studies in general or Judaism in particular is presupposed.

Caveats and additional information

Syllabus: Depending on time constraints and other factors, the instructor may alter the syllabus during the semester. Students will be given notice of such alterations.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance>.

For grading policies, please see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing

appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <http://teachingcenter.ufl.edu>

Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio>

Students are invited to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

Readings: Three books are required for this course. There will be additional required readings, which will be available online or will be distributed as handouts. Students should complete readings before the discussion session for which they have been assigned.

Required Texts:

Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*

Peter Novick, *The Holocaust In American Life*

Laura Z. Hobson *Gentleman's Agreement*

Other course readings will be made available on CANVAS or in-class

Attendance & Participation	20%
3 short essays	30%
Midterm	20%
3 <i>How this reading changed/affected my understanding</i> summaries	30%

****Extra credit opportunities:**

There will be extra credit opportunities connected with two talks during the semester (**Thursday Feb 8 at 5pm and Tuesday, March 27th**).

Assignments

- 1) Attendance and Participation. A significant portion (20%) of your grade is based on your contributions to our class discussion. Your ability to stay focused on

- discussion, listen to your classmates' and professor's comments and respond to them, and make use of our readings to further discussion, are all part of this grade. Absence without notes from a physician or college dean or advance permission from Professor Gordan will result in a 0/20 A&P grade for that day.
- 2) Three short essays: There will be 5 essay options provided during the semester. You may choose 3 of these essays to submit by the deadline on this syllabus.
 - 3) Midterm will be based on readings, in-class lectures & discussions, and the handouts we work on, during class-time. It will be take-home and due to rgordan@ufl.edu on Friday, March 2.
 - 4) *How this reading changed/affected my understanding* – Three times during the semester you will submit 250-500 words explaining how the reading for that day affected your understanding of post-WWII Jews in the US. Your submissions will be graded on your articulate expression of a) the author's arguments and evidence, and b) your views on the subject; c) effective use of quotations from the reading; and d) a larger takeaway regarding the reading and post-Holocaust Jews. This essay should be **submitted by 9 pm, the night before class to rgordan@ufl.edu.**

Grading Scale:^[SEP] Final letter grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

A 93-100	C+ 77-79
A- 90-92	C 73-76
B+ 87-89	C-70-72
B 83-86	D 60-69
B- 80-82	E 0-59

For UF policies on grading, please see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Monday, January 8: Course Introduction

Part I: What Just Happened? Processing the Holocaust and the Jew in America

Wednesday, Jan 10 Postwar:

1945 *American Jewish Book*, p. 209-228

American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 47, 1945-1946 p. 209-228

http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1945_1946_4_USCommunal.pdf

Friday, Jan 12

American Jewish Year Book, Vol. 47, 1945-1946 p. 256-268

http://www.ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1945_1946_4_USCommunal.pdf

Monday, Jan 15

http://ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1944_1945_5_USCivicPolitical.pdf

133-159

Wednesday, Jan 17

FDR and the Jewish Crisis and Reportage

http://ajcarchives.org/AJC_DATA/Files/1945_1946_3_SpecialArticles.pdf

37-50

Buried by the Times, excerpt on CANVAS

Friday, Jan 19

No class

Monday, Jan 22

Jeffrey Alexander, "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals"

CANVAS

Part II: What did it all mean to Jews and Americans?

The Holocaust, Judaism, and a new socio-economic status

Wed, Jan 24

Peter Novick, Holocaust in American Life, Part I

Fri, Jan 26

Peter Novick, Holocaust in American Life, Part I

Mon, Jan 29

Peter Novick, Holocaust in American Life, Part II

Wed Jan 31

Peter Novick, Holocaust in American Life, Part II

Friday, Feb 2

Peter Novick, Holocaust in American Life, Part II

***Novick essay due by 10 pm, Sunday, **February 4th** to rgordan@ufl.edu

Mon, Feb 5

Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism*, Introduction

Wed, Feb 7

Glazer, Chapter 6: Judaism and Jewishness

Fri, Feb 9

Glazer, Chapter 6: Judaism and Jewishness

Monday, Feb 12

No class

Wed, Feb 14

Glazer, Chapter 7: The Jewish Revival

Fri, Feb 16

Glazer, Chapter 8: The Religion of American Jews

Mon, Feb 19

Glazer, Chapter 8: The Religion of American Jews & epilogue

***Glazer essay due by 2 pm on Tuesday, February 20th to rgordan@ufl.edu

Part III: What are post-Holocaust Jews and Americans?

Wed Feb 21

Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America* reading on CANVAS

Fri Feb 23

Tri-Faith America reading on CANVAS
Mon Feb 26
Ambivalent Embrace excerpt CANVAS
Wed Feb 28 Midterm
Kranson, *Ambivalent Embrace* excerpt CANVAS
Fri, Mar 2nd
Midterm

Spring Break

Monday, March 12
Lila Corwin Berman, *Speaking of Jews* excerpt Canvas
Wed, March 14
Speaking of Jews excerpt Canvas
Friday March 16
Philip Gleason “Americans All” article
Monday March 19
“Americans All” article

**Speaking of Jews essay due Tuesday, March 20

Part IV Explaining Post-Holocaust Judaism to Americans

Wed March 21
Herman Wouk, *This Is My God* Excerpt
Friday March 23 – no class
Monday March 26
Wouk excerpt continued
Wed March 28
Milton Steinberg, *Basic Judaism* excerpt
Fri March 30 Passover begins tonight
Mon April 2
Steinberg excerpt

****Wouk and Steinberg essay due Tuesday April 3 at 8 pm

Wed April 4
Abraham Joshua Heschel excerpt
Friday April 6 – end of Passover – no class

Monday, April 9th
Heschel excerpt

Part V Telling the story of Post-Holocaust Jews

Wednesday, April 11

Leah Garrett reading on CANVAS

Friday, April 13

Leah Garrett reading on CANVAS

Monday, April 16th

Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* excerpt

Wed April 18

Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* excerpt

Friday, April 20

Gentleman's Agreement

***Herberg essay due 2pm, Sunday, April 22nd

Monday April 23

Gentleman's Agreement

Wed April 25

Gentleman's Agreement