

History 901: American Jewish History
(Spring 2019)
3:30-5:30

Tony Michels

Requirements

Active participation is crucial. I urge you to take risks, test ideas, and raise questions regardless of whether you're convinced you are "right." A successful seminar is one with lively, probing, freewheeling conversation. Thoughtfulness is welcome; circumspection is not.

Each of you is expected to present the reading(s) throughout the semester. Your presentations should succinctly summarize the authors' arguments and identify what you believe to be the most important issue that we should discuss. Presentations will necessarily vary in length, but should typically be no longer than 15 minutes in length.

Finally, you are required to write three papers during the semester. The first two papers should be 6-page analyses of a given week's readings (with the book assigned for that week being the main focus) and will be due two weeks after their discussion date. (For instance, if you want to write on week four's readings, your paper will be due in week six.) Your third paper is due on May 9. That paper should be 15 pages in length and synthetic in character, that is, address a particular historiographic issue, question, theme, or problem by drawing on various readings. I encourage you to speak with me outside of class about your final paper topic.

Grading

First paper: 30%

Second paper: 30%

Third paper: 40%

The Weinstein-Minkoff Lecture (March 5)

Prof. Bryan Roby (Univ. of Michigan), "Israel through a Colored Lens: African-American Perspectives on Mizrahi Israelis."

Time and Location: Pyle Center, AT&T Lounge, 702 Langdon St. (4:00-5:30).

Week 1 (Jan. 24): Introductions

Week 2 (Jan. 31): What Is American Jewish History?

Hasia Diner, "American Jewish History" in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, Martin Goodman, ed. (Oxford, 2003), pp. 471-490.

Salo W. Baron, "American Jewish History: Problems and Methods," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* No. 34, Part 3 (March 1950): 207-266.

Morris U. Schappes, "Introduction" in *A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States, 1654-1875* ed. Morris U. Schappes (The Citadel Press, revised edition, 1952), pp. ix-xxiii.

Ben Halpern, "America Is Different," *Midstream* 1 (Autumn 1955), pp. 39-52.

David B. Ruderman, "Reflections on American Jewish history," *American Jewish History* Vol. 91, Nos. 3-4 (Sep./Dec. 2003): 372-386.

David A. Hollinger, "Communalist and Dispersionist Approaches to American Jewish History in an Increasingly Post-Jewish Era," *American Jewish History*, Vol. 95, No. 1 (March 2009), pp. 1-32.

Tony Michels, "Is America 'Different?' A Critique of American Jewish Exceptionalism," *American Jewish History*, Vol. 96, No. 3 (Sep. 2010): 201-224.

Lila Corwin Berman, "Jewish History beyond the Jewish People," *AJS Review* 42:2 (Nov. 2018): 269-292.

Week 3 (Feb. 7): Writing the Survey

Henry L. Feingold, "American Jewish History and American Jewish Survival," *American Jewish History* Vol. LXXI, No. 4 (June 1982): 421-431.

Hasia R. Diner, *A Time for Gathering: The Second Migration, 1820-1880* (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1992), entire book.

Week 4 (Feb. 14): Quests for Community

Arthur Goren, *New York Jews and the Quest for Community: The Kehilla Experiment, 1908-1922* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 1-42, 186-252.

Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews, 1862-1917* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 453-551.

Week 5 (Feb. 21): Ethnicity

Russel A. Kazal, "Revisiting Assimilation: The Rise, Fall, and Reappraisal of a Concept in American Ethnic History," *American Historical Review* (April 1995): 437-471.

Deborah Dash Moore, *At Home in America: Second Generation New York Jews* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1983), entire book.

Forum on *At Home in America*

*Lila Corwin Berman and Tony Michels, "Introduction to the Special Issue on the Thirty-Fifth Anniversary of Deborah Dash Moore's *At Home in America*," *American Jewish History* Vol.100, No. 2 (April 2016): 169-177.

*Deborah Dash Moore, "Remaking Ourselves at Home," *American Jewish History* (April 2016): 179-189.

*Eli Lederhendler, "Domestic Virtues: Deborah Dash Moore's *At Home in America* and Its Historiographical Context," pp. 205-219.

*Cecile Kuznitz, "At Home in the City: Jewish Urban History between the New and Old Worlds," pp. 221-232.

Week 6 (Feb. 28): Small Town v. Big City

Eli Lederhendler, *New York Jews and the Decline of Urban Ethnicity, 1950-1970* (Syracuse Univ. Press, 2001), pp. 1-35.

Lee Shai Weissbach, *Jewish Life in Small-Town America: A History* (Yale Univ. Press, 2005), pp. 1-50.

Ewa Morawska, *Insecure Prosperity: Small-Town Jews in Industrial America, 1890-1940* (Princeton Univ. Press 1996), entire book.

Week 7 (March 7): Illegal Jews: Toward a New History of Jewish Immigration

Britt Tevis, "'The Hebrews Are Appearing in Court in Great Numbers': Toward a Reassessment of Early Twentieth-Century American Jewish Immigration History," *American Jewish History*, vol. 100, no. 3 (July 2016): 319-347.

Libby Garland, *After They Closed the Gates: Jewish Illegal Immigration to the United States, 1921-1965* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2014), entire book.

Week 8 (March 14): The New Economic History

Jerry Z. Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 1-14.

Marni Davis, *Jews and Booze: Becoming American in the Age of Prohibition* (New York Univ. Press, 2012), entire book.

Week 9 (March 21): Spring Break

Week 10 (March 28): Race

Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (June 2002): 154-173.

"Mitchell B. Hart, "Jews and Race: An Introductory Essay," in *Jews & Race: Writings on Identity & Difference, 1880-1940* (Brandeis Univ. Press, 2011), pp. pp. xiii-xxxix.

Eric Goldstein, *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2006), entire book.

Week 11 (April 4): African Americans and Jews

Paul Berman, "The Other and the Almost the Same," *The New Yorker* (Feb. 28, 1994), pp. 61-66.

Laurence Thomas, "Group Autonomy and Narrative Identity: Blacks and Jews," in *Blacks and Jews: Alliances and Arguments* (Delacourte Press, 1994), pp. 286-303.

David Levering Lewis, "Parallels and Divergences: Assimilationist Strategies of Afro-Americans and Jewish Elites from 1910s to the Early 1930s," *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (Dec. 1984): 543-564.

Wendell Pritchett, *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews, and the Changing Face of the Ghetto* (Univ. of Chicago, 2002), entire book.

Week 12 (April 11): African Americans and Jews (cont.)

Clayborne Carson, "Black-Jewish Universalism in the Era of Identity Politics," in *Struggles in the Promised Land: Toward a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 177-196.

Marc Dollinger, *Black Power, Jewish Politics: Reinventing the Alliance in the 1960s* (Univ. Press of New England, 2018), entire book.

Week 13 (April 18): Zionism, Multiculturalism, and Human Rights

Mitchell Cohen, "Rooted Cosmopolitanism: Thoughts on the Left, Nationalism, and Multiculturalism," *Dissent* (Fall 1992): 478-483.

James Loeffler, *Rooted Cosmopolitans: Jews and Human Rights in the Twentieth Century* (Yale Univ. Press, 2018), entire book.

Week 14 (April 25): American Judaism

Shari Rabin, *Jews on the Frontier: Religion and Mobility in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York University Press, 2017), entire book.

Week 15 (May 2): Exceptionalism Defended

Hasia Diner, *How America Met the Jews* (Brown Judaic Studies, 2017), entire book.