

**“Next Year in Havana”: Stories of the Jewish and Latinx Diaspora  
LSSP 318 (Also counts for English and Religious Studies)**

**Winter 2020  
MW 9:30-10:50  
Hathorn 314**

**Professor Pridgeon  
Roger Williams 309  
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Office Hours TBD**

**Description:**

This course considers literature authored by Jewish and Latinx-identifying authors writing from the United States and explores Jewishness as imagined by Latinx authors. Students examine the construction of intersecting Jewish and Latinx identities and experiences. Particular attention is paid to how Latinx ethnicities are constructed differentially throughout the Americas and how narratives of ethno-national identities, particularly their spiritual implications, come into contact with both Jewishness as an ethnicity and Judaism as a religion. The course begins with a consideration of the overlapping experiences of Jewish Latinxs as Jews and Latinxs as well as of the place of Jewish Latinx fiction within existing critical understandings of U.S. Jewish fiction, global Jewish fiction, Latin American fiction, and U.S. Latinx fiction.

**Grade Breakdown:**

**Daily Participation: 15%**  
**Discussion Leading: 10%**  
**Take-Home Midterm Exam: 15%**  
**Reading Journal: 10%**  
**Community Engaged Activity: 10%**  
**Annotated Bibliography and Prospectus: 5%**  
**Final Paper Draft: 5%**  
**Final Paper: 15%**  
**Final Paper Presentation: 15%**

## **Course particulars:**

### **Daily Participation**

This course is a senior seminar. Students are expected to arrive to class on time and having thoroughly read and understood the assigned reading materials for the class day. Everyone must contribute equitably and thoughtfully to class discussion through both speaking and listening actively to other students' contributions. Comments made in class must be ideas that can be substantiated by evidence presented in the text. This evidence must be used logically. While literary criticism and interpretation may at times be subjective, interventions based solely on opinions or impressions are not the same as interpretations rooted in textual evidence. Once every week or so there will be a required critical article and students will be expected to have read that article thoroughly and to use the ideas therein to sustain comments made in class. Students will be assigned a midterm participation grade and are welcome to discuss ways to improve the participation grade with the professor during office hours.

### **Discussion Leading**

In groups of three, students will take turns leading class discussion on specified days. These days are indicated in the course calendar and correspond, usually, to the last day designated for a specific author or text. Groups will be assigned the first day of class and the students need to meet with the professor in advance of the class to be led in order to go over what material they plan to present and how. The grade for leading the class discussion will be based on the relevance and thoroughness of the ideas covered as well as the liveliness of the discussion. To this end, individual participation on behalf of the students not presenting that day is vital in order to ensure the success of your classmates' leading discussion.

### **Midterm Exam**

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, students will be assigned short essay prompts to answer and submit via Lyceum by February 14<sup>th</sup> at midnight. Students are **NOT ALLOWED** to consult with one another about the questions or their answers.

### **Reading Journal**

Once a week, students will be required to submit a journal entry through Lyceum about the reading assigned for that day. These journal entries are low-stake format and should be approximately 200-250 words in length. Entries should focus on a specific aspect of the reading in relation to broader ideas. It is

not acceptable to write a summary or to quote excessively from the text in journal entries.

### **Community-Engaged Activity**

Students will conduct a community-engaged activity designed by the professor in conjunction with the Harvard Center through which they will screen and then lead small group discussions of the film *Big Sonia* for local middle school students. In small groups, students will be assigned to prepare pre-viewing information and activities, prepare and lead discussion with the students, or prepare follow-up activities for the teachers to use with students afterward. Each student will be required to design discussion questions in groups and to write a reflection about the activity and connect ideas and challenges that arose during the activity to concepts that have been discussed in the course.

### **Annotated Bibliography and Prospectus**

At the end of March, all students will be required to submit an annotated bibliography consisting of 8-10 **ACADEMIC** sources (peer-reviewed books and journal articles) and a prospectus of approximately 250 words in length outlining the thesis and main points of the final paper. We will discuss appropriate sources and formatting for the bibliography in class. Students are encouraged to meet with the professor should they have any further questions about what constitutes appropriate sources and how to find them. Any bibliography that includes encyclopedias, Wikipedia, or non peer-reviewed online sources will automatically result in a failing grade.

### **Final Paper Draft**

Along with the annotated bibliography and the prospectus, students should submit a draft of the first 1-2 pages of the final paper, including the introductory paragraph with the thesis statement. The professor will provide feedback on this draft that the student is required to take into account and revise accordingly before submitting the final paper.

### **Final Paper**

Each student will write a final paper of 10-12 pages in length. The paper should focus on a specific research question relating to one or two texts discussed in the course. Should a student be interested in writing about a different Jewish Latinx work of literature, they must consult with the professor beforehand. The final paper will be due the last week of class.

### **Presentation of Final Paper**

Each student must prepare a 5-minute presentation of their final paper to present to the class.

#### Required Materials:

Perera, Victor. *Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood*.

- ISBN-10: 0233979778
- ISBN-13: 978-1562790653

Obejas, Achy. *Days of Awe*

- ISBN-10: 0345441540
- ISBN-13: 978-0345441546

Alcalá, Kathleen. *Spirits of the Ordinary*

- ISBN-10: 0156005689
- ISBN-13: 978-0156005685

#### Week 1

Jan 13: Introductions

Jan 15: Dalia Kandiyoti, "Sephardism in Latina Literature" (Lyceum)  
Laura Limonic, *Kugel and Frijoles: Latino Jews in the US*,  
Introduction (Lyceum)

#### Week 2

Jan. 22: *Adiós, Kerida* (on reserve in Ladd and available to rent on Vimeo)  
Read: "The Story of Ruth, the Anthropologist" (Lyceum)

#### Week 3:

Jan 27: *Lucky Broken Girl* (part I)

Jan. 29: *Lucky Broken Girl* (part II) (GROUP 1 LEADS DISCUSSION)

#### Week 4

Feb. 3: *Days of Awe* (part I)

Feb. 5: *Days of Awe* (part II)

Week 5:

Feb. 10: *Days of Awe* (part III)  
Goldman, "Next Year in the Diaspora" (Lyceum)

Feb. 12: *Days of Awe* (part IV) (GROUP 2 LEADS DISCUSSION)

FEBRUARY BREAK (TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE THE 14<sup>TH</sup>)

Week 6:

Feb. 24: "Tomorrow We Never Did Talk About It" (Lyceum)  
Read: Pridgeon, "Silences Between Jewish and Indigeneity"  
(Lyceum)

Feb. 26: "The Polish Boxer" (Lyceum) (GROUP 3 LEADS DISCUSSION)

Week 7:

Mar. 2: Community-Engaged Activity

Mar.4: Discussion of Community-Engaged Activity

Week 8:

Mar. 9: *Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood* (Part II)  
Savin, "The Burden and the Treasure" (Lyceum)

Mar. 11: *Rites: A Guatemalan Boyhood* (Part I) (GROUP 4  
LEADS DISCUSSION)

Week 9:

Mar. 16: *The Long Night of the White Chickens* (excerpts)

Mar. 18: *The Long Night of the White Chickens* (excerpts) (GROUP 5  
LEADS DISCUSSION)

Week 10:

Mar. 23: *Spirits of the Ordinary* (Part I)

Mar. 25: *Spirits of the Ordinary* (Part II) (GROUP 6 LEADS DISCUSSION)

Week 11:

Mar. 30: Luz Alma Villanueva, "Sabra" (GROUP 7 LEADS DISCUSSION)

Apr. 1: Writing Workshop

Week 12:

Apr. 6: Student Presentations

Apr. 8: Student Presentations