

Jewish Migrations: Sex, Gender and Identity (1880-1939)
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University of Bergen
Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion
Jewish Migrations: Sex, Gender and Identity (1880-1939)
HIS115 Fordjuping i nyare historie
Syllabus Spring 2021
Mondays, Week 3 – 16, 14:15-16:00, Spaces, Vaskerelven, Sem.rom 301

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Office hours: Mondays, 11:00-12:00 or by appointment

Office: Øysteinsgate 3, Bergen (Room 200)

Course description:

This course explores global Jewish migrations between 1880 and 1939 in order to address questions related to mobility, identity, sex, and gender. Each week's readings include a series of case studies that offer an overview of transnational Jewish history while presenting diverse immigrant experiences. The course begins with an introduction to Jewish history and historiography, followed by a close examination of the practical measures involved in conducting historical research. By focusing on Eastern Europe (Białystok), the US (New York), Argentina (Buenos Aires), the UK (London), Palestine (Tel Aviv), Brazil (São Paulo/Rio de Janeiro), and Norway, we connect the historical analysis of migration with the study of sexuality, gender, and identity. We draw on both primary and secondary sources, including fiction, memoirs, film, poetry, and photography. Together, these materials are designed to sharpen your ability to think critically, analyze information, and express yourself effectively across a range of contexts related to migration history. The course also introduces how historians approach the intersection of gender, race, religion, social class, and the politics of sex and identity. The course features two additional lecturers: Christhard Hoffmann, Professor of History at the University of Bergen, and Per Kristian Sebak, Director of the Bergen Maritime Museum. No particular background is required, and assignments may be written in either English or Norwegian.

Lectures:

1. **How Jewish is Jewish history? Introduction to Jewish historiography**
2. **Transnational Jewish history and its theoretical framework**
3. **Finding sources in Jewish history**
4. **The Dreyfus Affair, Edvard Grieg, and World War I**
5. **“Anatevka, Anatevka...” Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe**
6. **Paths of migration – Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the United States 1880 – 1914 (Per Kristian Sebak)**
7. **A Modern Ghetto? Work and Life in the Jewish East End in London (Christhard Hoffmann)**
8. ***Di Goldene Medine*: Jewish immigration to the US**
9. **A Tale of a New York Ghetto: The Lower East Side Jews**
10. **Jewish *gauchos*: Jewish agricultural colonies in Argentina and Brazil**
11. **Prostitution, white slavery, and shame in Buenos Aires**
12. **Next year in... Tel Aviv: Women's Aliyah to pre-state Israel**

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Week	Date/Class	Lecture
Week 3	18.01.2021	How Jewish is Jewish history? Introduction to Jewish historiography
Week 4	25.01.2021	Transnational Jewish history and its theoretical framework
Week 5	01.02.2021	Finding sources in Jewish history
Week 6	08.02.2021	The Dreyfus Affair, Edvard Grieg, and World War I
Week 7	15.02.2021	“Anatevka, Anatevka...” Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe
Week 8	22.02.2021	Paths of migration – Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the United States 1880 – 1914 (Per Kristian Sebak)
Week 9	01.03.2021	A Modern Ghetto? Work and Life in the Jewish East End in London (Christhard Hoffmann)
Week 10	08.03.2021	<i>Di Goldene Medine</i> : Jewish immigration to the US
Week 11	15.03.2021	A Tale of a New York Ghetto: The Lower East Side Jews
Week 12	22.03.2021	Jewish <i>gauchos</i> : Jewish agricultural colonies in Argentina and Brazil
Week 15	12.04.2021	Prostitution, white slavery and shame in Buenos Aires
Week 16	19.04.2021	Next year in... Tel Aviv: Women's Aliyah to pre-state Israel

Week 3 (18.01.2021) - Class 1

1. How Jewish is Jewish history? Introduction to Jewish historiography

Required readings (p.90):

- Rawidowicz S., Israel: The Ever-Dying People, And Other Essays, p. 53-63. (11)
- Rosman M., How Jewish is Jewish history?, p. 19-55. (37)
- Stavans I., On Borrowed Words, A Memoir of Language, p. 3-44. (42)

Required online articles (p.43):

- [YIVO Language](#) (23)
- [A Portrait of Jewish Americans: Overview Findings from a Pew Research Center Survey of U.S. Jews](#) (20)

Week 4 (25.01.2021) - Class 2

2. Transnational Jewish history and its theoretical framework

Required readings (p. 55):

- Iriye A., Global And Transnational History: The Past, Present, And Future, p. 1-18. (18)
- Janz O. and Schonpflug D., Gender History in a Transnational Perspective: Network, Biographies, Gender Orders, p. 200-218. (19)
- Kobrin R., Jewish Bialystok And Its Diaspora, p. 1-18. (18)

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Week 5 (01.02.2021) - Class 3

3. Finding sources in Jewish history

Required readings (p.84):

- Portnoy E., Bad Rabbi: And Other Strange But True Stories from the Yiddish Press, p. 1-24, 127- 142. (40)
- Silverman E., A Cultural History of Jewish Dress, p. XV - XX, p. 76 - 85. (16)
- Zempel S., In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants, p. 157-184. (28)

Required videos:

- [Eddy Portnoy: "Bad Rabbi" and the Yiddish Press](#) (video, 20:20 min)

Required websites:

- [How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography: The Annotated Bibliography](#)
- [Annotated Bibliography and Guide to Archival Resources on the History of Jewish Women in America](#)
- [YIVO Institute for Jewish Research](#)
- [The Central Archives For The History of The Jewish People](#)
- [The National Library of Israel](#)
- [The Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project](#)
- [Worldcat](#)

Week 6 (08.02.2021)– Class 4

4. The Dreyfus Affair, Edvard Grieg, and World War I

Required readings (p. 39):

- Rozenblit M., Karp J., World War I and the Jews. Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East and America, p. 1-10, 32-48, 222- 234. (39)

Required online articles (p.12):

- [I Have No Desire to Appear Before a French Audience](#) (12)

Required videos:

- [Månedens Edvard - Edvard Grieg og Dreyfus-saken](#) (video in Norwegian; 18 min)
- [Robert Harris on An Officer and a Spy: 'I have no desire to be taken seriously by the literary establishment' - video interview](#) (7:59 min)

Week 7 (15.02.2020) - Class 5

5. "Anatevka, Anatevka..." Jewish migrants from Eastern Europe

Required readings (p.113):

- Freeze Ch., Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia, p. 11-41. (31)
- Herzog D., Sexuality in Europe. A Twentieth-Century History, p. 1-5, 6-15, 45-61.(32)
- Kobrin R., Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora, p. 19 - 68. (50)

Required online articles:

- [YIVO Gender](#) (p. 7)
- [YIVO Sexuality](#) (p. 4)

Required films:

- [Fiddler on the Roof](#), Norman Jewison (3 h)

Week 8 (22.02.2021) - Class 6

6. Paths of migration – Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe to the United States 1880 – 1914 (Per Kristian Sebak)

Required readings (p.97):

- Brinkmann, T. (ed.), Points of Passage - Jewish Migrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany, and Britain 1880-1914, p. 27-44, 63-84, 107-129, 130-147. (81)
- Evans, N. J., “The Port Jews of Libau, 1880-1914”, in Cesarani, David and Romain, Gemma (eds.), Jews and Port Cities 1590-1990 – Commerce, Community and Cosmopolitanism, p. 141 – 156. (16)

Week 9 (01.03.2021) – Class 7

7. A Modern Ghetto? Work and Life in the Jewish East End in London (Christhard Hoffmann)

Required readings (p.65):

- Tananbaum Susan KL., Jewish Immigration in London, 1880-1939, (London 2014), p. 15-31, 131-148. (35)
- Feldman D., Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840-1914, (New Haven/London 1994), p.185-214. (30)

Week 10 (08.03.2021) – Class 8

8. *Di Goldene Medine*: Jewish immigration to the US

Required readings (p.38):

- Goldstein E., The Price of Whiteness. Jews, Race, and American Identity, p. 119-137. (19)
- Zahra T., The Great Departure. Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World, p. 3-21. (19)

Required online sources (p.24):

- [Why American Jewish History Matters with Hasia Diner](#) (p.24)

Required video:

- [Hasia Diner: Jewish Immigration to the United States and the Lower East Side](#) (1h)

Week 11 (15.03.2020) – Class 9

9. A Tale of a New York Ghetto: The Lower East Side Jews

Required readings (p. 27):

- Kobrin R., Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora, p. 69 - 95. (27)

Required online articles:

- [Yekl, A Tale of the New York Ghetto](#) (p.13)
- [‘Yekl’ at 108: Rereading a Classic With the Children of Immigrants](#) (p.4)

Required film:

- [Hester Street](#), Joan Silver (1h 29 min)

Required video:

- ["Why don't you go back to Hester Street?"](#) (1:33 min)

Week 12 (22.03.2021) – Class 10

10. Jewish *gauchos*: Jewish agricultural colonies in Argentina and Brazil

Required readings (p. 146):

- Aizenberg E., Parricide on the Pampa. A New Study and Translation of Alberto Gerchunoff's *Los gauchos judios*, p. 41-49. (9)
- Kobrin R., Jewish Bialystok And Its Diaspora, p. 95 – 109. (15)
- Lesser J., Welcoming the Undesirables. Brazil and the Jewish Question, p. 1-22. (22)
- Lewis Nouwen M., Oy, My Buenos Aires: Jewish Immigrants and the Creation of Argentine National Identity, p. 11-58. (47)
- Sæther S., Expectations unfulfilled: Norwegian migrants in Latin America, 1820-1940, p. 162 – 183. (22)
- Scliar M., The Centaur in the Garden, p. 7-37. (31)

Week 15 (12.04.2021) – Class 11

11. Prostitution, white slavery, and shame in Buenos Aires

Required readings (p.77):

- Brodsky A., Rein R., The New Jewish Argentina: Facets of Jewish Experiences in the Southern Cone, p. 55-79. (25)
- McGee Deutsch S., Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: A History of Argentine Jewish Women, 1880-1955, p. 123-147. (25)
- Rodriguez J., Civilizing Argentina. Science, Medicine, and the Modern State, p.1-8. (8)
- Yarfitz M., Impure Migration: Jews and Sex Work in Golden Age Argentina, p. 1-19. (19)

Required online articles:

[Raquel Liberman](#) (p. 3)

Week 16 (19.04.2021) – Class 12

12. Next year in... Tel Aviv: Women's Aliyah in pre-state Israel

Required reading (p. 63):

- Kark R., Shilo M., Hasan - Rokem G., Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel. Life History, Politics, and Culture, p. 7-17, 51-62. (23)
- Shapira A., Israel. A History, p.103-118. (16)
- Kobrin R., Jewish Bialystok And Its Diaspora, p. 110-121. (12)
- Mendelsohn E., People of the City: Jews and the Urban Challenge, p. 68-79. (12)

Required online articles:

[Leah Goldberg](#) (p.5)

Leah Goldberg, "Tel Aviv 1935," in *With This Night ('Im ha-layla ha-ze)*, (Israel: Sifriat Poalim, 1964). (provided by lecturer)

Total: 1009 pages

Total (audiovisual): around 6h 30min

All the required readings and links to online sources with more specific instructions are available on the Leganto platform – check the Digital Reading List on mitt.uib.

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Course components:

- **Essay:** The students must hand in two papers during the teaching semester, consisting of approx 1500-2000 words.
- **Exam:** The assessment consists of a 7-day take-home exam and a 2-hour online exam. The take-home exam paper must be 1500-2000 words long. The exam questions will be handed out electronically.
- **Class Participation and Attendance:** Attendance is not required. The effort that each one of us puts into this class is a choice we must make. Keep in mind that every moment in this class is a learning opportunity, and the process of purposefully experiencing this course will teach you the content and prepare better for the assignments and exams.

Deadlines:

Course components	Due Date
Essay 1	18.02.2021
Essay 2	19.03.2021
Take home exam	23.04 – 30.04.2021
Take home short exam	12.05.2021

Course policies:

- Respect for diverse opinions and responsible communication are expected in this class. I encourage you to engage critically with the ideas presented in the readings and lectures, as well as with the perspectives of your peers. We are exploring complex issues, and richer discussions emerge when a variety of viewpoints are brought into conversation. If something said in class makes you feel uncomfortable, please speak with me. You are also welcome to submit anonymous feedback.
- If you require accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of the course, including assignments, in-class activities, or teaching methods, can be adjusted to support your participation and progress.
- If you have a name and/or pronouns that differ from those in your official records, please let me know.
- If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this course, please arrange a meeting with me so I can best support your learning. Any information you share will be treated as private and confidential.
- You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in class as long as it contributes to your learning. Please place your phone on silent before class begins.
- All required readings are available on Leganto, and there is no need to purchase any books. However, if you would like to obtain a physical copy of any text, please let me know. If you encounter any difficulties accessing the required materials, do not hesitate to contact me.
- I hold one hour of office hours each week (Monday, 11:00–12:00). You are welcome to stop by during that time, or you can arrange an appointment or contact me via email. I am happy to discuss your progress, any challenges you may be facing, or any other questions you may have.
- Each Friday morning, you will receive an email (via www.mitt.uib.no) with important information about the upcoming week's readings. These messages will include guiding questions and highlight key issues. I will also indicate whether the session will take place in person or online.

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Bibliography:

1. Aizenberg, Edna. *Parricide on the Pampa: A New Study and Translation of Alberto Gerchunoff's Los gauchos judíos*. Madrid: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2015.
2. Brinkmann, Tobias, ed. *Points of Passage: Jewish Migrants from Eastern Europe in Scandinavia, Germany, and Britain, 1880–1914*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2013.
3. Brodsky, Adriana M., and Raanan Rein. *The New Jewish Argentina: Facets of Jewish Experiences in the Southern Cone*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013.
4. Evans, Neil J. "The Port Jews of Libau, 1880–1914." In *Jews and Port Cities, 1590–1990: Commerce, Community, and Cosmopolitanism*, edited by David Cesarani and Gemma Romain. London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2006.
5. Feldman, David. *Englishmen and Jews: Social Relations and Political Culture, 1840–1914*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994.
6. Freeze, ChaeRan Y. *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia*. Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 2002.
7. Goldstein, Eric L. *The Price of Whiteness: Jews, Race, and American Identity*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.
8. Herzog, Dagmar. *Sexuality in Europe: A Twentieth-Century History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
9. Iriye, Akira. *Global and Transnational History: The Past, Present, and Future*. New York: Palgrave Pivot, 2013.
10. Janz, Oliver, and Daniel Schönplflug, eds. *Gender History in a Transnational Perspective: Networks, Biographies, Gender Orders*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2014.
11. Kark, Ruth, Margalit Shilo, and Galit Hasan-Rokem. *Jewish Women in Pre-State Israel: Life History, Politics, and Culture*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2008.
12. Kobrin, Rebecca. *Jewish Bialystok and Its Diaspora*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.
13. Lesser, Jeffrey. *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995.
14. Lewis Nouwen, Michelle. *Oy, My Buenos Aires: Jewish Immigrants and the Creation of Argentine National Identity*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013.
15. McGee Deutsch, Sandra. *Crossing Borders, Claiming a Nation: A History of Argentine Jewish Women, 1880–1955*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.
16. Mendelsohn, Ezra. *People of the City: Jews and the Urban Challenge*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
17. Portnoy, Eddy. *Bad Rabbi: And Other Strange but True Stories from the Yiddish Press*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018.
18. Rawidowicz, Simon. *Israel: The Ever-Dying People and Other Essays*. London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1986.
19. Rodríguez, Julia. *Civilizing Argentina: Science, Medicine, and the Modern State*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
20. Rosman, Moshe. *How Jewish Is Jewish History?* Oxford and Portland, OR: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2007.
21. Rozenblit, Marsha L., and Jonathan Karp, eds. *World War I and the Jews: Conflict and Transformation in Europe, the Middle East, and America*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2017.
22. Sæther, Steinar A. *Expectations Unfulfilled: Norwegian Migrants in Latin America, 1820–1940*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015.
23. Scliar, Moacyr. *The Centaur in the Garden*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003.
24. Shapira, Anita. *Israel: A History*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press.
25. Silverman, Eric. *A Cultural History of Jewish Dress*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.
26. Stavans, Ilan. *On Borrowed Words: A Memoir of Language*. New York: Viking Penguin, 2001.
27. Tananbaum, Susan L. *Jewish Immigration in London, 1880–1939*. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014.
28. Yarfitz, Mir. *Impure Migration: Jews and Sex Work in Golden Age Argentina*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2019.
29. Zahra, Tara. *The Great Departure: Mass Migration from Eastern Europe and the Making of the Free World*. New York and London: W. W. Norton, 2016.
30. Zempel, Susan. *In Their Own Words: Letters from Norwegian Immigrants*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.