RACE & JUDAISM

FALL SEMESTER 2013
Race and Judaism Fall Semester 2013  
Religion/Jewish Studies 0802  
Mon/Wed/Fri 9:00am-9:50am  
Professor Elliot Ratzman eratzman@temple.edu  
Office: 640 Anderson  
Call/Text me at 609-240-6699  
Office Hours: Mon. Fri. 1-2pm and always by appointment.

This course fulfills the Race & Diversity (GD) requirement for students under Gen Ed and Studies in Race (RS) for students under Core. Students cannot receive credit for this course if they have successfully completed Religion 0802.

Disability Statement: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy # 03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.

Course Goals and Learning Outcomes: In this course we will investigate the concept of race and the phenomena of racism and anti-Semitism as it relates to Jewish history, religion, politics, and culture. We will explore how Jews and non-Jews have understood and reacted to the varieties of Jewish identity. As we do so, we will engage in critical readings of primary texts, scripture, histories, op-eds, websites, testimonies, fiction, and film. The course aims to impart a rich and critical understanding of the complex relationship among religion, race, and ethnicity in general, and Judaism and race in particular. This course will have been in vain if we do not consider how we—as informed citizens in a global society—can affect social change for the better. As well, we hope to continually pose—and attempt to answer—the deceptive, seemingly simple questions: Who is a Jew? What makes someone a Jew? Finally, we will address the relationships between Jews and other ethnic groups in Europe, Israel, and the United States.

Practical Goals and Outcomes:
To expose you to issues and texts of history, criticism, opinion, and religion. Reading!  
To explore and explain issues of race, anti-Semitism, and Judaism to an audience. Writing!  
To ask questions about the nature, causes, and legacy of race, religion, history. Discussing!  
To absorb the rich history and context of modern Jewish history and identity. Lecturing!

you will be one sharp cat
Required books for purchase at the Temple bookstore—Please purchase ASAP or see me. You must have these books in hand as we discuss them in class. Most books are also available on two-hour reserve at Paley Library

1. Typecasting: On the Arts and Sciences of Human Inequality, by Stuart, Elizabeth Ewen
2. The Jewish Body by Melvin Konner
3. Anti-Semitic Myths edited by Perry and Schweitzer
4. We Look Like the Enemy by Rachel Shabi
5. Broken Alliance by Jonathan Kaufman

Other readings will be available on Blackboard. Students are expected to have access to materials, or notes on the reading(s), in class.

Course Policies: Cell phones and beepers must be turned off during class unless the instructor gives special permission otherwise— NO TEXTING. Ringing cell phones will be answered by the instructor. Computers are for taking notes or referring to texts. Use of computers for any other distracting purpose will result in a lower participation grade, believe me you. Please refrain from eating loud or smelly food.

Controversy, Religion, and Offense: In this class we will be discussing subject matter that some students may consider controversial. Some students may find some of the readings and/or comments in class disturbing, shocking, even “offensive”. So be it! Our purpose in this class is to explore this subject matter, which is inherently controversial, considering multiple perspectives and arguments. Students are expected to be respectful of contrary opinions, never to disrespect the person, but to disagree with dignity and to treat your fellow students with civility. Be charitable and assume that a person does not harbor ill-will or bad intentions.

Some helpful advice: Courses in Religion and/or Jewish studies do not presume that the students or instructor are of any particular religion or political commitment. Try to avoid comments that assume people are of a certain religious or political tradition. We will try to treat the material with fresh eyes, which may include the eyes of non-believers, the religious, the political, the apathetic and “the other side,” whatever side that may be.
Course Requirements: Attendance, participation, a number of writing assignments, and a final comprehensive exam. Failure to complete any of these assignments will result in a terrible grade.

Participation: Though we are a big class, all students are expected to participate in class discussion and activities. This means that you are expected to engage with your fellow students in active discussion of the week’s themes and readings in class, thereby contributing to the class’s overall good and welfare. Active and engaged participation not only makes the class more interesting, but also is an essential part of the learning process. Talking too much is a vice—be mindful of how much you are talking. Active listening is a virtue. Participation means engaging in meaningful discussion. Much of the material we are reading is difficult. This means that questions are every bit as important as responses for stimulating class discussion. If you are the “strong, silent” type, be prepared to be called upon!

Schedule, Subject to Small Changes

Overview
1. Introduction: Jews as/and race
2. Partial History of Race Pt I
3. Partial History of Race Pt II
4. The Politics of Racial Identity
5. Race and Identity in the Hebrew Bible
6. Jewish Identity from Antiquity to Modernity
7. Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism and Racism
8. Nazism, Racism and the Holocaust
9. Israel, Racism, Zionism, and Ethnicity Pt. I
10. Israel, Racism, Zionism, and Ethnicity Pt. II
11. Jews and/of Color
12. The Rise and Fall of a Black-Jewish Alliance
13. The Fall and Rise of a Black-Jewish Alliance
14. Concluding discussions
15. Exam

Due: 9/9 One page summary of Ewen Ch. 10.
Due: 9/18 A two page summary of debate.
Due: 10/11 Op-ed on Jewish History and race.
Due: 11/11 Op-ed on issues of Ethnicity in Israel
Due 12/4 Final Op-ed on issues of race in America.
Wed. 12/11 8-10am same room

Letter grades for the entire course will assigned as follows:

- 92.5 % and higher = A; 90.0 % – 92.49% = A-
- 87.5 % - 8.99% = B+; 82.5 % - 87.49 % = B
- 80 % - 82.49% = B-; 77.5 % - 79.99% = C+; 72.5% - 77.49% = C; 70% - 72.49% = C-
- 67.5% - 69.99% = D+; 62.5% - 67.49 % = D; 60% - 62.49 % = D-; 59.99% and lower = F

Grades - The course grade for this course will be determined according to the following formula:

Attendance: 10%

The classroom experience is part of the learning process and is mandatory. This is not a class that could be done through distance learning; plan appropriately. Classroom time will supplement the course readings through lectures, activities, discussion. Occasionally there will be in-class announcements of reading or writing assignments. Attendance will be taken. More than three unexcused absences will result in a lower attendance grade. You get three (3) unexcused absences, which we will call “personal days” which cannot be on Due Days. For each unexcused absence your attendance grade is lowered by ½ point.

If you are sick or if a relative passes away, don’t even put me in the embarrassing situation of having to ask for a doctor’s note or obituary (or proof of death); document it and spare me and you the awkwardness, ok?
Class Participation: 20%
Participating means that you have read the materials and contribute to the good and welfare of the class, which may include small in-class assignments. For each reading, I expect that you will write a one-paragraph “elevator speech” that will summarize the reading “as if” you were explaining it to someone in an elevator. You should bring these one paragraph summaries to class and you may be randomly called upon to read your response. Avoid shame and embarrassment by jotting down your elevator speech.

Another form of participation will, at times, entail group work answering questions along with feedback/responses that will be turned in. This will help facilitate learning, clear up confusions, and give me feedback about what materials need more attention.

Written Papers: 40% (in total)
Written assignments can be understood as exercises meant to develop your skills as a communicator of ideas and issues.

Assignment 0: A one page summary of Ewen Chapter 10, in class. Due: 9/9
Required but not graded—though you will receive feedback.

1st assignment: A two page summary of Jewish positions on a) Darwin and Evolution or b) Choseness. Emphasis on catching the essence of the issues in a readable form. Worth 10% Due: 9/18

2nd assignment: An opinion-editorial (op-ed) piece, 700-800 words. Worth 10% Due: 10/11

3rd assignment: An opinion-editorial (op-ed) on Israel issues. Worth 10% Due: 11/11

4th assignment: A final opinion-editorial on Jews and race in America. Worth 10% Due: 12/4

Writing and communicating is one of the most valuable skills you can cultivate in college. This course, controversial as it is, seeks to grow your ability to communicate to a general audience through writing. These assignments will require you to think through the material critically and communicate your understanding/interpretation of the material in writing to a general audience. Details on writing expectations and skills will be discussed in class. Assignments not turned in on time will be penalized 1 point per day.

Final Examination: 30%
Why take a course and then forget everything? The exam will enable you to revisit the entire semester, ‘take away’ important information, and develop your test-studying/taking skills. The exam will be mostly based on the prompt questions that I will supply for each week’s readings. The exam itself is mostly short answer (i.e. elevator speeches), fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, crossword puzzle. Exam is Wednesday December 11th, 8-10am; Plan accordingly.
Policy on Academic Honesty:
In sum: Don’t turn in work—in whole or in part—that is not your own. The following section in italics is quoted verbatim from the Temple University Bulletin for 2006-2007 and applies to this class: Temple University believes strongly in academic honesty and integrity. Plagiarism and academic cheating are, therefore, prohibited. Essential to intellectual growth is the development of independent thought and a respect for the thoughts of others ... Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's labor, another person's ideas, another person's words, and/or another person's substantial assistance. Normally, all work done for courses -- papers, examinations, homework exercises, laboratory reports, oral presentations -- is expected to be the individual effort of the student presenting the work. Any assistance must be reported to the instructor. If the work has entailed consulting other resources -- journals, books, or other media -- these resources must be cited in a manner appropriate to the course. It is the instructor's responsibility to indicate the appropriate manner of citation. Everything used from other sources -- suggestions for organization of ideas, ideas themselves, or actual language -- must be cited. Failure to cite borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Undocumented use of materials from the World Wide Web is plagiarism. Academic cheating is, generally, the thwarting or breaking of the general rules of academic work or the specific rules of the individual courses. It includes falsifying data; submitting, without the instructor's approval, work in one course which [sic] was done for another; helping others to plagiarize or cheat from one's own or another's work; or actually doing the work of another person. I reserve the right to report any instances of suspected plagiarism and academic cheating to the University Disciplinary Committee.

be. this. person. HONEST!
Reading Schedule: Subject to small adjustments

**Part I: Theories of Race, Racism, and Racial Identity**

Key Questions to be explored: What is race? Is it a biological entity, a social category, or something else? How is the category of race connected to racism? How is the category of race connected to other categories of identity, such as nation, gender and class?

Content goals of this section: To become familiar with the history of “race” and racism – major figures, events, and arguments. To see the connection with current debates.

Skill goals of this section: How to discern the “story” in historical and social scientific writing; How to summarize pieces of academic writing and make them accessible to a reading audience; How to anticipate objections to an argument.

**WEEK ONE INTRODUCTION: RACE MATTERS**

Monday August 26
Introduction: Judaism and Race. Martin Luther King’s last speech.

Wednesday August 28

Friday August 30

**WEEK TWO ASPECTS OF JUDAISM AND RACE**

Monday September 2 LABOR DAY, NO CLASS

Wednesday September 4
*Rosh HaShanah Begins Sundown*
-Primer on Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness.

Friday September 6
-“The Great Brain,” Haim Waizman July 2007


**WEEK THREE A PARTIAL HISTORY OF RACE PT. 2**

Monday September 9
*Due: One page Summary.*

Wednesday September 11


Friday September 13
Yom Kippur Begins Sundown

Recommended—on Chosenness:
- Chabad on “the Jewish Soul” (from Chabad.org)
- On Jewish Chosenness, Views by Jacobs, Eisen, Jospe, Ariel. (from myjewishlearning.com)

Recommended—on Jews and Evolution:
- Overview: Jews on Creationism & Evolution (from myjewishlearning.com)
- Rabbinic Council of America, “Statement on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design”

See also The Clergy Letter Project: http://theclergyletterproject.org/

WEEK FOUR THE POLITICS OF RACE
Monday September 16
- Daniel Pipes, “Was Obama a Muslim?” (danielpipes.org)
- “Next Year at the White House—A Seder Tradition”, NYTimes, March 27, 2010.

DUE: Wednesday 9/18 two page (double-spaced) summary of various positions on Darwinism and Evolution among Jews or the varieties of Jewish “Chosenness”. Emphasis on catching the essence of the issues in a readable form. Worth 10%

Wednesday September 18
-Due: Summary

In Class: Race and Comedy: Sarah Silverman, Ali G, Seinfeld

Friday September 20  


**Part II: History of Race, Racism and Judaism: Ancient and Modern**

Key Questions to Be Explored: Are Jews a "race"? How are Jews connected to other "races"? Historically, how have Jews been seen racially? How have Jews seen themselves? What are the key racial divisions among Jews around the world? What are the key moments in the history of Judaism during which race played a fundamental role? How have these moments been understood historically? How have class, sex, gender, and sexuality played a role in defining Jewish racial categories and identities?

Practical Goals: To develop critical perspectives on historical, political, and religious issues through debate and opinionated writing.

**WEEK FIVE  RACE AND IDENTITY IN THE HEBREW BIBLE**

Monday September 23  
-Genesis 9: 18-29; 25:19-34; Exodus 1-2; Numbers 12 (available online)  
-In Class: “The Goy’s Teeth” from *A Serious Man*.

Wednesday September 25  
-In class: *Prince of Egypt*

Friday September 27  


**WEEK SIX  JEWISH IDENTITY FROM ANTIQUITY TO MODERNITY, oy!**

Monday September 30  
Special Session! Guest Lecturer on the Bible and Race.  


Wednesday October 2
- Ashley Montagu, “Are Jews a Race?” Man’s Most Dangerous Myth. pp.218-236;
- Steven Kaplan, “If There are no Races, How can Jews be a "Race?" Journal of Modern Jewish Studies 2:1 (2003), pp.79-96.

Friday October 4
- The Jewish Body, chapters 4, 6, pp.48-60, 71-80.

Due: Friday October 11 Op-ed piece on Jewish History and Race.

WEEK SEVEN RISE OF MODERN ANTI-SEMITISM AND RACISM
Monday October 7
- Jewish Body, chapters 7-8, 13, pp. 81-109, 164-184.


Wednesday October 9
- Jewish Body, chapter 14, pp.185-206.

Recommended: Fredrickson, Racism, Chapter 2, 49-96. “The Rise of Modern Racism(s)”

Friday October 11

Due: First Op-ed.

Recommended: Mosse, Toward the Final Solution, Ch. 8 pp.113-128. “The Jews: Myth & Counter Myth”; Mosse, Toward the Final Solution, Chapter 9, pp.128-149.”Infected Christianity.”

WEEK EIGHT NAZISM, RACISM AND THE HOLOCAUST
Monday October 14
Anti-Semitic Myths, readings #s: 11- 14, 16-17, pp.65-119, 127-155.


Wednesday October 16
Anti-Semitic Myths, readings #s: 19-21, pp. 161-216.

Friday October 18  
**In class workshop on Holocaust denial.**
- Anti-Semitic Myths, readings #8: 28, pp. 283-290.


Israel is a tough, complex subject; students are encouraged to explore resources online to examine the multi-faceted issues facing Israeli society.

**WEEK NINE   ISRAEL, ZIONISM, RACISM AND ETHNICITY PT I.**
Monday October 21
- Ratzman, “Primer on Zionism and Israel”

Wednesday October 23
The UN “Zionism is Racism” Debate:
- UN resolution 3379
- Israeli Ambassador Hertzog’s response.
- Kathleen and Bill Christison, “Zionism as a Racist Ideology,” *Counterpunch.org*
- Judea Pearl, “Anti-Zionism is Racism”
- Alan Dershowitz *The Case for Israel* (excerpts)

Friday October 25

**WEEK TEN   ISRAEL, ZIONISM, RACISM AND ETHNICITY PT II.**
Monday October 28
Rachel Shabi, *We Look Like the Enemy*, Prologue, Chapter 1-2, pp. 2-50.


Wednesday October 30
Friday November 1
- Jeff Halper, “The Matrix of Control”
- Kevin Coval, “Hero Israel” (poem)

Israeli hip hop. Please view selections online. Hadag Nahash, the Sticker Song. Subliminal.

Recommended: Arthur Gish Hebron Journal, Al-Tuwani Journal; Amos Oz, In the Land of Israel; David Grossman, Sleeping on a Wire.

2nd op-ed topics on Israel made available.

Special Session: Channels of Rage documentary about Israeli/Palestinian Hip Hop

WEEK ELEVEN  JEWS ARE/OF COLOR
Monday November 4

Wednesday November 6
- Introduction to Black Zion: African American Religious Encounters with Judaism
- “Black and Jewish, and Seeing No Contradiction” NYTimes, August 27, 2010


Friday November 8
African Jewish Communities (TBA)

Due: Monday Nov 11th Op-ed on Issues of Ethnicity in Israel.

Part III: Race and Jewish Identity in the United States

Key Questions to be Explored: How have Jews seen themselves/been seen by others in the diverse landscape of the United States? What is the racial make-up of American Jews today? What is the origin and nature of the presumption of Jewish whiteness? What are the relationships among Jews and race in the United States today?

WEEK TWELVE

Monday November 11
- Kaufman, Broken Alliance, preface, intro, chapter 1; ix-48.

Due: Second Op-ed.


Wednesday November 13
Broken Alliance, Chapter 2, pp. 49-84.


Friday November 15
Broken Alliance, Chapter 3, pp.85-124.


WEEK THIRTEEN  JEWS AND BLACKS: CIVIL RIGHTS AND BEYOND

Monday November 18
Broken Alliance, Chapter 4 pp. 125-164.

Josh Dubler, author of Down in the Chapel: Religious Life in an American Prison. Speaking in my 10-10:50 course. If you are free that hour, plan on attending.

Wednesday November 20
Broken Alliance, 5 165-195.

Friday November 22
Broken Alliance, Chapter 6, pp. 197-236. Please view Anne Deavre Smith’s Fires in the Mirror, on Youtube, over the weekend—about 90 minutes—for discussion on Monday.

Final Op-ed Topics Handed Out
WEEK FOURTEEN  THE RISE & FALL OF A BLACK-JEWISH ALLIANCE
Monday November 25
Broken Alliance, Chapter 7, pp. 237-266; Smith, Fires in the Mirror (youtube).

Wednesday November 27

Friday November 29 NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING!

Due: Wednesday Dec. 4th –Final Op-ed on race, Jews, and America.

WEEK FIFTEEN  CONCLUDING DISCUSSIONS
Monday Dec 2
Broken Alliance, Chapter 8, epilogue, pp. 267-300.


Wednesday Dec 4 Last Class

Due: Third Op-Ed.

Recommended: -“Black, Jewish Vote for Obama May Signal a Renewed Tie,” The Forward, 10/13/2008;

Dec 5-6. Study days. A study session will be organized for the exam on one or both of these dates.

Exam: Wednesday December 11th, 8:00-10am Same room.