**Religious Studies 378: American Jewish Experience**

Fall 2016 • Tu/Th 11:00-12:15, Sierra Hall 190 Professor: Dr. Jennifer Thompson

Dr. Thompson’s Office Hours: 8:45-10:45 a.m., Santa Susana 232 • Office Phone Number: x 2963 • Email: [jthompson@csun.edu](mailto:jthompson@csun.edu)

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**: In this course, you will learn about the experience of the Jewish religious-ethnic community in America from the colonial period to the present. Our focus will be on the diversity of American Jews, their relationship to other American subcultures and ethnic groups, and the issues that concern American Jews today.

**SLOS FOR RS 378:** By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the role of Jews in American civic and political life since the colonial era, including relationships with non- Jews generally and with other minority groups in particular.
2. Describe how the American context – particularly the dominant Christian religious traditions and professed separation of church and state – shaped Jewish religious discourse, practice, institutions, and values.
3. Explain the changes in Jewish identity, definitions of Jewishness, and varieties of Judaism in America.
4. Identify and explain the role gender played in both individual and communal experience.
5. Articulate some of the concerns that contemporary American Jews have for the future of Jews and Judaism in the United States.

**GE IN COMPARATIVE CULTURAL STUDIES/GENDER, RACE, CLASS, ETHNICITY STUDIES & FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** Goal: Students will

understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences, and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies. By the end of the semester, students will be able to

1. Describe and compare different cultures;
2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world;
3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations;
4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society;
5. Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.

**INFORMATION COMPETENCE (GE DESIGNATION IC):** Goal: Students will progressively develop information competence skills throughout their undergraduate career by developing a basic understanding of information retrieval tools and practices as well as improving their ability to evaluate and synthesize information ethically. By the end of the semester, students will be able to

1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed;
2. Demonstrate effective search strategies for finding information using a variety of sources and methods;
3. Locate, retrieve, and evaluate a variety of relevant information including print and electronic formats.
4. Organize and synthesize information in order to communicate effectively;
5. Explain the legal and ethical dimensions of the use of information.

**WRITING INTENSIVE (GE DESIGNATION WI):** Goal: Students will develop their abilities to express themselves and the knowledge they have obtained through practicing various forms of writing within different disciplinary contexts. Writing intensive courses will build upon the skills gained in the Analytical Reading and Expository Writing section of Basic Skills. In each WI course students will be required to complete writing assignments totaling a minimum of 2500 words. By the end of the semester, students will be able to

1. Develop and clearly define their ideas through writing;
2. Ethically integrate sources of various kinds into their writing;
3. Compose texts through drafting, revising, and completing a finished product;
4. Express themselves through their writing by posing questions, making original claims, and coherently structuring complex ideas;
5. Revise their writing for greater cogency and clarity;
6. Utilize adopted communication modes and documentation styles of specific disciplines (MLA, APA, Chicago, CBE, etc) where appropriate.

**SERVICE-LEARNING:** This course involves a significant service-learning component. Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Through service-learning, students use what they learn in the classroom to solve real-life problems. They not only learn the practical applications of their studies, they become actively contributing citizens and community members through the service they perform. For this course’s service-learning component, students will collect information about Jewish community resources and contribute to an online guide at mappingthejewishvalley.com.

All of these competencies will be demonstrated through participation in class discussion, written assignments, and the community engagement project.

### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States, 1654-2000*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004 (available at Matador Bookstore and on e- reserve at Oviatt Library).

Marc Dollinger and Gary Zola, eds., *American Jewish History: A Primary Source Reader*. Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014 (available at Matador Bookstore).

Additional sources will be posted on Moodle under the week in which they will be used in class.

### LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

This class will provide you the following opportunities to meet its learning objectives:

* You will have the opportunity to learn about the trajectory of American Jewish history across several centuries.

• You will have the opportunity to read primary texts from a variety of sources drawn from the breadth of American Jewish history.

• You will have the opportunity to actively participate in class discussions (i.e. offer insights, think out loud about various scenarios, construct verbal arguments, construct verbal objections or support for positions using evidence).

• You will have the opportunity to apply the knowledge of American Jewish history that you gain to contemporary Jewish settings in Los Angeles.

### EVALUATING YOUR LEARNING

Grades provide feedback to students about how well they are meeting the learning objectives of a class. This means that grades are earned, not given; they are neither a reward nor a punishment, but rather measures of how well a student has learned and grown as a result of taking a particular class. I will determine the degree to which you have met my and your learning objectives for the class in the following ways.

1. PARTICIPATION. To fully meet the learning goals of this course, you must attend the entirety of every class meeting. You must arrive prepared, with all assigned materials. The discussions we’ll be having in class are an integral part of the learning process. The things you think and say are important, and sharing your ideas with classmates may well give you new ideas. You cannot make up in-class assignments.
2. ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FOLLOWING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

• Reading quizzes (130 points): A 10-point quiz on the day’s reading will be given in the first five minutes of each class session.

• In-class and online assignments (400 points): These include primary text analyses, film analyses, the syllabus scavenger hunt, and the academic honesty tutorial. Points may not be made up if you miss class, arrive late, or leave early.

• Three-page papers (280 points total): Assignment sheets and grading rubrics will be posted at the top of the course Moodle page.

• Museum paper: Visions and Values: Jewish Life from Antiquity to America exhibit at the Skirball Cultural Center. Consider joining a guided tour. Admission is free on Thursdays. Check Skirball.org website for hours and days of operation. ***Paper due Tuesday, October 25, 11:59 pm, on Moodle*.** 120 points.

• Midterm self-evaluation: ***due Tuesday, Oct. 18, 11:59 pm, on Moodle***. 80 points.

• Final self-evaluation ***due Tuesday, Dec. 13, 11:59 pm., on Moodle***. 80 points.

• Mapping the Jewish Valley assignments (190 points): These include site visits, a class presentation plan, a class presentation, and peer feedback.

### GRADE SCALE

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| A 93-100 | A- 90-92 | B+ 88-89 | B 83-87 | B- 80-82 | C+ 78-79 | C 73-77 | C- 70-72 |
| D+ 68-69 | D 63-67 | D- 60-62 | F 59 and below |  |  |  |  |

A grade of C indicates that a student has met the learning objectives in a basic way by following assignment directions completely. A grade of A indicates that a student has gone far beyond this level, demonstrating deep understanding of and independent thought about course topics in clear, polished writing.

Grades for all assignments will be recorded in the gradebook on Moodle. You may see your grades by clicking on “My Grades” on your Moodle page. Please do not email me to ask what your grade is; the information is available to you on Moodle.

Grade appeals will be considered only when: at least 24 hours after you receive the grade, you explain in writing the reason for the appeal, pointing to specific evidence in the assignment that you turned in that supports your argument (i.e., a mathematical error). This appeal must be submitted before the next assignment is due.

### TIMELINE FOR SCHOLARLY INVESTIGATION INTO THE AMERICAN JEWISH EXPERIENCE

\*\*\* NOTE: This schedule may change during the semester. See Moodle for the most up-to-date information. \*\*\*

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| **Week 1:**  **Aug. 30,**  **Sept. 1** | TUESDAY: WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT FROM THIS CLASS?  Introduction to the syllabus, the course, and each other  *AJH*, p. 33-35 (Joseph Salvador, 1785; Rebecca Samuel, 1791) | THURSDAY: HOW DID THE AMERICAN SETTING AFFECT JEWS AND JUDAISM?  Reading quiz 1; In-class assignment 1  Diner, “Introduction” and Ch. 1, “American Jewish Origins: 1654-1776”;  The Constitution of the United States [on Moodle] *AJH*, p. 10-12 (Stuyvesant & Dutch West India Co.); *AJH*, p. 15 ("Description by a non-Jew," 1748)  *AJH*, p. 22-24 (“The Oldest Extant Constitution," 1728)  *AJH,* p. 29 (“Congregation Gate of Heaven," 1773)  **Online assignments due by 11:59 pm tonight:**  Academic honesty tutorial Syllabus scavenger hunt |
| **Week 2:**  **Sept. 6, 8** | TUESDAY: HOW DID THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION AFFECT  JEWS?  Reading quiz 2, In-class assignment 2  Diner, Ch. 2, “Becoming American: 1776-1820”; The Declaration of Independence [on Moodle] *AJH*, p. 57-58 (“Gentiles of Philadelphia," 1788); *AJH*, p. 41-43 (Newport/Washington, 1790);  *AJH*, p. 45-48 (“Mordecai M. Noah," 1816; Thomas Jefferson, 1820) | THURSDAY: JEWS AND IMMIGRATION  Reading quiz 3, In-class assignment 3:  Diner, Ch. 3, “A Century of Migration: 1820-1924,” p. 71-92 *AJH*, p. 69-72 (Penina Moïse, 1820; Charles L. Mailert, 1835; "Reasons," 1839; Joseph Jonas, 1843)  *AJH*, p. 131-140 (Letter to the Editor, 1882; Abraham Cahan, 182; Emma Lazarus, 1883; H. L. Sabsovich, 1891; Mary Antin, 1899; HIAS, 1909; Jewish Federation, 1917) |
| **Week 3: Sept.**  **13, 15** | TUESDAY: JEWS AND WORK  Reading quiz 4, In-class assignment 4 | THURSDAY: WHAT CHANGES DID THE REFORM MOVEMENT INTRODUCE INTO JUDAISM? |

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|  | Diner Ch. 3, p. 92-111  *AJH*, p. 76-78 (Abraham Kohn, 1842-1843; Henry J. Labatt, 1861)  *AJH*, p. 142-152 (Julia Richman, 1893; Morris Winchevsky, 1895; "Women as Wage Earners," 1897; "Protocol of Peace," 1910; Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire, 1911; Rose Schneiderman, 1967)  *AJH*, p. 187-190 (Judah L. Magnes, 1919; Stephen S. Wise, 1919) | Reading quiz 5, In-class assignment 5  Diner, Ch 4, “A Century of Jewish Life in America: 1820- 1924," p. 112-134  *AJH,* p. 24-25 (Prosecutor's Summary, 1755-56)  *AJH,* p. 79-82 (Memorial, 1824; Abraham Rice, 1848) *AJH,* p. 153-154 (The Trefah Banquet, 1883; Pittsburgh Platform, 1885)  A Partial Listing of Jewish Ritual Obligations; Principles of Belief are not Formally Defined in Judaism [Moodle] |
| **Week 4: Sept.**  **20 & 22** | TUESDAY: REPRODUCING JEWS  Reading quiz 6, In-class assignment 6  Diner, Chapter 4, p. 135-154  *AJH*, p. 82-86 (Rosa Mordecai, 1850s; Isaac Jalonick, 1853;  I.J. Benjamin, 1859-1862)  *AJH*, p. 155-57 (Ray Frank, 1890; Cyrus Adler, 1894) | THURSDAY: WOMEN'S ROLES IN AMERICAN JUDAISM  **Professor Hasia Diner visits our class!**  In-class assignment 7. |
| **Week 5: Sept.**  **27 & 29** | TUESDAY: JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS  Reading quiz 7, In-class assignment 8  Diner, Chapter 5, “A Century of Jewish Politics: 1820-1920," p. 155-202  *AJH*, p. 37-39, 40-41 (Maryland, 1776; NY, 1777; PA, 1787)  *AJH*, p. 73 (Jacob Ezekiel, 1841)  *AJH*, p. 141 ("Revised Words," 1915)  *AJH*, p. 177-180 (NCJW, 1893; AJC, 1906; Schiff, 1911) | THURSDAY: ANTISEMITISM  Reading quiz 8, In-class assignment 9  Diner, Chapter 6, “At Home and Beyond: 1924-1948,” p. 205- 228  *AJH*, p. 61-62 (Milledoler, 1817)  *AJH*, p. 91-92 (Cohen-Chisholm, 1827; Kursheedt, 1840)  *AJH*, p. 114-116 (Double Lynching, 1868)  *AJH*, p. 170-176 (Wolf, 1903; "The Mass Meeting," 1903;  "Bintel Brief," 1907; Bingham, 1908; Frank, 1915)  *AJH*, p. 217-231; 272-274 (various) |
| **Week 6:**  **Oct. 4, 6** | **TUESDAY: (ROSH HASHANAH, DAY 2): NO CLASS MEETING**  ANTISEMITISM IN THE EARLY 20TH CENTURY  Online Assignment 1  Watch film: *The People v. Leo Frank* on reserve in Music & Media library, or rent streaming video from https://vimeo.com/ondemand/16620. | THURSDAY: THE HOLOCAUST AND ZIONISM  Reading quiz 9, In-class assignment 10  Diner, Ch 6, p. 228-258  AJH, p. 165-169; 207-216; 245-274; 322. |
| **Week 7: Oct. 11**  **& 13** | TUESDAY: INTERFAITH & INTERGROUP RELATIONS  Reading quiz 10, In-class assignment 11 | THURSDAY: AMERICAN JEWS AND WORLD JEWRY  Reading quiz 11, In-class assignment 12 |

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|  | Diner, Ch. 7, “A Golden Age? 1948-1967,” p. 259-283  *AJH*, p. 19-20; 52-53; 65-66; 118-122; 161; 203-206; 306-32;  368-69. | Diner, Ch. 7, 283-304  AJH, 277-280.  Additional readings TBA |
| **Week 8: Oct. 18**  **& 20** | **TUESDAY: (SUKKOT HOLIDAY): NO CLASS MEETING**  ***Midterm self-evaluation due October 18, 11:59 p.m., on Moodle.*** | THURSDAY: DO CONTEMPORARY JEWS AGREE ABOUT ANY RELIGIOUS MATTERS?  Reading quiz 12, In-class assignment 13  Diner, Chapter 8, “In Search of Continuity: 1967-2000" Excerpts from Jennifer Thompson’s interviews;  Central Conference of American Rabbis, “Patrilineal and matrilineal descent”  Additional readings TBA |
| **Week 9: Oct. 25**  **& 27** | **TUESDAY: (SIMCHAT TORAH HOLIDAY): NO CLASS MEETING**  ***Museum paper due October 25, 11:59 pm, on Moodle.*** | **THURSDAY: MAPPING THE JEWISH VALLEY PROJECT: INTRODUCTION**  Reading quiz 13, In-class assignment 14  “Jewish,” in *How to be a Perfect Stranger*; Excerpt from *Coming of Age in Jewish America.*  Discuss research question: How have the "intergroup relations" of the mid-20th century become part of intra-group relations for American Jewish today?  Team 1: Race, ethnicity, and American Jewry Team 2: Interfaith families and American Jewry  What resources do you already have to help answer the research question? What additional resources would help you? |
| **Week 10:**  **Nov. 1, 3** | TUESDAY: TEAM MEETINGS  Tentative: Team visits | THURSDAY: TEAM MEETINGS  In-class assignment 15 Debriefing on team visits |
| **Week 11:**  **Nov. 8, 10** | TUESDAY: TEAM MEETINGS  In-class assignment 16 Readings TBA | THURSDAY: TEAM MEETINGS  In-class assignment 17 Readings TBA |
| **Week 12:**  **Nov. 15, 17** | TUESDAY: TEAM MEETINGS  In-class assignment 18 Readings TBA | THURSDAY: TEAM MEETINGS  In-class assignment 19 Readings TBA |

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| **Week 13:**  **Nov. 22, 24** | TUESDAY: TEAM MEETINGS  In-class assignment 20 Readings TBA | **THURSDAY: THANKSGIVING; NO CLASS MEETING** |
| **Week 14:**  **Nov. 29, Dec 1** | TUESDAY: TEAM REHEARSALS | THURSDAY: TEAM REHEARSALS |
| **Week 15:**  **Dec. 6, 8** | TUESDAY: TEAM 1 PRESENTS | THURSDAY: TEAM 2 PRESENTS |
| **Week 16:**  **Dec. 13** | **TUESDAY: *Final self-evaluation due on Moodle by 11:59 pm.*** Today is also **Partial Credit Day**: ONE late or missing assignment may be turned in for up to 50% credit by 11:59  p.m. on Dec. 13. |  |

**IN ORDER TO CREATE THE BEST POSSIBLE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, WE WILL ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:**

## We will be prepared.

• Readings must be done before the class for which they are assigned. Hard copies of all assigned texts for the day must be brought to class. You may print readings for free at the computer lab at the USU.

## We will consistently work to improve our writing.

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1 Source: <http://www.inboundmarketingagents.com/inbound-marketing-agents-blog/bid/258135/The-25-Best-Internet-Memes-of-All-Time>

* The highest possible grade for typed work containing capitalization errors, spelling errors, and/or incomplete sentences is B+. The highest possible grade for a written work containing a significant number of these errors is C+.
* Work must also include parenthetical citations for all sources used. Work that lacks citations is considered plagiarism.

## We will turn in all work on time, in the assigned format.

* You will need to spend about 8.25 hours per week and log in to the course several times per week to do well.
* In general, assignments cannot be made up after they are due (with the exception of one, on Partial Credit Day). Assignments that are not turned in on time will receive zero credit. Moodle is the final arbiter if there are any questions about whether a submission was turned in on time.
* Start early enough on your assignments that you can overcome any unforeseen difficulties. If you attempt to submit your assignments within the half-hour before the assignment is due, you are more likely to encounter technical errors that cause your submission to fail.
* Do not email your work to the professor unless specifically instructed to do so.
* Take a screenshot each time you upload an assignment that shows that you were successful, just in case any technical problems arise later. You do not need to turn in the screenshot unless the instructor asks for it, but it is wise to keep it until the course ends.
* If you run into technical problems while submitting an assignment before its deadline, take one or more screenshots that show what the problem is and send them to the instructor immediately. I will consider requests for extensions related to technical problems only if you follow these instructions.
* The Faculty Technology Department helps faculty and students with Moodle-related questions, at 818-677-3443 on weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
* Partial Credit Day offers you the opportunity to turn in ONE missed assignment for up to half credit.

## We will use common sense and courtesy about class attendance.

* Students who are more than five (5) minutes late to class will not be admitted. Being unable to find parking easily is not an excuse for arriving late.
* There are no excused or unexcused absences for this course.
* For the sake of public health, students who are sick may make up in-class work provided that they notify me of their absence and illness *before* the missed class. I may revise this policy if I suspect that it is being abused.
* Do the reading from the missed class session and ask your fellow students to fill you in on the class discussion.
* ***Personal electronic gadgetry*** (e.g., cell phones, laptops) may not be used in class. Classroom computers will be used for in-class assignments.
* Students who use such devices without permission during class will receive one warning. Any subsequent usage will result in their being asked to leave and losing all daily quiz and assignment points for the day.

## We will ask for help when we need it.

* I am available by phone and email during my office hours. Be in touch if you need to clear up any material that you don’t understand or if a personal crisis has arisen that affects your ability to do well in the course. I am glad to help you find ways to do well in the course when you plan ahead and try your best.
* You may also seek basic information from classmates through the Moodle “Got questions?” forum, and you may seek help with writing from the Learning Resource Center in the library.
* I am glad to accommodate students with disabilities as directed by the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) office or the National Center on Deafness (NCOD).

## We will correspond professionally and regularly.

* Check your CSUN email account at least daily to keep up with any announcements. I may email updates or clarifications to assignments.
* Use your CSUN email account. Ensure that your CSUN email account displays your full name, not “Me” or some other handle.
* Include a salutation (i.e., “Dear Dr. Thompson”).
* Sign your email with your first and last name (e.g., James Smith).
* Write a brief (2-3 sentence) message that begins with your primary reason for contacting the instructor and that is free of shorthand, slang, or unnecessary abbreviations (e.g. LOL, wassup?, plz).
* I will try to respond to you within one business day.
* If your question is about an assignment or a policy, check the syllabus and the course FAQ on Moodle before emailing me. I might not reply to an email if it asks a question covered in the syllabus or the FAQ. If you have not heard back from me in one business day, it's likely that the information is covered there.
* Check Moodle frequently to view feedback on assignments, keep track of your grades, and find details about upcoming assignments.

## We will be honest.

California State University, Northridge expects honesty and integrity from all members of its community. Students found guilty of cheating on assignments or examinations, plagiarism, or other academic dishonesty are subject to a failing grade in the course. Students may be suspended or dismissed from the University upon the recommendation of the Department Chair or the Dean of the student’s college.

* Students may not work together on assignments done outside of class, unless otherwise specified by the professor. Unauthorized collaboration may result in a grade of zero for the assignment.
* Parenthetical citations are required in all work for this course unless the instructor states otherwise. Work lacking appropriate citations is considered plagiarism, regardless of intent to plagiarize.
* If I suspect plagiarism on any assignment, I will immediately report it to the Office of Student Affairs, at which point the offense will become part of your permanent record at CSUN. The student will receive zero credit for a plagiarized assignment for the first offense. Any student who commits plagiarism or inappropriate collaboration as defined above more than once during the semester will fail the course.
* See Oviatt Library’s web page for information on plagiarism: <http://library.csun.edu/Guides/ResearchStrategies/AvoidingPlagiarism>
* You should also ask a librarian, your professor(s), and/or the staff at the Learning Resource Center if you are not 100% sure you understand what constitutes plagiarism. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism; ignorance is not an excuse.

# Sources should be cited using the Chicago/Turabian author-date style. For examples, see <http://library.williams.edu/citing/styles/chicago2.php>

Please use common courtesy and common sense. I cannot list every approved or unapproved behavior on the syllabus. The guiding rule is that everyone should be respectful and attentive in class.