

# History of the Jewish People II

*Dean Henry Abramson*

Touro College South, Miami Beach

Course Highlights

Spring 2013

## Renewal and Divergence

*The incredible Safed Circle! Rabbi Yosef Karo and the creation of the Code of Jewish Law, the Kabbalah of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero and the Arizal; the challenge of Baruch Spinoza and modernity.*



## The Rise of Eastern Europe

*The Khmelnyts'kyi Rebellion of 1648-49, the false messiah*

*Shabbetai Tsvi, and the birth of Hasidism.*

## The Haskalah

*Moses Mendelsohn and the challenge to tradition; the response of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch.*



## Women in Jewish Society

*Diverse women like Gluckel, the Maiden of Ludmir, and Betty Friedan.*

## The Holocaust

*Rise of Nazism, the plight of Jews in the Ghettos and Death Camps, rescue and resistance.*



## Israel, the USSR, and post-war America

*Golda Meir, Albert Einstein, and Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson.*



## Study Jewish History Online!

*This course is optimized for students who want a robust academic learning experience but need the flexibility of distance learning. A wide variety of instructional tools are used to provide students with a strong alternative to conventional classroom learning. Is it right for you?*

### Academic Requirements

There are no prerequisites for this course, although HIS 155: History of the Jewish People I is recommended. All readings, videos, and other multimedia assignments will be provided online, so you don't even have to buy a textbook! You might find it useful, however, to pick up a copy of Michael Brenner, *A Short History of the Jews* (Princeton University Press, 2010) ISBN: 978-0691143514 as a recommended supplement to the readings.

### Technology requirements

You'll need a reliable personal computer with a speedy internet connection. Headphones or speakers will be necessary for the audio, and if you choose to participate in the CyberOffice

Hours, you will need a webcam as well. To access the readings, you'll need an off-campus login for the Touro Library System (click [here](#) to apply).

### Time Commitment

Don't be fooled by cheap imitations--just because you can attend class in your pajamas, learning online can be a serious challenge! Plan on spending **at least five hours a week** working on this class, between watching the videos, working through the readings, and completing the assignments.

### Students in Miami

A portion of this class consists of lectures delivered as a part of the Young Israel of Bal Harbour adult education program, Wednesday nights 8:30-9:30 pm (see below for dates of individual lectures, click [here](#) for location). Attendance at these lectures is not mandatory, since videos of the lectures will be made available online, but attendance will fulfill the Virtual Attendance requirement (see below for information on what that means).

[Meet Your Instructor: Click Here!](#)



### Dean Henry (Hillel) Abramson

**holds a PhD in History from the University of Toronto. He has held visiting appointments and post-doctoral fellowships at Cornell, Oxford, Harvard and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and is the author of five books on Jewish History and Thought, and has received numerous awards for his teaching and research, including the Excellence in the Academy award from the National Education Association.**



# How to Succeed in This Course

*Each unit in this course has multiple assessments. Here's a description of each type of assessment, and guidelines for student success.*

## Virtual Attendance



Woody Allen once said, “eighty percent of success is just showing up.” This course isn’t quite as generous, but Virtual Attendance is worth **10% of the final grade**. Participate in the **Discussion Board**, an open-ended forum to comment on issues raised in the learning unit. I’ll pose a question for debate--usually something that connects the material to issues in contemporary Jewish history--and invite your commentary. Grades will be based on the quality of your participation, measured in terms of the sophistication of your argument, the sources you bring to prove your point, and the collegial nature of your discourse with others.

## Unit Quizzes



Each of the ten units in this

course has at least one quiz associated with it. Part of the quiz is intended to reinforce recall, that is, help you remember the key points of the lectures or readings (yes, you will be responsible for everything assigned). The quizzes are all open-book, and you can go back and review the videos to find the correct answers, but it is important that all the answers submitted be your own, without any help from your spouse or Uncle Shloime. **All students must complete the Online Honor Code Agreement.** Quizzes are worth **10% of the final grade**.

## Term Paper



Students will be required to complete a **2000-word Term**

**Paper**, due on the last day of class. The topic of the paper will be a biographical analysis of any individual who made an impact on Jewish History since the Spanish Expulsion of 1492. Be sure to place the biography within the larger social, religious, economic and political trends of the period. The paper must be supported by full scholarly apparatus, including a bibliography and citations. The Term Paper is worth **20% of the final grade**.

## Proctored Tests



This course will have one **midterm (25% of final grade)** and one **final exam (35% of final grade)**. The midterm and final exams must be administered under full proctored conditions, meaning you must take them on a Touro Campus at a time scheduled by the local proctor. No aids will be allowed. The test material will be online, and will include a mix of multiple choice and short essay questions.

## Bonus Credit



During the course of the semester there will be several opportunities for Bonus Credit. I’m looking for creativity here: bonus assignments might include submitting video reviews of the lectures or themes treated in the Discussion Board, or participation in the weekly CyberOffice Hour (you’ll need a webcam to do this properly), and other ideas as I think of them (open to suggestions!).

*Online education requires students to demonstrate a lot of self-motivation and initiative to keep up with class work. It's your responsibility to manage your schedule so you don't fall behind! Set reasonable goals for weekly progress rather than leaving a large amount of material for the end of term. As Rabenu Yonah of Gerondi puts it in his classic Sha'arei Teshuvah (and echoed in the famous Letter of the Vilna Gaon): הרגל על כל דבר שלטון, “regularity has power over everything.” To reinforce this study skill, **all assessments will only be available for a limited amount of time: check Blackboard for deadlines!***

## THE LEARNING UNITS

*Okay, so this is how it works: The course is divided into ten Learning Units, which represent a compromise between a chronological and a geographic overview of Jewish history since the Spanish Expulsion of 1492. Some of the Units are Thematic, meaning they cover an idea or trend rather than a specific period of history (e.g. Women in Jewish Society), but they are scheduled in such a way that they build on the previous Learning Units. Students are recommended to proceed through the Learning Units in Sequence.*

*All the material is available on Blackboard. Ensure that you have a quiet place and time to work on the course. The lectures focus on the biographies of Jews who represent the periods under discussion. Introductory videos fill in background information when necessary.*

*Each Learning Unit has assigned readings, at least one video, one or more Unit Quizzes or other assignments, and a Discussion Board. Do not attempt the assessments until you complete the assigned material (duh).*

*CyberOffice Hours will be held on Google+ at a time to be determined. You will need a Gmail account to participate. Miami students can, of course, visit me in my RealOffice at Touro College South.*

*Any questions? Write to me 24/6 at [abramson@touro.edu](mailto:abramson@touro.edu). I'll try to respond within one business day.*

*Good luck, or still better, hatslahah!*

*Henry (Hillel) Abramson*



## Learning Outcomes

*Students who complete HIS 156 will gain broad familiarity with the major themes and trends of Jewish History from the Spanish Expulsion to the turn of the 21st century. Major themes to be covered include the codification of Jewish law and modern dissent, the implications of gender in early modern Jewish society, strategies of communal and individual acculturation to the Diaspora from assimilation to insularity, the development of antisemitism during the Enlightenment, and major intellectual trends within the Jewish world.*



## Introduction

*A video overview of the course, background of the instructor. No required readings or graded assessments, but students will be required to complete the Touro College South Online Learning Honor Code Statement.*

- 1) Video: Overview of the Syllabus
- 2) Readings (optional):
  - i. Abramson, Henry, "[Studying the Talmud: 400 Repetitions and the Divine Voice](#)," *Thought and Action* 27:1 (Spring 2001), 94-100.
  - 2) Abramson, Henry, "Just Different: The Last Jewish Family of Ansonville, Ontario," *Canadian Jewish Studies: Etudes Juives Canadiennes* 9 (2001), 155-169.
- 3) Students must complete the Touro College South Online Learning Code of Conduct statement.



## Unit One: The Medieval Background

*A brief summary of relevant material covered in HIS 155, culminating in the Spanish Expulsion of 1492. The assessment will include some map work and image analysis.*

- 1) Video: The Medieval Background
- 2) Video: Johannes Pfefferkorn
- 3) Video: Benevida Abravanel
- 4) Video: Don Isaac Abravanel (Live 2/6)
- 5) Readings: Marc Saperstein, "The Quality of Rabbinic Leadership in the Generation of

*Expulsion," *Anuario de Estudios Medievales* 42/1 (2012), 95-118.*

### 6) Assessments:

- i. Map and Image Quiz
- ii. Discussion Board Question: "Ashkenazic culture turned inward after the Crusades, essentially viewing non-Jewish society as fundamentally toxic and off limits to Jewish participation. Sephardic culture, on the other hand, boasted numerous figures who participated actively in the secular political and cultural life of the larger world. Does the Spanish Expulsion effectively invalidate this approach? Are there relevant comparisons to the 21st century?"

## Unit Two: Incipient Revival and Divergence

*This unit will look at the aftermath of the Spanish Expulsion in two distinct areas: the brief but intense flourishing of the Safed Center, and the growth of heterodox attitudes among Jews in Amsterdam, notably Baruch Spinoza.*

- 1) Video: [Rabbi Yosef Karo](#)
- 2) Video: Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (Live 2/13)
- 3) Video: Baruch Spinoza
- 4) Readings:
  - i. Abramson, Henry, *The Kabbalah of Forgiveness: A Reader's Guide to Rabbi Moshe Cordovero's The Palm Tree of Devorah* (MS)
5. Assessments:

- i. Unit Quiz
- ii. Discussion Board Question: "Rabbi Moshe Cordovero advocated lifting the ban on Kabbalah study for students under forty, arguing that even twenty-year old students can grow tremendously through this esoteric science. On the other end of the spectrum, the Jewish community of Amsterdam issued severe bans against Baruch Spinoza for his philosophical inquiries. How should a Jewish community deal with divergence from group norms? Why does a Jew go 'off the derekh,' and are there ways a community should deal with this challenge in the 21st century?"

## Unit Three: The Rise of the Eastern European Center

*The rise of the Eastern European Center, including a discussion of the economic status of the Jews in Slavic lands, the Khmel'nyts'kyi Rebellion, the appearance of the false messiah Shabbetai Tsvi, and the birth of Hasidism.*

- 1) Video: Nathan of Hanover (Live 2/20)
- 2) Video: [Shabbetai Tsvi](#)
- 3) Video: [Israel ben Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov](#)
- 4) Video: [Khane-Rokhl Webermacher, the Maiden of Ludmir](#)
- 5) Music: Samples of Klezmer, traditional and modern.
- 6) Readings: Jan Doktor, "The Beginnings of Beshtian Hasidism in Poland," *Shofar* 29.3 (Spring 2011), 41-VII.

### Assessments:

- i. Unit Quiz
- ii. Discussion Board Question: "On the one hand, the Hasidic revival opened up new possibilities for the participation of women in traditionally male roles in Jewish culture, as evidenced by figures like the Maiden of Ludmir in the 19th century and the activity of Chabad *shlukhot* in the 20th and 21st century. On the other hand, the insular nature of some Hasidic groups ultimately place more restrictive



measures on women's activity, including bans on driving cars and even more serious allegations made by women who have left the community. What accounts for this bifurcation of attitudes to women in various Hasidic movements?"



*Socialism, Diaspora Nationalism, and Renewed Traditionalism.*

- 1) Lecture: [Theodor Herzl](#)
- 2) Lecture: [Leon Trotsky](#)
- 3) Lecture: Shimon Dubnow (Live 3/6)
- 4) Readings: Henry Abramson, "The End of Intimate Insularity: New Narratives of Jewish History in the Post-Soviet Era," *Construction and Deconstruction of National Identities in Post-Soviet Eurasia*, ed. Tadayuki Hayashi, Sapporo: Hokkaido University, 2003, 87-115.

## Four: The Haskalah

*An overview of the Haskalah, the 19th century Jewish adaptation of the Aufklärung, a secular, modernizing movement that swept Europe during the 18th century. Emphasis will be placed on the increasing pace of change, from the modern Hebrew writings of Rabbi Moshe Hayim Luzzatto, an individual with strong ties to traditional Rabbinic culture, through the thought of Moses Mendelsohn and the penetration of Jews into secular society through the offices of women like Rahel Varnhagen. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch provides one of the traditionalist responses to the challenge of this movement.*

- 1) Video: [Rabbi Moshe Hayim Luzzatto](#)
- 2) Video: Moses Mendelsohn (Live 2/27)
- 3) Video: [Rahel Varnhagen](#)
- 4) Video: [Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch](#)
- 5) Readings: Adam Teller, "Tradition and Crisis? Eighteenth-Century Critiques of the Polish-Lithuanian Rabbinate," *Jewish Social Studies* 17.3 (Spring 2011), 1-39.
- 6) Assessments:

- i. Unit Quiz.
- ii. Discussion Board Question: "The traditionalist response to the challenge of Haskalah took two forms: adaptation, as we see in the life and work of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, and rejection, as we see in the position of Rabbi Moshe Sofer. Both approaches continue to thrive through the 20th century. Will they survive the 21st? What challenges does each approach face in this generation?"

## Unit Five: The Rise of Jewish Mass Politics

*At the turn of the 20th century, Jews faced a range of five basic political orientations: Emigration, Zionism,*

### 5) Assessments:

- i. Unit Quiz
- ii. Discussion Board Question: "As the saying goes, 'two Jews, three opinions.' Which of the five political orientations was best adapted to the stresses of the 20th century? Which orientation shows the most promise for the 21st?"

*Note: The Mid-Term Test will cover Units One through Five. This Test must be proctored on a Touro College Campus. The Mid-Term will be scheduled during the week of March 11-15.*

## Unit Six: Women in Jewish Society

*Jewish women experienced tremendous change with the advent of modernity. This unit will begin with a discussion of the realities of life for premodern Jewish women in Europe, and then look at two individuals who generated tremendous change in the 20th century.*

- 1) Lecture: [Gluckel of Hameln](#)
- 2) Lecture: [Sarah Schenirer](#)
- 3) Lecture: Betty Friedan (Live 5/29)
- 4) Readings: Miriam Solomon, "Father, Faith and Philosophy: A Journey Through Orthodox Judaism," *Bridges: A Jewish Feminist Journal* 14.1 (Spring 2009) 123-132.
- 5) Assessments:

- i. Image Analysis
- ii. Discussion Board Question: "Feminism in the United States has been led by a disproportionate number of Jewish women. Is this merely coincidence, or is there something special about the American Jewish experience that predisposed Jewish women to gravitate to feminism?"

## Unit Seven: Jewish Culture

This thematic unit will look at the beginnings of the concept of "celebrity," much of which was associated with Jewish activity in the nascent film industry. The unit will also discuss the all-too-brief flourishing of modern Yiddish-language culture.

- 1) Lecture: [Sarah Bernhardt](#)
- 2) Lecture: [Shalom Aleichem](#)
- 3) Lecture: Solomon Mikhoels (Live 3/13)
- 4) Readings: Jonathan Sarna, "Leon Bernstein and the Boston Jewish Community of His Youth: The Influence of Solomon Braslavsky, Herman Rubenovitz, and Congregation Mishkan Tefila," *Journal for the Society for American Music* 3:1 (February 2009), 35-46.
- 5) Assessments:
  - i. Analysis of Yiddish proverbs
  - ii. Discussion Board Question: "Should Yiddish be revived?"

## Unit Eight: The Holocaust

This unit will concentrate on the Nazi attempt to destroy the Jews of Europe.

- 1) Lecture: [Hannah Szenes](#)
- 2) Lecture: Emmanuel Ringelblum (Live 4/10)
- 3) Lecture: Yevgenia Ginzburg (Live 4/17)
- 4) Readings: Richard Cohen, "Writing Jewish History after the Holocaust," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 102.1 (Winter 2012), 96-111.
- 5) Assessments:
  - i. Unit Quiz
  - ii. Discussion Board Question: "Raul Hilberg argued that Jews failed to mount adequate military resistance to the Nazis because this behavior was simply not part of their recent cultural memory. Is this a fair assessment? What implications does this debate have for contemporary Jewish life in Israel and the diaspora?"

## Unit Nine: The State of Israel

From exile to redemption, from darkness to great light, the State of Israel emerged after the horrors of the Holocaust. This unit will cover the major events and

themes that concerned this struggling new state, including the Arab-Israeli conflict and tensions between secular and religious Israelis.

- 1) Lecture: Golda Meir (Live 4/24)
- 2) Lecture: Menachem Begin (Live 5/1)
- 3) Readings: Miriam Keim, "Here and Back Again: US National Security Interest in the Arab/Israeli Conflict," *Pepperdine Policy Review* 4 (Spring 2011) 99-114.
- 4) Assessments:
  - i. Unit Quiz
  - ii. Discussion Board Question: "They just put you in charge. Solve the Arab-Israeli conflict. What's your best suggestion?"

## Unit Ten: Jews in America

After the devastation of European Jewry, America emerged as the cultural center of world Jewry for the remainder of the 20th century. This Jewry, however, would be radically different from its European predecessor.

- 1) Lecture: Stephen Samuel Wise (Live 5/8)
- 2) Lecture: Albert Einstein (Live 5/22)
- 3) Lecture: Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (Live 6/5)
- 4) Readings: Samuel Heilman, "On Writing about the Seventh Lubavitcher Rebbe and His Hasidim," *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 35.2 (November 2011), 393-400.
- 5) Assessments:
  - i. Unit Quiz
  - ii. Discussion Board Question: "America: is it *di goldene medine* (the land of gold) or *di treyfe medine* (the non-kosher land)?"

*Note: The Final Test will cover Units Six through Ten. This Test must be proctored on a Touro College Campus. The Final Test will be scheduled during the week of June 10-14.*

## Live Lectures in Miami

A number of the lectures in this course will be delivered live throughout the Spring 2013 semester as part of the Adult Education Programming at the Young Israel of Bal Harbour. Students are welcome to attend these lectures in person. All lectures are scheduled for Wednesday evenings at 8:30 PM. The videos will be uploaded within a few days of the recording.

February 6

Don Isaac Abravanel

February 13

Rabbi Moshe Cordovero

February 20

Nathan of Hanover

February 27

Moses Mendelsohn

March 6

Shimon Dubnow

March 13

Solomon Mikhoels

No Lectures March 20, 27, April 3

April 10

Emmanuel Ringelblum

April 17

Yevgenia Ginzburg

April 24

Golda Meir

May 1

Menachem Begin

May 8

Stephen Samuel Wise

No Lecture may 15

May 22

Albert Einstein

May 29

Betty Friedan

June 5

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson

# Touro College South Student Code of Conduct

## Student Code of Conduct

Touro College South derives its Student Code of Conduct from the tradition of Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua (Avot 4:15), whose inspirational teaching on the respect due to students, colleagues and instructors is a moral standard for all classroom conduct, regardless of the subject or discipline. Mutual respect is the foundation of all productive academic discourse, and we consider this to be one of our most cherished values. Touro College South students are expected to uphold the concept of free intellectual discourse in an engaged learning environment by adhering to the standards of the Student Code of Conduct.

The TCS Code of Conduct is, in reality, a single concept: *אָרַךְ אַרְךְ*, basic respect for the human dignity of others. The following are examples of the expressions of the TCS Code of Conduct:

### Cell Phone Use

Cell phones must be silenced during class and may not be used without advance permission from the instructor.

### Portable Computer Use

Portable computers may be used for classroom-related activities only. Instructors may ask to review any notes taken during class or to have students move to seats where their computer activity is less distracting.

### Attendance

Attendance will be recorded. Absences may result in failure, grade reduction, or other academic sanctions, and may affect financial aid. Missing over 50% of class meetings for any reason (excused or unexcused) will result in automatic failure. Students who must be absent should contact the instructor in advance.

### Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive to class on time. Most instructors take attendance during the beginning of class, so students who arrive late may be marked absent.

### Leaving Class

Leaving class during lectures disrupts the learning process. Students are expected to remain in class while it is in session.

# Touro College South Policy on Academic Integrity

Because intellectual integrity is the hallmark of educational institutions, academic dishonesty is one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit. Students are required to abide by the highest standards of academic honesty in study and preparation for, and presentation, of examinations, term papers and research reports.

## Plagiarism

To commit plagiarism means to present as one's own the ideas, writings, computer-generated material, etc., of others without proper acknowledgement of those sources by means of quotation marks and/or specific references (footnotes) to the original source from which the material was taken. Plagiarism also includes the submission of the work of a commercial writing service or of a "ghost write" as one's own work. Section 213-6 of the Florida State Education Law prohibits the sale of term papers, essays, and research reports to students enrolled in a college.

## Cheating and Other Irregularities

A. No student shall give or receive assistance in the preparation of any assignment or examination without the authorization of the instructor of the course. Common examples of cheating include: copying from another student's paper; using books, notes, calculators, when these are not authorized; obtaining tests before the scheduled date of the examination; copying laboratory work; and sending in a substitute for taking an examination.

B. Stealing, falsifying, or otherwise altering documents or records containing grades, examination materials, or anecdotal information is forbidden.

## Sanctions for Academic Integrity Violations

Students who violate Touro College's Standards of Academic Integrity are subject to disciplinary sanctions. An official report of the incident is submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services. The following disciplinary sanctions may be imposed:

The grade of "F" for a test, term paper or assignment;

The grade of "F" in the course;

Other sanctions deemed appropriate by the Dean of Academic Affairs and Student Services, including suspension or dismissal from the college.

# Touro College South Honor Code Statement for Online Coursework

All students are required to complete the Touro College South Honor Code Statement for Online Coursework. This text must be written out by hand, signed and dated, and submitted to the instructor prior to beginning any online assessment. **Students outside Miami must mail this document to Dean Abramson, Touro College South, 1703 Washington Avenue, Miami Beach FL 33139. Alternatively, the handwritten text may be sent via Fax to (305) 535-1553 or scanned and emailed to [abramson@touro.edu](mailto:abramson@touro.edu).** The text of the Statement reads:

"I understand that learning in an asynchronous, online environment affords me both greater freedom and, at the same time, demands greater responsibility. I understand that all online assessments completed in this course must be the result of my own study, and that they represent my good-faith efforts to learn the material. I understand that representing another person's work as my own, whether through plagiarism or through unfair assistance during self-administered testing, is a violation of the standards of Torah behavior, and also constitutes an Academic Offense prohibited by the Touro College Code of Conduct. "

Signed:

Date:

Please submit this document before attempting any online assessment.