

**CUBAN JEWS:  
DIASPORA, IDENTITY, AND THE SEARCH FOR HOME**  
New Course – Spring 2008  
Professor Ruth Behar

Jews have haunted Cuban history since the discovery of the island by Columbus. But not until the early twentieth century could Jews openly live as Jews in Cuba. American Jews, as well as Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews from Europe, then began to be drawn to Cuba, where they built a thriving and diverse Jewish community that fell apart after the Cuban revolution of 1959. Cuban Jews who left the island for Miami recreated their identity as “Jubans” and became part of the transformation of Miami into a global city. Cuban Jews who stayed on the island learned to live as invisible Jews in a communist country, but later they revitalized Judaism with support from American Jewish philanthropists.

This course offers the challenge of focusing on a small community in order to understand large philosophical issues: What is the meaning of diaspora? How do people hold on to a unique identity in the midst of cultural fusions? Why search for home in an age when the soul is global? More specifically, we will want to ask what is exceptional about the Jewish experience in Cuba compared to other Jewish diasporas in Latin America. We will use a multidisciplinary approach to seek answers to these questions. Together we will immerse ourselves in the scholarly and artistic literature, as well as a selection of films, by and about Cuban Jews. We will carry out ethnographic research in Miami to build a living history archive on the Cuban Jewish experience that will incorporate documents, oral histories, photographs, and videos. Field trips to Cuban Jewish sites in Miami will be incorporated into the course and all students will have the opportunity to intern with a Cuban Jew, in fields ranging from medicine to real estate to business to music and dance, to learn firsthand about their lives.

The ultimate goal of the course is not simply to learn about the diaspora of Jews to Cuba, but to learn how to do creative ethnographic research on the history of the present. Grades will be based on class participation, two short essays about the readings, and a research project. Course is limited to juniors and seniors. No previous background required, but previous coursework in anthropology, history, Judaic Studies, or Latin American and Caribbean Studies will be helpful. Students in art, communication, and photography are also invited to participate.

דער שענסטער נייט-קלוב  
פון דער גאנצער וועלט

**טראפיקאנא**

;El Night-Club más Hermoso del Mundo!

**TROPICANA**

HABANA, CUBA

Lujoso Salón "Arcos de Cristal"... Romántico salón "Bajo las Estrellas" . . . y todas las noches dos shows deslumbrantes presentando las estrellas más sensacionales del momento.

Orquestas  
Armando Romeu Jr. y  
Senén Suárez y su Conjunto

Club Room  
Aire Acondicionado.

**RESERVACIONES  
B-4544**

Joya de las Américas

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אַ שאַר יעדן אָונט.

קומט פארברענגען אין אַ  
אונגענעמער אוממאסער!

סאכט רעפּרעזאַנטאַטיוו דורך טעלעפּאָן.