This course explores Jewish immigration, settlement, cultural production and religious life from the earliest instances of European conquest and colonization of the Americas until the present day. The Americas are not just a geographic space, but they also function as a dreamscape—paradise, savage frontier, land of refuge, or an El Dorado/Golden Medineh. We will explore the interplay between Jews, Judaism and the realities and mythologies of Latin America. The majority of the material will come from the Spanish and Portuguese zones of Central and South America with attention given to the Jewish communities of the Dutch and English colonies of the Caribbean such as Curaçao and Jamaica. The investigation into the colonial period will focus more heavily on aspects of Sephardic history such as crypto-Judaism, Inquisitorial persecution and the expansion of the Western Sephardim to the New World. As the course moves into the modern period, more emphasis will be placed on the experience of Eastern European Jewish immigrants and their descendants. Secondary sources will provide the wider historical context for the wide range of primary texts that will be at the center of the class discussion.
Goals of the course:
* Develop textual and analytical skills through careful engagement with primary sources
* Empower the student to think critically, creatively and personally about the texts and their historical context
* Examine the complexities and ambiguities of culture, society and identity

Please Note: If you are a student with a documented disability and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

Structure of the Course and Grading Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaction Papers</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Essay Project</td>
<td>70%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The class will meet once a week and consist of interactive lectures, student presentations and group discussions of the texts and historical issues under consideration. Performance will be judged on the basis of participation in class discussions, reaction papers, oral presentations, and the final research project.

Participation (20%): Attendance, knowledge of assigned readings and active participation in class discussions. (You are expected to bring the relevant readings to class.)
The class is designed to allow for a plurality of voices. You will be expected to share your insights and questions with the class on a regular basis. It is your responsibility to come to class with good questions and concerns about the readings; you are not expected to have definitive answers to these questions.

In addition you are required to submit a question or brief comment regarding the readings to the professor by **5pm of the day of class** via the *Weekly Reaction Blog* on ANGEL.

*Each student will be responsible to introduce one or two of the primary or secondary texts at some point in the semester.

When you must miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed as well as the assignment for the next meeting. Please consult a fellow student in the class for this information. If you would like clarification on any point, however, I will be available on email and we can always arrange a meeting to discuss the material. You are allowed **two** absences. After that point your participation grade will suffer. Regular attendance is essential to building a learning community.

**Reaction Papers (10%)**: 
To help promote meaningful conversations you will be required to write 2 short reaction papers based on your readings. You should focus on one aspect of the reading that you find intriguing. You can also use it as an opportunity to reflect on the connection between different issues that we have previously discussed.

It is essential that your essay develop an idea and reflect a **coherent** process of analysis and **interpretation** of the text or issue you decide to write about.

You are free to decide when to write a reaction paper but at least one of these papers must be written before **March 1** and the second one must be turned in by **April 7**. The essays should be uploaded to the drop box on ANGEL.

**Free Help with Your Writing!** The Writing Center, in Furst 202, offers **individualized tutoring** that can support your writing for this course. All writers need feedback, even strong ones. Make an appointment and find out about **drop-in hours** at yu.edu/wilf/writingcenter.

**Final Project (70%)**: Each student will write a research paper dealing with a topic that they have independently researched.

**Readings**: You will be responsible for the primary texts and secondary readings assigned for each week. The reading will enable you to participate in the discussions of both the literary texts and the larger historical issues covered each week.

**Required texts:**
ISBN-10: 0801890357

The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo Lerner, Isaac Goldenberg (ISBN 0671818082)

*Multiple copies of these books can be found online at very reasonable prices.

All other texts for this course will be available digitally either through ANGEL. Every student is responsible to have an accessible copy of the primary and secondary texts for class either in the form of a hard copy (print-out) or on their personal laptops in class. We will make ample use of these sources during our class discussions.

It is imperative that you are able to access and fully utilize Angel for this class. If you have any technical issues with Angel it is your responsibility to contact: angelsupport@yu.edu to resolve these issues.

Please pay attention to you YU email because the assigned readings may shift throughout the semester.

January 28: Introduction
Expulsion and Discovery: Old World and New World Intertwined
“I, a Jew?” Jorge Luis Borges
Selections from Columbus’ Diaries
“The Letter to Santangel”
www.ems.kcl.ac.uk/content/etext/e022.html

February 4: Session 2
New World Paradise?: the Americas as screen for Old World hopes and fears
*Columbus’ Fourth Voyage (PDF on Angel)
***Noah J. Efron, “Knowledge of Newly Discovered Lands among Jewish Communities of Europe (From 1492 to the Thirty Years War)”, Jews and Expansion of Europe to the West 1450- 1800 47- 72.

State of the Field:
Ra’anana Rein, Introduction: New Approaches to Latin American Jewish Studies

Edna Aizenberg, “How a Samovar Helped Me Theorize Latin American Jewish Literature”. Prooftexts
February 11: TBA

February 18: An Atlantic World
Ronnie Perelis, “The Conversos in the New World”, sections 1.1 and 1.2

Three essays from Atlantic Diasporas
Adam Sutclifffe, “Jewish History in an Age of Atlanticism”, 18-32.

February 25: Session 3
Conversos and Crypto-Jews in New Spain
Perelis, “The Conversos in the New World”, sections 1.3 and 2, pp3-12.


When reading Carvajal’s autobiography consider the following: to what extent is this an American/New World story? How does Carvajal construct his religious identity and practice? How does he learn about Judaism? What can the text tell us about Carvajal’s religious community?

First essay due by March 1 via Angel

March 3: Session 4
Tropical Synagogues: Open Judaism in the Dutch Caribbean
Recife: First Open Jewish Community of the Americas


Bruno Feitler, Jews and New Christians in Dutch Brazil, 1630-1654 in Atlantic Diasporas 123- 151.

DUTCH CONQUEST AND OCCUPATION OF BRAZIL
Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society (1893-1961); 1934; 33, AJHS Journal pg. 45

Arnold Wiznitzer, “Jewish soldiers in Dutch Brazil 1630- 1654” PAJHS Vol. 46, 1956

Meyer Kayserling, “The Earliest Rabbis and Jewish Writers of America” Volume 3, 1895
Meyer Kayserling, “Isaac Aboab, The First Jewish Author in America” Volume 5, 1897

*Be sure to look at Aboab’s Hebrew Poem.*

March 10

Sacred Space: constructing Jewish identity brick by brick
Rachel Frankel “Antecedents and Remnants of Jodensavanne: The Synagogues and Cemeteries of the First Permanent Plantation Settlement of New World Jews”
In The Jews and the *Expansion of Europe to the West* 394-438

*Images of the Synagogues of the “Nation” in the Atlantic World
** Images of Belisario’s paintings

Optional:
James Homer Williams, “An Atlantic Perspective on the Jewish Struggle for Rights and Opportunities in Brazil, New Netherland, and New York” *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West* pp 369-393

3.16 Special Event: Prof. Erin Graff Zivin will present her new book, *Figurative Conversion, Torture, and Truth in the Luso-Hispanic Atlantic* (Northwestern University Press, 2014) at noon, Honors Lounge

March 17: Session 6

Jews and Blacks: Atlantic trade, African slavery and the early modern Sephardic world


Optional:

March 24 Purim- La Fiesta de la Reina Esther

Special Event: Monday March 28: Guest lecturer Claude Dov Stuczynski, “New Christians and ‘New Jews’ conceptualize Empire”
March 31: Session 7
Polacos y Turcos: Old World Immigration to Latin America

**Syncretism, mestizage and the ghosts of memory**


April 7: Session 8
Gauchos Judíos: Agricultural Settlements and the birth of the “New Jew” in Argentina
*Los Gauchos Judíos/ The Jewish Gauchos of the pampas*, Alberto Gerchunoff.

**Second essay due via Angel**

**Tuesday April 12: Thursday Schedule** Session 9

**Varieties of the Jewish Immigration experience in Latin America**
Jeffrey Lesser, “How the Jews became Japanese and other Stories of nation and Ethnicity”
*Jewish History* 18.1 2004 pp 7-17

Margalit Bejarano, “Sephardic Jews in Cuba—From all their Habitations,” *Judaism*, winter 2002

Jerry Davila, “Ethnicity, Identity and Nationality in Latin America”
*Jewish History* 18.1 2004 pp 95-113

Optional:

Jeffrey Lesser and Raanan Rein, “Introduction” and “New Approaches to Ethnicity and Diaspora in Twentieth-Century Latin America pp1-40


April 14: Session 10
Guest Scholar Prof. Bruno Feitler

May 5: Session 11
*Novia que te vea. Film by Guita Schyfter, based on the novel by Rosa Nissán (México 1994).

Evelyn Dean-Olmsted
Shamis, halebis and shajatos: Labels and the dynamics of Syrian Jewishness in Mexico City Language & Communication Volume 31, Issue 2, May 2011, Pages 130-140

Jewish Languages in the Age of the Internet

Marc Isaac Berliner, “Churches” (Poem illustrated by Diego Rivera), Yiddish South of the Border pp156-158

May 12- Yom Ha’atzmaut- No Class

MAY 17- Tuesday schedule

May 19: Session 12
Fractured Lenses
The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo Lerner, Isaac Goldenberg (ISBN 0671818082) 1- 89

May 26: Session 13
Fractured Lenses (Part II)
The Fragmented Life of Don Jacobo Lerner contd. 90- 186

June 2: Session 14
J.L. Borges: Jews and Judaism within Modernity’s Labyrinth
PDF on angel
*Borges y la kabala* http://youtu.be/N7vvdFB7c5s

June 9: Session 15
“*It tasted better in Cuba*”
*Adió Kerida*, a film by Ruth Behar

**“While waiting for the ferry to Cuba: Afterthoughts about Adio Kerida”**
Ruth Behar *Michigan Quarterly Review*; Fall 2002; 41, 4; Research Library pg. 655

***Marti in Yiddish***
http://www.chcuba.org/espanol/vida_comunitaria/interesante/marti%20y%20los%20hebreos.htm

”Mi tierra”, Gloria Estefan, “El danzón de Moises”, Roberto Rodríguez  [In class audio recordings]

*Presentation of research topics.*