Marranos and Other Heretics: Varieties of Heresy in the Iberian World

Stern College for Women
Yeshiva University

Prof. Ronnie Perelis
Belfer Hall (Wilf Campus) 1120
e-mail: perelis@yu.edu

The Spanish Inquisition - 55531 - JHIS 4931 - K

This course examines the interaction between the Spanish Inquisition and a wide range of its targets. Beginning with a brief history of the Inquisition in the Iberian world, the focus shifts to a series of individual testimonies presented before the Inquisition. These individuals were accused of a variety of religious crimes, from bigamy and witchcraft to adhering to varying manifestations of Jewish and Protestant heresies. The course is particularly interested in the ways that individual “heretics” present themselves to their inquisitors and how they transform their interrogations into acts of self-fashioning. In addition to inquisitorial records we will examine literary and visual interpretations of the Inquisition including contemporary cinema.

This multidisciplinary course challenges the students to analyze a wide range of primary texts – Inquisitorial documents, spiritual autobiographies, Responsa, and visual media in order to explore a complex socio-cultural phenomenon.
Goals of the course:

* Develop textual and analytical skills through careful engagement with primary sources.
* Empower the student to think critically and creatively about the texts.
* Challenge assumptions about religion and society of the early modern Iberian world.
* Expand understanding of Crypto-Judaism within its wider historical context.

Texts

The following books can all be easily and economically purchased on AMAZON or similar websites. It is very important that you bring the relevant material to class in order to enable your full involvement in the discussion.

ISBN-10: 0801879248 ($8-$22)

ISBN-10: 0872207943 ($6-$14)

ISBN-10: 0195151674 ($9-$32)

*The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes* (New York Review Books Classics) [Paperback]
*W.S. Merwin* (Translator), *Juan Goytisolo* (Introduction)
ISBN-10: 1590171322 ($4-$7)

Supporting material (primary texts, images, journal articles, films etc.) will be found on ANGEL.


**Please Note:** "Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, (917-326-4828) during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to me as soon as possible to ensure the successful implementation of those accommodations".

Structure of the Course and Grading Policies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction Papers</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral Presentation</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Essay Project</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participation 20%
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. Attendance, knowledge of assigned readings and active participation in class discussions. (*You are expected to bring the relevant readings to class in an easily accessible format.*)

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.

*Blog-Postings/reflections on the readings:* To facilitate the class discussion, each student is required to submit a question or comment related to the readings for that day of class. The comment should be posted to the blog on Angel by **9:00am** of the day of class.

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 for further discussion.

*Attendance:* Leaving class in the middle or showing up late will be marked as an absence. We have only 26 class meetings, so you are permitted only **two** absences with no penalty (three absences would constitute more than ten percent of our class time). I strongly suggest you save these excused absences in case of family emergency, illness, or other unexpected conflicts. Absences beyond two will count against your grade; there are no exceptions to this rule. The two excused absences are simply your first two absences. The deduction from your grade will be **5 points** per absence from your participation grade.

*Reaction Papers (15%):* Two to three page essays analyzing one aspect of the assigned reading for class.

The essays should be uploaded to the drop box on ANGEL. 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 you decide to write about.

These assignments should be between 300-500 words (Double-spaced). Your reaction paper must be coherent in its language and clear in its ideas.

Insightful and clearly written reaction papers will receive between **86-100 points**

Papers that have a good idea but fail to develop it, or papers that are poorly written (basic grammatical errors, unclear phrasing or structure) **75-85 points**

Unsatisfactory papers (disorganized, no thesis, incoherent, etc.). **70 and below**

You are required to write **2 reaction papers** throughout the semester. The first essay is due **September 20** by 12pm via Angel. The second essay is due on **October 19** by 12pm via Angel.
**Oral Presentations (5%)**: Throughout the semester each student will be responsible to introduce the texts assigned for at least one of the class discussions. These introductions should involve an overview of the reading highlighting important points, introducing questions for discussion, and when available, providing background on the author(s)—about 10-15 minutes (this can be done in pairs, or small groups, depending on the number of students).

**Final Essay Project (40%)**: Each student will write a research paper dealing with an aspect of the Inquisition, Sephardic history and/or medieval Iberian history that they have independently researched. At the end of the semester there will be a forum for the students to share their research and ideas. You will begin work on your topic after the midterm. In preparation for the paper you will prepare, in consultation with me, an annotated bibliography. This will be graded as part of your essay.

**Free Help with Your Writing!** The Writing Center 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 [http://yu.mywconline.com/](http://yu.mywconline.com/). You can also find out more at, [http://www.yu.edu/writing-centers/beren/](http://www.yu.edu/writing-centers/beren/)

**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.

**You are expected to bring the actual texts to class to enable our discussion.**
**Calendar of reading and assignments:**

If you ever have a question about an assignment please email me at perelis@yu.edu

8/28  **Convivencia, conflict, competition: a pre-history**

8/30  **The Historiography of Conversos and the question of Crypto-Judaism**


Methodology:


*Don Isaac Abravanel, Commentary on Ezekiel 20:32 (In class)*

(Chapter 1 is on Angel or can be accessed here: http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/k/kamen-inquisition.html)

9/4 The Wandering Jew: Luis de la Ysla
*“Mimesis of the Last Judgment: The Spanish Auto de fē”, Maureen Flynn
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/2542736

9/6
Heretics or Daughters of Israel — Introduction and chpts 1 and 2, 3-44

9/11
Heretics or Daughters of Israel — 3 and 4, 45-93

9/13 Alumbrados, Lutherans and other Christian Deviants
Lu Ann Homza, Document 12 “Excerpts from the Trial of Maria de Cazalla, 1532- 1534” 112- 135
Kagan and Dyer, “Miguel de Piedrola: The Soldier Prophet”

http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft396nb1w0/

(Last Class till October 11, Chag Sameach!)
9/20 first essay due via angel by 12pm

10/11 Heretics of Daughters of Israel Chpts 5-7 pp 94- 149

10/16 Heretics of Daughters of Israel Chapter 8 and Conclusion pp 150- 174

10/18 Shape Shifters: Francisco de San Antonio aka Rabí Abraham Rubén and Mariana de los Reyes
Kagan and Dyer 88- 118.

10/23 Fictions before the Law: Lazarillo de Tormes and the Inquisitor’s gaze

10/25 Men of the Nation: Portuguese Conversos and the Question of Crypto-Judaism
Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, “Chapter I: Marranos in the Seventeenth Century”, From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto. (New York, 1971) 1-50. (On Angel in Unit Two folder.)

10/30 Conversos go Global: The transoceanic network of Iberian Jews, Conversos and Crypto-Jews

*Responsa from the Sephardic Diaspora, cases 26 and 27 from Matt Goldish’s Jewish Questions (Princeton 2008) 99-105 with Hebrew originals.

11/1 Midterm

11/6 and 11/8 New World Crypto-Judaism


11/13- 11/15 Colonization of the Soul: race, faith and power in the New World and Old
This is available as an e-book http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.03521
Read the following chapters: “Gloalization and Guinea Pigs”, “States and Stains”, “New Christians and New World Fears” 99-160.

11/20 Converso networks and Global Anxieties
“Keeping the Faith” in Kagan and Dyer

11/22 Fighting to the End: Faith and Reason in a Peruvian Jail
*Poems commemorating the martyrs of the Inquisition.

11/27 Gender Trouble: Sacraments and Sexuality in the Case of “Elena/Eleno” a Morisca Hermaphrodite
“Sexuality and the Marriage Sacrament” in Kagan and Dyer pp 36-59
*Sex and Sin, Witchcraft and the Devil in Late-Colonial Mexico
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/645632

11/28- Thanksgiving!
12/4 Moriscos, the other New Christians

“Moriscos” in Homza pp238-248

12/6 Morisco Ghosts
The Exile Returns: Sancho Panza and his old Morisco neighbor Ricote
(Don Quijote) II: 54


Bernard Vincent, “Moriscos and Circumcision”, Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain, Cruz, Anne J. Perry, Mary E.
http://site.ebrary.com/lib/yeshiva/Doc?id=10194332

12/11 Bibliophobia: Books and Censorship
Lu Ann Homza, “Prohibited Books” 212-220.

Recommended reading: Harm den Boer, The VISIÓN DELEITABLE under the scrutiny of the Spanish Inquisition: New Insights on Converso literature, European Judaism Volume 43, Number 2, Autumn 2010: 4–19 (Angel)

12/13 The Black Legend and the Uses of the Inquisition
** “The Inquisition, what a show”, clip from Mel Brook’s History of the World in class.

12/18 20th Century Marranos: Belmonte, New Mexico and Beyond
Film- The Last Marranos, dir. Frederic Brenner
**Prayers from the New Christians of Belmonte
***Judith S. Neulander (2006): Folk taxonomy, prejudice and the human genome: using disease as a Jewish ethnic marker, Patterns of Prejudice, 40:4-5, 381-398
Permalink
http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00313220601020114
****“On the Cancer Gene Trail” an audio podcast from Vox Tablet
http://www.tabletmag.com/podcasts/96237/on-the-cancer-gene-trail

12/20 Celebration of Student Research