



The Jewish Experience in Rome

UNH Course Code: REL341

Subject Area: Religious Studies

Level: 300

Professor: Gabriele Simoncini

Email: gsimoncini@genf.it

Class meets: Tuesdays, 15:20 – 18:00

Prerequisites: None

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Course Description

For more than two thousand years, Jews have lived in Rome making it the oldest Jewish community in Europe. Traces of Jewish heritage are entrenched throughout the city from the ancient settlement of Ostia Antica to the modern Great Synagogue on the banks of the Tiber. From the ruins of the historic Roman Ghetto to the contemporary districts where today's vibrant 18,000 strong Jewish population lives. This course concentrates on the origins, history, and changing cultural conditions of Jewish life in Rome and on the particular characteristics of the Roman Jewish experience.

Attending many classes and discussions directly on site, you'll visit the major monuments of historic and contemporary Jewish life in the city in order to retrace the birth and subsequent evolution of the community, its 400 years of Ghetto life, the emancipation of the late 19th century, the fascist racial laws of the 1930s, and the mass deportation under Nazi rule. We will probe and analyze the distinctive language, ethnicity, traditions and identity of this *Romanim* community, as it is known, and its complex relationship with its Christian neighbors, the Papacy and the Italian state.

Learning Objectives

- To be able to trace the history of the Roman Jewish community.
- To appreciate the distinctive cultural, linguistic, and ethnic characteristics of that community.
- To analyze the historical and theological rapport between this community, the Christian church and the Italian state.
- To enter into dialogue with members of the Roman Jewish community in order to explore and analyze the current experience of this distinctive community.
- To critically analyze the historical causes and consequences of religious persecution and prejudice.

- To build the ability to interpret religious values, images, symbols and texts critically.
- To improve reading, oral and written communication skills.
- To acknowledge and appreciate the varieties of religious belief and experience.

Instructional Format

Class will meet once a week for 150 minutes. Course work is comprised of in-class lectures and discussions, group exercises, student *exposés*, documentary films, extensive outside readings, independent group and individual onsite study, a research project, and a number of instructor-led onsite research excursions to relevant course-related sites and institutions in the city. Some onsite study will be integrated into class-time while others will be assigned as out-of-class independent learning. *If you require any special accommodations, please contact your instructor.*

Forms of Assessment

The instructor will use numerous and differentiated forms of assessment to calculate the final grade you receive for this course. For the record, these are listed and weighted below. The content, criteria and specific requirements for each assessment category will be explained in greater detail in class. However, you must complete all grading assessment categories to receive a grade for this course. In addition, your work and behavior in this course must fully conform to the regulations of the CEA *Academic Integrity Policy* to which you are subject. Finally, all formal written work you carry out in this course (research papers, projects, studies, etc.) must be submitted in electronic format. Your instructor may also require that you hand in a hard copy of such work.

Class Participation	10%
Midterm Exam	20%
Presentation	15%
Final Exam	25%
Final Project	30%

Class Participation (10%): This grade will be calculated to reflect your participation in class discussions, your capacity to introduce ideas and thoughts dealing with the texts, your ability to interpret different uses of literary language and to express your analysis in intellectual, constructive argumentation. When determining your class participation grades, traditional criteria such as material preparation, completed reading before class, and collaborative group work are all evaluated. But it is the active, meaningful and informed verbal and written contribution that you make that is most important to your overall participation grade. Indeed, willingness to share views in classroom discussions and the insightfulness of your comments and questions about assigned readings will all be taken into account when evaluating your participation. Additionally, it is important to demonstrate a positive and supportive attitude to the instructor and your classmates, and give full attention to class activities (i.e., cell-phones off, laptop for notes only, etc.). Whereas attendance and punctuality are expected and will not count positively towards the grade, laxity in these areas will have a negative effect. The instructor will use the following specific criteria when calculating your class participation grade:

Criteria for Assessing Class Participation	Grade
You make major and original contributions that spark discussion, offering both critical and analytical comments clearly based on readings and research and displaying a working knowledge of theoretical issues.	A+ (9.70-10.00)
You make significant contributions that demonstrate insight as well as knowledge of required readings and independent research.	A-/A (9.00-9.69)
You participate voluntarily and make useful contributions that are usually based upon some reflection and familiarity with required readings.	B/B+ (8.40-89.90)
You make voluntary but infrequent comments that generally reiterate the basic points of the required readings.	C+/B- (7.70-8.39)
You make limited comments only when prompted and do not initiate debate or show a clear awareness of the importance of the readings.	C (7.00-7.69)
You very rarely make comments and resist engagement with the subject, attending class having manifestly done little if any preparation.	D (6.00-6.69)
You make irrelevant and tangential comments disruptive to class discussion, a result of frequent absence and complete un-preparedness.	F (0-5.90)

Mid-Term Exam (20%): The exams consist of two parts of equal value. The first part is an essay, chosen from one of three proposed themes. The second part of the exam consists of ten terms to be concisely defined. More details of the format and objectives of the exam will be distributed on the first day of class.

Class presentation (15%): Students are required to give an individual or team presentation on a specific topic of their choice related to the class program. The presentation will be well-organized, concise, and include (when opportune) audiovisual and electronic materials. The grade will especially take into consideration accuracy and clarity of content.

Final Exam (25%): The exams consist of two parts of equal value. The first part is an essay, chosen from one of three proposed themes. The second part of the exam consists of ten terms to be concisely defined. More details of the format and objectives of the exam will be distributed on the first day of class..

Final Project (Research Paper) (30%): Students are required to write a 20-page double-spaced typed critical research paper on a topic of their choosing related to the course. Suggested research topics and more detailed grading criteria for this exercise will be available on the first day of class.

CEA Global Campus Grading Scale				
Letter Grade	Numerical Grade Low Range	Numerical Grade High Range	Percentage Range	Quality Points
A+	9.70	10.00	97.0 - 100%	4.00
A	9.40	9.69	94.0 - 96.9%	4.00
A-	9.00	9.39	90.0 - 93.9%	3.70
B+	8.70	8.99	87.0 - 89.9%	3.30
B	8.40	8.69	84.0 - 86.9%	3.00
B-	8.00	8.39	80.0 - 83.9%	2.70
C+	7.70	7.99	77.0 - 79.9%	2.30
C	7.00	7.69	70.0 - 76.9%	2.00
D	6.00	6.99	60.0 - 69.9%	1.00
F	0.00	5.99	0 - 59.9%	0.00
W	Withdrawal			0.00
INC	Incomplete			0.00

CEA Global Campus Attendance Policy

Every student is expected to attend all scheduled class sessions on time and be thoroughly prepared for the day's class activities. In compliance with NEASC and UNH accreditation requirements, CEA Global Campus instructors compile regular attendance records for every course and take these records into account when evaluating student participation and performance.

- In each three-credit 15-week course, a maximum of the equivalent of two weeks of accumulated absences due to sickness, personal emergency, inevitable transport delay and other related impediments will be tolerated.
- Your final course grade will drop one full letter grade (e.g. A- to B-) for each additional class missed beyond this two week period, regardless of the reason for your absence.
- You will automatically fail a course if your absences exceed the equivalent of three weeks of class.

Furthermore, to comply with immigration and financial regulations, you must maintain full-time student status and attend at least 12 hours of class every week. Consequently, the Dean and Program Director will dismiss from all CEA courses, programs, activities and housing any student who fails to maintain full-time status.

Required Readings

Listed below are the required course textbooks and additional readings. Whether you buy your books from our locally affiliated merchants or whether you acquire these before arrival, you must have constant access to these resources for reading, highlighting and marginal note-taking. It is required that you have unrestricted access to each. Additional copies will be placed on reserve in the Academic Affairs office for short-term loans. Access to additional sources required for certain class sessions will be provided in paper or electronic format consistent with applicable copyright legislation. In addition, the Academic Affairs Office compiles a bank of detailed information about the many libraries, documentation centers, research institutes and archival materials located in the host city and accessible to CEA Global Campus students. You will be required to use these resources throughout your

studies. Direct access to additional resources and databanks are available to you through the online library of the University of New Haven.

- Leon, Harry J., *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers 1995. pp. 1-378.
- Geller, Ruth Liliana, *Jewish Rome*. Viella, 1984. pp. 172.
- Abulafia, David, 'Introduction: The Many Italies of the Middle Ages', in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages, 1000-1300*, Oxford History of Italy, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004. pp. 1-26, 228-236.
- Lerner, L. Scott, 'Narrating Over the Ghetto of Rome', in *Jewish Social Studies*, Vol. 8, Nos. 2 and 3 (2000). pp. 1-38.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo, 'The Jews of Italy', in *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 1994. pp. 121-134.
- Kertzer, David, *The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism*, New York: Vintage 2002. pp. 1-292.
- Zuccotti, Susan, *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006. pp. 334.
- Hughes, H. Stuart, *Prisoners of Hope: The Silver Age of the Italian Jews, 1924-1974*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996. pp. 188.
- Gruber, Ruth Ellen, 'Italy and the Vatican', in *American Jewish Yearbook*, 2005. pp. 382-402.

Throughout the syllabus, **assigned readings** on Jewish Experience in Rome will come from international journals, periodicals, or newspapers depending on the progress of the class, your personal research interests, and current events.

Recommended Readings

The following sources are all available in the GlobalCampus Resource Center.

- Sacerdoti, Annie, *The Guide to Jewish Italy*, Marsilio, 2003.
- Abrahams, Israel, *Jewish Life In The Middle Ages*, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004.
- Biale, David, *Cultures of the Jews. II: Diversities of Diaspora*, New York: Schocken, 2002.
- Bonfil, Roberto, *Jewish Life in Renaissance Italy*, Berkeley: U. of California Press, 2006.
- Momigliano, Arnaldo, *Essays on Ancient and Modern Judaism*, Chicago: U. of C. Press, 1994.

- Fiorentino, Luca, *The Ghetto Reveals Rome*, Rome: Gangemi, 2006.
- De Felice, Renzo, *The Jews in Fascist Italy: A History*, New York: Enigma Books, 2001.
- Levi, Primo, *If This is a Man and The Truce*, Abacus, 1991.
- Zargani, Aldo, *For Solo Violin: A Jewish Childhood in Fascist Italy*, Phil. P. Dry Books, 2002.
- Zuccotti, Susan, *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*, Yale U. P., 2002.
- Barnavi, Eli, *Historical Atlas of the Jewish People*, New York: Schocken Press, 1992.
- Cohn-Sherbok, Dan, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Judaism*. Oxford, 1999.

Recommended Films/Documentaries

- Istituto Luce, *Storia d' Italia*, 2010.
- De Sica V., *The Garden of the Finzi Contini*, 1970.
- Benigni R., *Life is Beautiful*, 1997.
- Costa Gravas C., *Amen*, 2002.
- Lizzani C., *The Gold of Rome*, 1961.

Course Content Schedule

Session	Topic	Activity	Student Assignment
1 Jan. 17	Introduction. The Italian Peninsula and Rome. Historical and cultural review.	Lecture & Discussion. Film/Documentary.	Leon, pp. 1-66; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
2 Jan. 24	Jewish experience and Jewish sites in Rome and Italy.	Lecture & Discussion. Film/Documentary.	Geller, pp. 1-28; Leon, pp. 67-121; Hughes, pp.1-28; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
3 Jan. 31	The Jews of Ancient Rome. The Catacombs.	Lecture & Discussion. Field trip: Catacombs	Leon, pp. 122-166; Hughes, pp. 28-54; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
4 Feb. 7	Jewish Sites in Rome. Ostia. Ancient Synagogues.	Lecture & Discussion. Field trip: Ostia	Leon, pp. 167-228; Hughes, pp. 55-85; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
5 Feb. 14	From the fall of the Roman Empire to the end of the Middle Ages.	Lecture & Discussion. Guest Speaker	Leon, pp. 229-256; Geller, pp. 28-52; Hughes, pp. 86-113; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
6 Feb. 21	The Roman Ghetto, the Jewish community, and the Great Synagogue.	Lecture & Discussion. Field Trip: Ghetto	Hughes, pp. 114-149; Lerner, pp. 1-38; Abulafia, pp. 1-23; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
7 Feb. 28	Jewish experience and identity in Rome, Italy, and Europe.	Lecture & Discussion. Film/Documentary.	Hughes, pp. 149-179; Momigliano, pp. 121-134; Abulafia, pp. 228-236; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
8 Mar. 6	MIDTERM EXAM		Review notes; <i>assigned readings</i>
9 Mar. 13	The Emancipation of Italian and Roman Jews. The Liberal Italian State.	Lecture & Discussion. Guest Speaker	Kertzer, pp. 1- 85; Geller, pp. 52-63; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
10 Mar. 20	Spring Break		Classes will not be held this week
11 Mar. 27	Fascism and the Jews in Rome and Italy. The racial laws.	Lecture & Discussion. Presentations.	Geller, pp. 64-74; Zuccotti, pp. 3-100; Kertzer, pp. 86-130; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
12 Apr. 3	Fascism, Nazism and the Shoah in Rome, Italy and Europe.	Lecture & Discussion. Film/Documentary.	Zuccotti, pp. 101-200; Kertzer, pp. 131-165; <i>Assigned readings.</i>

13 Apr. 10	Being a Jew in Rome Today. An Orthodox Community.	Film/Documentary. Presentations.	Zuccotti, pp. 201-287; Kertzer, pp. 166-238; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
14 Apr. 17	Jews in Italy, community and society. The Relationship with Israel.	Lecture & Discussion. Film/Documentary.	Gruber, pp. 482-402; Kertzer, pp. 239-292; <i>Assigned readings.</i>
15 Apr. 24	FINAL EXAM		Review notes; <i>assigned readings</i>

NOTE:

Activities, such as field trips and guest speakers, are tentative and subject to change due to subjective conditions. To be confirmed during the semester. Film/Documentary screening will be complete or partial.