

RE/HI 182: Judaism and Its History II (Jews, Judaism, and the Modern World)

Colby College, Spring 2009 — Mondays/Wednesdays, 1:00–2:15 pm, Lovejoy 212

David M. Freidenreich

Lovejoy 350, 859-4646, dfreiden@colby.edu (email is the best way to reach me)

Office Hours: Mondays/Wednesdays 10:30–12:00 and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys the social, cultural, intellectual, and political history of the Jews of Europe, the United States, and Israel/Palestine from ca. 1600 to the present. In addition to developing basic familiarity with this subject matter, students will learn how to interpret specific ideas, movements, biographies, and works of cultural production within the framework of broader dynamics associated with Jewish life in modern times. No prior familiarity with Jewish history or Hebrew is assumed.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all classes, and you are responsible for all material presented through lectures, much of which cannot be found in course readings. Some class time will also be devoted to learning activities that you cannot replicate on your own. It is understood that circumstances may prevent you from attending class on a given day, and you are entitled to two absences with no questions asked. More than two absences, however, will impair your ability to benefit from this course and will affect your final grade significantly unless all absences result from documented emergencies or illness; if such circumstances arise, please speak with me. **I reserve the right to fail students who miss more than five sessions.** In determining the final grade, I assign extra credit to students with perfect or near-perfect attendance records.

Preparation and Participation

Students are expected to participate regularly in class discussions and to do so in a constructive manner. Participation should reflect strong preparation of assigned readings and prior consideration of assigned study questions. Participation in online discussions (accessible through <http://moodle.colby.edu>) counts so long as I have time to read your posts before class; if you post before 10:00 am on the morning of class, you are guaranteed credit for your posts.

Evaluation: I assign a ✓+, ✓, ✓-, or 0 to each student after every class, on the following basis:

- ✓+ indicates that the student participated actively in class discussions, engaged others about ideas while respecting their opinions, and elevated the overall level of discussion.
- ✓ indicates that the student offered constructive contributions to class discussion; **I expect every student to do so at least once in every class**, either in the classroom or online.
- ✓- indicates that the student was present in class but either did not participate sufficiently or participated in a non-constructive or disrespectful manner.
- 0 indicates that the student was absent and failed to post to the online discussion or that the student was especially disrespectful toward fellow participants.

Assignments

Assignments are designed to measure your command of the specific knowledge and skill sets being taught in this course along with the general skill sets associated with an undergraduate liberal arts education. Engaging in acts of academic dishonesty is antithetical to this goal, and for that reason any student guilty of such acts may automatically fail the course. If you are in doubt as to whether an act crosses the line into academic dishonesty, speak with me, another member of the faculty, or a librarian.

Detailed descriptions of each assignment will be distributed separately.

<u>Essays</u>	<u>Due date</u>	<u>Weight</u>
“A Jewish Life,” Round 1	February 16, 18, 23, or 25	10% of final grade
Jewish Political Movements	Monday, March 9	10%
“A Jewish Life,” Round 2	April 1, 13, 22, or 29	10%
Americanization, Holocaust, Zionism	Monday, April 15	10%
Israeli Music and Israeli Society	Monday, May 4	10%

Exams

Midterm Exam	Wednesday, March 18	15%
Final Exam	Thursday, May 14, 9:30 am	20%

Preparation and Participation 15%
 — periodic in-class writing exercises count toward preparation/participation

Late essays will only be accepted under extenuating circumstances with prior permission, and lateness may result in a lower grade.

Note: Grading in the humanities is not an exact science. My goal is to be fair in evaluating your work, open about the reasons for the grades I give, and available to help you improve your work over the course of the term. I assign extra weight to performance in the second half of the semester when a student demonstrates significant effort toward improvement. Please note that if a student is on the border between two final grades, I use the participation grade as a tie-breaker.

ASSIGNED READINGS

Assignments for each class session may be found on the course Moodle site, <http://moodle.colby.edu>. All readings not found in the following books are posted there as well.

Please purchase the following books (all available at the Colby Bookstore):

Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews in Modern Times*
 Hasia Diner, *The Jews of the United States*
 Donna Rosenthal, *The Israelis: Ordinary People in an Extraordinary Land* (2008 update)

NOTE: Please bring to class the assigned readings for that session.