

Dr. Phillip I. Ackerman-Lieberman
Email: phil.lieberman@vanderbilt.edu

Office: 149 Buttrick Hall
Phone: (O) 343-2098 (H) 347-249-9627
Office Hours: MW 10am-12pm

Jewish Studies 120-1
MWF 9:10am-10:00am, 202 Buttrick Hall

Islam and the Jews

Objectives

This course will examine the political, economic, social, and cultural experience of the Jews in Islamic lands from the foundations of Islam to the modern period. We will begin with an extensive discussion of the premodern period, from the rise of Islam in the seventh century through the high middle ages and moving on to the Ottoman period. As we enter the modern period, the impact of colonialism will be discussed with the waning of Ottoman power in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the emergence of the Zionist movement and its affect upon Jewish life in Muslim lands. Finally, we will discuss the impact of the emergence of the State of Israel on Jewish life, and intercommunal tensions within the State of Israel with the influx of Oriental Jewry.

Course Requirements

Students will be expected to prepare the readings for class and to discuss them actively in a seminar-style setting; class participation accounts for 10% of the final grade. To this end, egregiously missing class will reduce your final grade as it detracts from the learning environment. There will be an in-class midterm on Friday, 5 March, and a final exam on Thursday, 6 May, at 9am, which will account for 15% and 25% of the final grade, respectively.

The writing assignment for the course breaks down into four stages, each of which will ideally build on those which precede it. Although these stages are designed to assist you in the process of choosing a topic for your paper and in writing that paper, there is no requirement that you choose the same topic for each of these stages. Rather, each stage will be graded for its clarity and depth of analysis. The stages are:

- Meeting informally with me to discuss your paper topic (5% of the final grade)
- An annotated bibliography, due Friday, 12 February (10% of the final grade)
- A paper proposal, due Wednesday, 17 March (15% of the final grade)
- A final paper, 5-6 pages (double-spaced), due Friday, 16 April (20% of the final grade)

Textbooks

The following textbooks are available at the university book store:

Reeva S. Simon, Michael M. Laskier, and Sara Reguer (eds.), *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times* (Columbia, 2003)

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands* (JPS, 1979)

idem., *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (JPS, 1991)

Books on Reserve:

The following books are on reserve at the Central Library:

Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*

Walter Fischel, *The Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Medieval Islam*

Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634-1099*

S.D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs: Their Contact through the Ages*

Stanford Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*

Material on the syllabus not contained in these books will be posted on OAK.

Policies

Teaching and Learning

Study at the university level is a partnership between student and instructor. If you have any questions or concerns about the course, or even suggestions for the course, please do not hesitate to contact me by email, by phone, or by visiting my office during office hours. If you are having difficulty understanding the written material, or you are having difficulty absorbing what goes on in class, or if you have a documented learning disability or need some sort of special accommodation, please do the same. If you have a personal problem or issue that is affecting your performance in the course, please let me know **as soon as** you can. If you are an active partner in preparing for and participating in class and in doing the assignments, your grade at the end of the semester should reflect this. However, if you do not do these things, it is my responsibility to reflect this in your final grade.

Late Work

The written assignments for the course are designed to assist you in preparing the final paper. Since each assignment builds on the previous assignment, turning in an assignment late will only give you less time to make use of my feedback and to write the following assignment. This will also defeat the purpose of the course as a tool to help train you in the process of writing. Therefore, your grade on a late assignment will be reduced by one full letter grade (i.e., from a "B" to a "C") for every three days or fraction thereof that the assignment is submitted after the due date. If you cannot bring the assignment to class, please bring it to my office during office hours or give it directly to Lynne Perler in the Jewish Studies Program Office, 140 Buttrick Hall.

Honor Code

As an undergraduate at Vanderbilt, it is your responsibility to adhere to the university's Honor Code. *Plagiarism of academic work will result in a grade of "F" for the course and may also carry a consequence with the Undergraduate Honor Council.* If you have any questions about this policy in general or specific questions about whether your work might be considered plagiarism, please contact me.

Writing

Over the course of the semester, you will receive examples of the written assignments, in order to help you prepare your own work. To the extent that the clarity of your writing inhibits or enhances your effectiveness in achieving the goal of the assignment, the quality of your writing will influence your grade. Thus:

- Projects which have a clear and well-considered thesis, a thorough and well-organized analysis that relies on a wide range of primary and secondary sources, and are well-written and concise, will receive a grade in the "A" range.
- Projects which have a good basic idea, but may be disorganized in their composition or scattershot in their choice or use of sources, will receive a grade in the "B" range.

- Projects which have an incoherent, unsupported or ill-supported thesis, or those which do not demonstrate a serious engagement with the sources, will receive a grade in the “C” range or lower.

Note that we will not meet on Wednesday 24 February, Friday 19 March, Wednesday 31 March, or Wednesday 2 April.

Weekly Topics and Assignments

Week of 13 January

Introduction—the Foundations of Islam

Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, pp.xv-xx, 3-39

Week of 18 January

Muhammad and the Jews: from the Foundation of Islam through the Conquests

S.D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp.vii-xiii, 3-18, 46-88

Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine 634-1099*, pp.11-12, 51-56

Primary Sources: Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, pp.115-120, 149-151, 154-161, 176-179

Week of 25 January

The Mashriq: Jewish Life in Baghdad—Center and Periphery

Walter Fischel, *The Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Medieval Islam*, pp.1-44

Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*, pp.35-82

Primary Sources: Nosson Dovid Rabinowich (ed.), *The Iggeres of Rav Sherira Gaon*, p.150;
Gerson Cohen (ed.), *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, pp.46-90

Week of 1 February

The Rise of the Karaite Schism

Gerson Cohen, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, pp.xliii-lxii

Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*, pp.83-99

Yosef Tobi, “Sa’adia Gaon, Poet-Paytan: the Connecting Link between the Ancient Piyyut and Hebrew Arabicised Poetry in Spain”, in *Israel and Ishmael*, ed. Tudor Parfitt, pp.59-77

Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *Karaite Marriage Documents from the Cairo Geniza*, pp.1-14

Marc Bernstein, *Stories of Joseph: Narrative Migrations between Judaism and Islam*, pp.xi-xvii, 1-44 (skim)

Primary Sources: Leon Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology*, pp.3-20

Week of 8 February

Iberia from the Eighth Century to the Reconquista

Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain*, pp.59-89

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, pp.53-61

S.D. Goitein, *Jews and Arabs*, pp.155-166

Raymond Scheindlin, *Wine, Women, and Death*, pp.ix-x

Primary Sources: Isadore Twersky (ed.), *A Maimonides Reader*, pp.437-443; Olivia Remie Constable (ed.), *Medieval Iberia*, pp.91-102, 131-132; Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, pp.210-246; Raymond Scheindlin, *Wine, Women, and Death*, pp.3-11, 19-39

Friday, 12 February: Annotated Bibliography Due

Week of 15 February

North Africa and the Land of Israel from the Fatimids to the Mamluks

Robert Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*, pp.123-134

Moshe Gil, *A History of Palestine 634-1099*, pp.527-539, 545-631, 826-837

Moshe Gil, *Jews in Islamic Countries in the Middle Ages*, pp.579-584, 663-679

Mark R. Cohen, *Jewish Self-Government in Medieval Egypt*, pp.3-6, 36-42

Jacob Mann, *The Jews in Egypt and Palestine under the Fatimid Caliphs*, I:215-220

Walter Fischel, *The Jews in the Economic and Political Life of Medieval Islam*, pp.45-89

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, pp.40-53, 61-87

Primary Sources: S.D. Goitein, *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*, pp.26-34, 145-153; Marcus N. Adler (ed.), *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, pp.22-27; Isadore Twersky (ed.), *A Maimonides Reader*, pp.74-76, 134-139.

Week of 22 February (Note: no class Wednesday 24 February)

The Ottoman Empire

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, pp.87-94

Istanbul, Anatolia, Salonika (SELECTIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING)

Stanford Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, pp.1-108

Minna Rozen, *History of the Jewish Community of Istanbul*, pp.278-288

Gershon Scholem, *Shabbetai Zevi*, pp.152-180

Primary Sources: Minna Rozen, *History of the Jewish Community of Istanbul*, pp.310, 314-317, 336-356, 369-371

Week of 1 March

The Ottoman Empire, Continued

Istanbul, Anatolia, Salonika (SELECTIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING)

Stanford Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, pp.109-243

Minna Rozen, *The Last Ottoman Century and Beyond*, pp.333-367

Gershon Scholem, *Shabbetai Zevi*, pp.180-198

Palestine

Amnon Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam*, pp.220-225

Amnon Cohen, *A World Within*, I:1-23

Primary Sources: Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 299-302; Amnon Cohen, *A World Within*, I:24-39

Review for Midterm, 3 March

In-Class MIDTERM EXAM, 5 March

Week of 8 March (Spring Recess – No class)

Week of 15 March (Note: no class Friday 19 March)

The Nineteenth Century and the Impact of Colonialism

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, pp.3-26

Rachel Simon, “Education”, in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. Reeva S. Simon et al., pp.142-164

Zvi Zohar, “Religion: Rabbinic Tradition and the Response to Modernity”, in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. Reeva S. Simon et al., pp.65-84.

Primary Sources: Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, pp.183-201

Wednesday, 17 March: Paper Proposal Due

Week of 22 March

The Emergence of Zionism: the Beginning of the End? (SELECTIONS FROM THE FOLLOWING)

Rachel Simon, “Zionism”, in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. Reeva S. Simon et al., pp.165-179

Stanford Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic*, pp.244-271

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, pp.65-112

Michael M. Laskier and Eliezer Bashan, “Morocco”, in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. Reeva S. Simon et al., pp.471-504

Michael M. Laskier, “Syria and Lebanon”, in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. Reeva S. Simon et al., pp.316-334

Reeva Spector Simon, “Iraq”, in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. Reeva S. Simon et al., pp.347-366

Haideh Sahim, “Iran and Afghanistan”, in *The Jews of the Middle East and North Africa in Modern Times*, ed. Reeva S. Simon et al., pp.367-388

Primary Sources: Stillman, *ibid.*, pp.357-362, 385-388, 396-400, 411-412, 416-422; Bat Ye'or, *Islam and Dhimmitude*, pp.141-145; Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, pp.307-310, 517-521

Week of 29 March (Note: no class Wednesday 31 March)

Exodus

Norman Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, pp.141-176

Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, pp.155-191 [available electronically via the library]

Primary Sources: Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times*, pp.467-470, 522-529

Week of 5 April (Note: no class Wednesday 7 April) and Week of 12 April

Intercommunal Tensions within the State of Israel

Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims,” *Social Text* 19-20 (1988): 1-35.

Erik Cohen, “The Black Panthers and Israeli Society,” *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 14 (1972): 93-109.

Lilly Weissbrod, “Shas: an Ethnic Religious Party,” *Israel Affairs* 9.4 (2003): 79-104.

Michael R. Fischbach, *Jewish Property Claims against Arab Countries*, pp.158-173

Movie: Charlie and a Half
Friday, 16 April: Paper Due

Week of 19 April

History and Memory

Norman A. Stillman, "The Judeo-Islamic Historical Encounter: Visions and Revisions",
in *Israel and Ishmael*, ed. Tudor Parfitt, pp.1-12

Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, pp.3-14

Bat-Yeor, *The Dhimmi*, pp.127-157

Mark Cohen, "The Neo-Lachrymose Conception of Jewish History," *Tikkun* (May-June
1991): 55-60; Norman Stillman, "Myth, Countermyth, and Distortion," *ibid.*:60-64;

Letters to the Editor, *ibid.* (July-August 1991): 96ff

26 April (Last day of class)

Conclusion/Review for Final

6 May **Final Exam** 9:00am-11:00am