

**RSOC 67. Judaism and Film      Spring, 2017**

**Prof. Akiba Lerner**

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Class Time: Tuesday, 5:40-8:40

Office: 300G Kenna

Off. Hrs: Tues, 2:10-3:10

Thur, 10:50-11:50

[Fulfills Core RTC 2]

***Course Description:***

This is a course on Jewish history, religion, philosophy, and film. In this course we will draw on a variety of readings and films to explore the ideas and experiences that have shaped Jews and Judaism primarily in the modern period. Topics include Enlightenment and Emancipation, Kabbalah Mysticism, Hasidism and Secularism, Zionism and Socialism, Immigration and Assimilation, Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, Denominationalism, Feminism, Peoplehood, Jewish Renewal, Jewish Humor and Jewish Identity.

***Film Pathway Credit:*** This course is associated with the “**Pathway**” in film studies. If you declare a Pathway in this area you may use a representative piece of work from this course in the Pathway Portfolio you will complete during your senior year. [Recommendation: keep electronic copies of your work for uploading to your dropbox.]

***Pre-requisites:*** Students must have completed at least one RTC1 level course in the Religious Studies Department. An introductory course in philosophy and theology is also recommended.

***Required Texts:***

***Jewish Literacy, Revised Ed: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History***

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin

· ISBN-10: 0061374989

· ISBN-13: 978-0061374982

[All assigned texts that are not listed as “required texts” above can be found on SCU’s Camino system for this course]

***Recommended Text:***

*A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, (7th Edition) [Paperback]  
Timothy Corrigan (Author)  
# Publisher: Longman; 7 edition (February 5, 2009)  
# ISBN-10: 0205668941  
# ISBN-13: 978-0205668946

David Biale, *Eros and the Jews*  
· Publisher: University of California Press; 1 edition (October 3, 1997)  
· ISBN-10: 0520211340  
· ISBN-13: 978-0520211346

J. Hoberman and Jeffrey Shandler, *Entertaining America: Jews, Movies, and Broadcasting*

- **Publisher:** Princeton University Press (March 24, 2003)
- **ISBN-10:** 0691113025
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0691113029

### *Core Learning Objective for RTC 2:*

1. Students will be able to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena (such as architecture and art, music, ritual, scriptures, theological systems, and other cultural expressions of religious belief).
2. Students will be able to integrate and compare several different disciplinary approaches to a coherent set of religious phenomena.
3. Students will be able to clarify and express beliefs in light of their critical inquiry into the religious dimensions of human existence.

### *Course Structure, Goals, and Requirements:*

This course is designed around a combination of lectures, films, class discussion, and paper writing. During class we will view and discuss the content of the films in relationship to the readings assigned. Students will be sent, via email, a set of questions and themes to guide viewing of films, class discussions, and papers. Through viewing of films, readings, lectures, and discussions in this course students will learn how to analyze complex and diverse religious phenomena, most specifically to the history and traditions of Judaism. As reflected in the readings and lectures, students will also learn to apply the disciplinary approaches of philosophy, theology, sociology, and social theory to the religious

themes and images contained within the films for this course. The assignments in this course are all designed to help students clarify and critically investigate their own religious beliefs.

Additional questions of inquiry for this course: What makes the films selected “Jewish”? How do we identify “Jewish” or “religious” themes in film? What does it mean to understand Judaism as a “religion” versus “peoplehood,” or simply “a way of life”? How do the images in the films both draw upon and reject the history of anti-Semitic images of Jews? In class we will also explore the philosophical, theological, social and cultural relationships between the assigned texts in relation to the characters and topics raised in the films covered in this course. We will focus on the relationships between the images of Jews and the larger political, historical, and theological issues attached to the representations of the Jewish people. This class also touches upon issues related to identity, ethnicity, race and gender. We will also look at Jewish hermeneutics [textual interpretative tradition] with a focus on the tensions between the retaining of traditions and moments of transgression and innovation through Judaism’s tradition of ongoing interpretation and debate. Additionally, this class explores the various survival strategies of Jews as they have struggled to redefine Judaism and Jewish identity in the face of various historical challenges, especially in the modern period.

In order to further guide viewing of the films and reading of assigned texts, students will be given a list of quotes/terms from a variety of philosophers, theologians, and social theorist that help to define Judaism and Religion. Special attention in this course will be given to the representations of religious rituals, social behavior, theological and philosophical ideas presented within the films selected. Students are expected to draw on these terms and categories when critically evaluating the films and ideas in their written work and during class discussion. [Fulfills Core Learning Objective 2]

***Class participation:*** Attending class is mandatory and attendance will be noted. If a student is not present in the classroom when attendance is taken they will be marked down as absent. Missing **three** or more classes – no matter the excuse including playing on a team – will automatically result in a reduction of the final grade. A student cannot pass the class if they miss **four** or more classes, even if the absences are due to sickness or other personal hardships. If a student misses the first day of class they will likely be cut from the class, and their position in the class may be given to another student. Students are responsible for viewing all the films assigned in this class. If a student misses a class, in addition to viewing all relevant films assigned in this course, they are also expected to get notes on the film and discussion from a class “buddy,” not from the professor. Class attendance is a necessary prerequisite for intellectual engagement, but is not sufficient for counting as class participation. [i.e. simply showing up to class

will not help the student's grade, but not coming to class, however, will adversely impact the final grade]. Student's class participation grade will mostly depend on their ability to engage in thoughtful conversation on the course material and assignments, and on how they conduct themselves with reference to their peers and the professor. Students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the material and mastery of the ideas and terms provided through lecture and the readings by actively engaging in discussions, presenting on the material, asking questions, and participating in small group exercises and assignments. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before coming to class. Students are expected to bring the assigned materials having underlined key phrases and/or sentences to every class ready to discuss. Students are expected to cite the assigned texts during discussion. Students should not assume that lectures are solely devoted to summarizing the reading. Lectures are primarily devoted to weaving together the assigned readings, films, and general themes from this course. Class discussion only works if each student takes responsibility for having completed the reading, taking time to reflect on reading in relation to the films and general themes from the class, and comes to class ready to contribute. I assume that each student comes to class having both done the readings and having devoted time preparing their questions and insights into the texts. Thus, students should expect to be randomly called upon in class to answer questions on the assigned readings and films. Further details on class participation expectations will be elaborated upon in class. [20% of final grade]

### ***Assignments:***

***2 In-Class Exams:*** Students will be given a set of questions on each film/readings section in order to guide their readings, class discussion, and help facilitate critical reflection. Additionally, the questions and terms provided also serve as a study guide for the in-class exams administered two times before the last class. Each exam will cover previously discussed films and assigned readings. Each exam is a hard absolute! i.e. a student cannot make up a missed exam. If a student knows they will likely miss one of the exams they should seriously consider taking a different course. [each exam is worth 15% of final grade] [Further details discussed in class]

***Final Essay:*** For the final essay students are required to identify, integrate, and compare several different disciplinary approaches to the intersection between Judaism and the theological/philosophical/sociological ideas and theorists covered in this course. In their final essay students are required to critically reflect on the films in relationship to the assigned readings and questions

presented by the professor. Students are expected to draw on the readings in order to analyze the complex and diverse religious phenomena presented in the films. By drawing on the wide array of philosophical and sociological theory covered in this course, students must also demonstrate their ability to connect religious phenomena presented in the films with the history and ideas addressed in the assigned readings and lectures. The “disciplinary approaches” engaged in this course include theology, philosophy, social theory, psychology, cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, history, and film theory. In their essays students are required to connect the theological, philosophical, and sociological ideas from the assigned texts to specific scenes from the films viewed in this course. Further details on the final essay will be addressed in class. This writing assignment will be assessed on the ability of the student to critically reflect on how the assigned readings help to elucidate characters, themes, history, and ideas presented in the films. Additionally, within their essays students are required to critically reflect on their own beliefs in relationship to the religious and philosophical themes addressed in the films and readings assigned in this course. Further final paper guidelines will be elaborated on in class. [50% of final grade] [Fulfills Core Learning Objectives 1, 2 and 3]

The due date for the final paper is **Wednesday, June 14 by 5 pm via email**. The paper should be emailed via “word” document to the professor. “RSOC.67 Final Paper” should be included in the subject line of the email. A student cannot pass the class unless they have turned in their final essay on time. Late papers will be reduced a full grade for every 24hr period not turned in. Final grades are non-negotiable.

***Extra Credit Opportunity:***

Through consultation with the professor, students are allowed to write a 3-4 page extra credit essay in which they elaborate on the questions and texts already assigned in this course. If a student is interested in writing an extra credit essay they must talk to the professor, either after class or during office hours, in order to get approval for their topic. A student cannot write more than two extra credit essays. Extra credit essays are worth 2% of the student’s final grade. Extra credit essays are graded on a scale of 0-4. Extra credit essays should not be viewed as a substitute for the main assignments in this course. [Extra credit essays can only be turned in the same day as the final essay].

***Format:*** All paper assignments should be double-spaced, 12 font text, 1 inch margins. Additionally, all written assignments must be typed, stapled, and with proper title page that includes the student’s name, class number and title, date, and the professor’s name. [i.e. Professor Lerner at the bottom of the page].

Quoting texts: In footnotes/end notes all you need to put is author, title, page number. [Example: Heschel, *The Prophets*, 41]

***Feedback on Course Assignments:*** Students will receive feedback on their work through a combination of written grades, comments, and conversations. If a student has any questions or concerns I encourage them to come visit me during office hours or to set up an appointment. All additional requirements and expectations will be elaborated on in class.

***Grading and Evaluation:*** Grades are earned, they are not guaranteed. I will be as explicit as possible about what the expectations are and how to earn a superior grade on any given assignment, but simply completing the work to the letter of the assignment will not guarantee a student an A or even a B. Earning a superior grade depends on the students ability to combine films, texts, lectures and, most importantly, critical thinking with their own work. The challenge, of course, is for students to translate ideas into writing that is intelligible to the professor. Excellence is the ultimate aspiration for all assignments. Demonstrating competence will allow students to merely pass. All final grades are non-negotiable except for clerical error.

***Grading Structure:*** A=100-95, A-=94-90, B+=89-87, B=86-83, B-=82-80, C+=79-77, C=76-73, C-=72-70, D=69-60, F=below 60

***Office Hours and E-mails:*** I encourage all students to visit me during my office hours. E-mails should be thoughtful and concise. I would rather meet during office hours to discuss issues of greater length. Students should feel free to contact me to set up an alternative appointment if they have a serious conflict with my designated offices hours. When sending an e-mail to the professor students should include the course number and short topic description in the “subject” title section of the email –i.e. RSOC.67. Students are expected to check their emails for course related issues several times a week.

***Academic Integrity, Technology, Mindfulness, and Classroom Decorum:***

**Students cannot engage electronic devices in class unless permission is given!** We will collectively create a safe and dynamic space in which each student will be expected to share his/her insights into the texts, ideas, and traditions covered, while retaining a respectful openness to the opinions and identity commitments of the other students in the class. It is important to demonstrate your respect for

both the professor and your fellow peers by reframing from using personal technological devices (such as phones, laptops, etc.). In order to foster this greater state of “mindfulness,” students are additionally expected to demonstrate their “presence” during class by reframing from distracting activities such as having un-authorized side conversations, side jokes (unless really funny and shared with the class), and/or engaging in other disruptive behavior like coming into the classroom late, or packing up before the class has ended. Any disruptive behavior can affect the final class participation grade. If a student is caught using any form of unauthorized technology (i.e. computer, answering phones, ipad, texting, etc.) the student’s class participation grade will be reduced. Additionally, students should reframe from leaving in the middle of class, even for the bathroom, unless absolutely necessary.

A student caught plagiarizing cannot pass the course and their case will be turned over to proper academic authorities within the University. All integrity and policy standards already laid out in the University bulletin apply. (For further see [www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity](http://www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity))

### **Academic Integrity**

*The Academic Integrity pledge is an expression of the University’s commitment to fostering an understanding of -- and commitment to -- a culture of integrity at Santa Clara University. The Academic Integrity pledge, which applies to all students, states: “I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code.”*

*Students are expected to uphold the principles of this pledge for all work in this class. For more information about Santa Clara University’s academic integrity pledge and resources about ensuring academic integrity in your work, see [www.scu.edu/academic-integrity](http://www.scu.edu/academic-integrity).*

### **Disabilities Resources**

*If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, <http://www.scu.edu/disabilities> as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours.*

*While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at [408-554-4109](tel:408-554-4109).*

### **Accommodations for Pregnancy and Parenting**

*In alignment with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and with the California Education Code, Section 66281.7, Santa Clara University provides reasonable accommodations to students who are pregnant, have recently experienced childbirth, and/or have medical needs related to childbirth. Pregnant and parenting students can often arrange accommodations by working directly with their instructors, supervisors, or departments. Alternatively, a pregnant or parenting student experiencing related medical conditions may request accommodations through Disability Resources.*

### **Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct (Title IX)**

*Santa Clara University upholds a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, or stalking, I encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please consult the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy at <http://bit.ly/2ce1hBb> or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie, at [408-554-3043](tel:408-554-3043), [bguthrie@scu.edu](mailto:bguthrie@scu.edu). Reports may be submitted online through <https://www.scu.edu/osl/report/> or anonymously through Ethicspoint <https://www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethicspoint/>*



**Introduction to Judaism and Film:**

1. [4/4] Introduction: Beginnings of Judaism: Exodus, Revolt, and Exile [Galut]

Film: **Masada** (miniseries), (1981) [Selections] Directed by Boris Sagal

[Recommended] **Prince of Egypt** (1998) Directed by Simon Wells, Brenda Chapman, and Steve Hickner [Recommended: viewed outside of class]

**Assigned Readings:** Chapter, "The Jewish Tradition" by Alan F. Segal [located in *World Religions: Western Traditions, Second Edition*, Edited by Willard Oxtoby – found on SCU's Camino/"Angel" system]

*The Routledge Companion to Religion and Film*, ed. John Lyden  
[Selection: chapter 5, "Judaism," – located in SCU's Camino system]

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin

Section: Exodus, chap.14 Moses/Moshe, chap.15 Burning Bush/"I shall be what I shall be" chap.16 "Let my people go" chap.17 The Ten Plagues. "And God hardened Pharaoh's heart" chap.18 The splitting of the Red Sea, chap.20 Mount Sinai and the Giving of the Torah, chap.21 Covenant/Brit "We Shall do and we shall hear," chap.22 The Ten Commandments/Aseret ha-Dibrot,  
Part II. THE SECOND COMMONWEALTH, THE MISHNA AND THE TALMUD Chap.64 Antiochus Ephiphanes, King of Syria, and the Seleucid Empire, chap.65 Maccabees. Hasmoneans. Mattathias. Judah Maccabee, chap.66 Hannah and Her Seven Sons, chap.67 Rome Takes Over Jerusalem, 63 B.C.E., chap.68 R.Hillel. The Golden Rule. *The Prosbul*, chap.69 Sanhedrin, chap.70 Herod, King of Judea, chap.71 Jesus. The Crucifixion. Pontius Pilate. The New Testament, chap.72 Paul, chap.73 Pharisees. Sadducees. Essenes. Dead Sea Sect, chap.74 The Great Revolt, 66-70 c.e. Zealots, chap.75 Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai. "Give me Yavneh and its sages," chap.76 Destruction of the Second Temple, 70 c.e., chap.77 Flavius Josephus, chap.78 Massada, 73 c.e., chap.79 Rabbi Akiva, chap.80 Bar-Kokhba Rebellion, 132-135 c.e.  
Part 12. JEWISH ETHICS AND BASIC BELIEFS [recommended that you read the whole section, but be sure to focus on the following chapters] chap.256 Commandment/Mitzvah, 259. 'Justice, justice you shall pursue,' 263. 'Not to oppress the stranger,' 268. Fear of God, 269. Tzedaka, 272. Kiddush Has-Shem/Hillul Ha-shem, 274. Where Life Is at Stake/Pikuakh Nefesh, 288. Yetzer ha-Tov and Yetzer ha-Ra, 289. Messiah/Ma-shi-akh, Messianism, 290.

Afterlife/Olam ha-ba, 291. Ethical Monotheism. Perfection of the World/Tikkun Olam

**Recommended Readings:** Book of Exodus from the Hebrew Bible, specifically Exodus, Chap. 1-4

Omer Bartov, *The “Jew” In Cinema: From The Golem to Don’t Touch My Holocaust*

Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, M. Fishbane, *Judaism*

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin Section: Exodus, chap.19 Amalek, chap.23 The Golden Calf, chap.24 Aaron and Miriam

*The Jewish War*, by Flavius Josephus (Yosef Ben Matityahu)

[Eleazar’s last speech, selections: VII, 315-40 – found on Camino]

2. [4/11] *Diaspora [Galut], Redemption, and Mystical Ecstasy*

**Film: Fiddler on the Roof**, (1971) [181 min] Directed by Norman Jewison

[1<sup>st</sup> day of Passover, 2<sup>nd</sup> Seder]

**Assigned Readings:** Gershom Scholem, “Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories in Judaism” [located in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*]

David Biale, essay “Sexuality and Spirituality in the Kabbalah”  
[located in *Eros and the Jews*]

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin

Chap.105 Ghetto, chap.106 Kabbalah, chap.127 Shtetl. Cheder,

chap.128 Pogrom, chap.129 Kishinev Pogrom, c

Chap.337 Temple/Synagogue/Shul/Shtiebl, Jewish Community Centers,

Chap.351. Sh’ma Yisra’el

*A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, (7th Edition) [Paperback]

Timothy Corrigan (Author) [selections: Chapters 1 and 2]

**Recommended Reading:** Seth Wollitz, “Tevye on the Mayflower”

"Mysticism," chap located in *Judaisms: A Twenty-First Century Introduction to Jews and Jewish Identities*, by Aaron Hahn Tapper

Martin Buber, essays "The Foundation Stone," [located in *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*, pg. 60-89,]

Martin Buber, "Hitlahavut: Ecstasy," [located in *Hasidism and Modern Man*]

Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies* (Vintage, 2002)

*A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, (7th Edition) [Paperback]

Timothy Corrigan (Author) [selections: Chapters 3 and 4]

3. [4/18] *The Jew as "Other": Anti-Semitism and Crisis of Modernity*

Film: **Sunshine** (1999) [181 min] Directed and written by Istvan Szabo

**Assigned Readings:** Hannah Arendt, "The Jews and Society: Between Pariah and Parvenu" [located in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pg.54-68]

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin

Part 10. ANTISEMITISM [read whole section]

chap.117 Emancipation. "To the Jews as individuals, all rights. To the Jews as a people, no rights." chap.254 *Rome and Jerusalem*

**Recommended Reading:**

"The Jew As Pariah: A Hidden Tradition," [1947] located in *The Jewish Writings: Hannah Arendt*, edited by J. Kohn and R. Feldman

"The 'Jew' As Hero," [located in *The "Jew" in Cinema: From The Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust*]

Chapters: "The Concept of Enlightenment," and

"Elements of Anti-Semitism: Limits of Enlightenment",

[located in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* by Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno,]

4. [4/25] *The Holocaust (Shoah) and the Problem of Evil*

Film: **God on Trial** (2008) [BBC/WGBH Boston – television play written by Frank Boyce, Directed by Andy de Emmony] [90 min]

**Schindler's List** (1993) [186 min] Directed by Steven Spielberg  
[Entire film to be viewed outside of class]

**Assigned Reading:** Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, section "The Problem of Evil" [Located in *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*]

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin Part 7. THE HOLOCAUST  
chap.294 Theodicy, chap.278 "Whoever saves a single life it is as if he saved an entire world," chap.221 Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

**Recommended Reading:** "The 'Jew' As Hero," [located in Omer Bartov, *The 'Jew' In Cinema: From The Golem to Don't Touch My Holocaust*]  
*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin chap.282 Righteous Non-Jews/*Hasidei Ummot ha-Olam*

5. [5/2] *Holocaust and Hope*

**First Exam:**

**Film: Defiance** (2008) [137 min] Directed and Written by Edward Zwick

**Assigned Reading:** Emil Fackenheim, "The Commandment To Hope: A Response to Contemporary Jewish Experience," in *The Future of Hope: Essays by Bloch, Fackenheim, Moltman, Metz, Capps*. Edited by Walter Capps, 68-91

**Recommended Reading:** "Hope – After Auschwitz And Hiroshima?"  
Panel Discussion: Emil Fackenheim, Johannes Metz, Jurgen Moltmann, Walter Capps [located in *The Future of Hope: Essays by Bloch, Fackenheim, Moltman, Metz, Capps*. Edited by Walter Capps, 92-101]  
"Of Last Things: The Messianic Days and the World to Come"  
[located in Emil Fackenheim, *What Is Judaism? An Interpretation For The Present Age*]  
*A Short Guide to Writing about Film*, (7th Edition) [Paperback]  
Timothy Corrigan (Author) [selections: Chapter 5]

6. [5/9] Zionism and Redemption: Creating the New Jew

*Film: Exodus* (1960) [208 min] Directed by Otto Preminger [adaptation of Leon Uris' book *Exodus*] [Entire film to be viewed outside of class, selections viewed in class]

**Assigned Reading:** Martin **Buber**, essay "Nationalism" (1921) [located in *Israel and the World*]

Rabbi Abraham Joshua **Heschel**, *Israel: An Echo Of Eternity* [Selection: Chap.3 "Between hope and distress"]

David **Biale**, "Zionism as an Erotic Revolution," [located in *Eros And The Jews*]

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin Part 6. ZIONISM AND ISRAEL Chapters 133 – 154 chap.125, Martin Buber (1878-1965)

**Recommended Reading:** Martin Buber, essay "Hebrew Humanism" [located in *Israel and the World*]

Deborah Dash Moore, essay: "Israel as Frontier"

Stephen Whitfield, essay: "Value Added: Jews in Postwar American Culture"

M. Silver, *Our Exodus: Leon Uris and the Americanization of Israel's Founding Story* (Wayne State Univ. Press, 2011)

Philip Roth, "Some New Jewish Stereotypes."

*Film: Cast a Giant Shadow* [1966] Based on the life of Colonel Mickey Markus, starring Kirk Douglas. Supporting roles by John Wayne, Frank Sinatra, and Angie Dickinson.

7. [5/16] Jews and Judaism in America

*Films: The Jazz Singer*, [1980's remake starring Neil Diamond and Sir Laurence Olivier] [116 min]

[The original] *The Jazz Singer* (1927) Directed by Alan Crosland [viewed outside of class]

**Assigned Readings:** Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, "Chap. VIII GOD AS THE POWER THAT MAKES FOR FREEDOM" [loc in *The Meaning of God In Modern Jewish Religion* (1937)]

Michael **Rogin**, *Blackface, White Noise: the Jewish Jazz Singer Finds His Voice*  
Selections: Chapters, 1. "Uncle Sammy and My Mammy,"  
3. "Nationalism, Blackface, and the Jewish Question"

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, chap.222 "Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan (1881-1983) Reconstructionism"

**Recommended Reading:** Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization: Towards a Reconstruction of American-Jewish Life* (1934) Selections: Chap. XIV "Judaism As A Civilization",  
Chap.XVI. "Implications Of The Proposed Version Of Judaism"  
Stephen Whitfield, "Movies in America as Paradigms of Accommodation"  
[located in *The Americanization of the Jews*, edited by Robert Seltzer and Norman Cohen]

Michael Rogin, *Blackface, White Noise: the Jewish Jazz Singer Finds His Voice*  
Selections: Chapter 2. "Two Declarations of Independence: The Contaminated Origins of American National Culture,"  
Chapter 4. "Blackface, White Noise: The Jewish Jazz Singer Finds His Voice"  
Mordecai Kaplan, "Hope," [located in *The Future of the American Jew*]  
Jon Stratton, "Not really white - again: performing Jewish difference in Hollywood films since the 1980s,"  
Joel Rosenberg, "What You Ain't Heard Yet: The Languages of The Jazz Singer,"  
"Are Jews White?" article located at...

[https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/are-jews-white/509453/?utm\\_source=atltw](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/12/are-jews-white/509453/?utm_source=atltw)

8. [5/23] *Mystical Experience and the American Jewish Quest for Meaning in Suburbia*

**Second Exam:**

**Film: A Serious Man** [2009] [106 min] Directed by Joel Coen and Ethan Coen

**Assigned Reading:** David Biale, "Sexual Stereotypes in American Jewish Culture," [located in *Eros And The Jews*]

Essay "A Serious Film," by Ruth Wisse [*Commentary*, December 2009]

Essay "Realism or Anti-Semitism?" by Tom Tugend [The Jewish Journal, 1/27/2010]

Essay "What's Going On?" by Juliet Lapidos [Slate.com, 3/2/2010]

**AJS Review: Vol. 35, No.2 November 2011**

Shai Ginsburg, "The Physics of Being Jewish, or On Cats and Jews"

Ariella Lang, "From Boys to Men: Gender Politics and Jewish Identity in A Serious Man"

***Recommended Reading:***

Gershom Scholem, essay "The Messianic Idea in Kabbalism" [located in *The Messianic Idea in Judaism: And Other Essays on Jewish Spirituality*]

Thomas Nagel, essay "The Absurd" [located in *Mortal Questions*]

"Kabbalistic Texts," [located in *Back to the Sources: Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*, ed. Barry Holtz]

*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin Chap.94 Maimonides/Rambam Book of Job, Hebrew Bible

Essay: "Seriously, Coen Brothers," by Matthue Roth [MyJewishLearning.com, 10/9/2009]

Essay: "Jewish History, Popcorn Included" by A.O. Scott [New York Times, 10/4/2009]

Essay: "Secret Test!: A Serious Man (2009)," by Chris Stangl [explodingkinetoscope.blogspot.com, 10/30/2009]

9. [5/30] *Reason, Revelation, and the Discontents of American Jewish Assimilation*

**Film: Crimes and Misdemeanors** (1989) [107 min] Director, Woody Allen

**Assigned Reading:** Leo Strauss, essay "Jerusalem and Athens" [1967] [located in *Jewish Philosophy And The Crises of Modernity* pg.377-405]

*Recommended Reading:*

Peter Minowitz, "Crimes and Controversies: Nihilism from Machiavelli to Woody Allen" [located in Literature/Film Quarterly, vol.19, 1991 No.2]  
Film: *Zelig* (1983) [79 min] Director, Woody Allen  
Richard Grenier, "Zelig and the American Character"

10. [6/6] *Jewish Humor and "Marrano" Consciousness: Truth, Concealment, and Identity*

*Film:* Short clips taken from a selection of media sources

**Assigned Reading:** Sigmund **Freud**, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (Norton: 1989)  
[Selections: p.53-64, 84-88, 113-124, 132-139, 174-177]

Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Humor: What the Best Jewish Jokes Say About the Jews* [selections: Introduction: *What is Jewish About Jewish Humor?* Chap:4, "*The Doctor Is Three and the Lawyer Is Two:*" *Self-Loathing, Self-Praise, and Other Jewish Neuroses*, Chap:5, "*Pardon Me, Do You Have Another Globe?:*" *Persecution and the Jewish Sense of Homelessness*, Chap:6, "*And I Used to Be a Hunchback:*" *Assimilation and Its Delusions*, Chap:7, "*If I Could Just See One Miracle:*" *Poking Fun at God, His Law, and His Spokesmen on Earth*]

*The Big Book of Jewish Humor* [25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary]  
Edited and annotated by William Novak and Moshe Waldoks  
[Selected texts found in Camino]

*Recommended Reading:* "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment As Mass Deception," [located in Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*]  
Stephen Whitfield, "The Distinctiveness of Jewish Humor."  
Lawrence Epstein, *The Haunted Smile: The Story of Jewish Comedians in America*  
*Jewish Literacy*, by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin chap.131 Sigmund Freud

**Final Essay Due: Wednesday, June 14<sup>th</sup> 5 pm via email to the Professor.**



### ***Additional Resources:***

Internet Movie Script Database [IMSD] [www.imsdb.com/scripts](http://www.imsdb.com/scripts)  
The National Center for Jewish Film – [www.jewishfilm.org](http://www.jewishfilm.org)  
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>  
[Journal of Religion & Film](http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/)--<http://www.unomaha.edu/jrf/>  
[Journal of Religion & Popular Culture](http://www.usask.ca/relst/jrpc/)--<http://www.usask.ca/relst/jrpc/>  
[Journal of Religion & Theatre](http://www.rjournal.org/)--<http://www.rjournal.org/>  
[Hebrew Bible on the web] <http://www.mechon-mamre.org>  
<http://www.imdb.com> [The Internet Movie Database]  
Gale Virtual Reference Library [University library database]  
[International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers](#). Ed. Sara Pendergast and Tom Pendergast. [accessed through SCU library by going to “Gale Virtual Reference Library” in “list of databases”]  
*Encyclopedia Judaica* [accessed through SCU library by going to “Gale Virtual Reference Library” in “list of databases”]  
MyJewishLearnin.com  
Jews and Italian Cinema--<http://www.primolevicenter.org>

Ed. Lawrence Baron, *The Modern Jewish Experience in World Cinema*  
· Publisher: Brandeis (December 13, 2011)  
Arnold Eisen, *The Chosen People in America: A Study in Jewish Religious Ideology*  
Jonathan Sarna, *American Judaism: A History*  
Marc Dollinger, *Quest For Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America*  
Nathan Glazer, *American Judaism* [Second Edition]  
*Insider/Outsider: American Jews and Multiculturalism*, Edited by David Biale, Michael Galchinsky, and Susannah Heschel  
*Hollywood: An Empire of Their Own* (A&E DVD Archives) (1998)  
Paul Buhle, *From The Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture*  
Sam Girgus, *Levinas And The Cinema Of Redemption: Time, Ethics, and the Feminine*  
Michael Fishbane, *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions*  
Andrea Most, *Theatrical Liberalism: Jews And Popular Entertainment in America*, [NYU, 2013]