

JEWISH ATLANTIC WORLD

MESSIANISM & MYSTICISM

Reed College
Summer 2010
Prof. Laura Leibman

LBST 507
Monday-Thursday 3-5pm
Library 387

Webpage:
<http://moodle.reed.edu>

Database:
<https://cdm.reed.edu/>

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Weekly Papers

Weekly Papers are due each Wednesday in class and are 1-2 pages in length. Bring enough copies for everyone (including Laura). Papers will be workshopped in class Thursdays, so please read and comment on your peers' papers before coming to class. Papers should be close readings of the week's designated objects or readings of the object in the context of the week's subject. You should choose an object from the database or a print source **from your port**. Please include an image of the object in your paper. Ports will be chosen the first day.

2. Portfolio at End of Semester

See instructions at the end of the syllabus



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Jews in the Atlantic World (1620-1820) didn't stay put for long: one year they were in Amsterdam, the next in London, New York, Newport, Curaçao, Jamaica, Barbados, or Suriname. These wanderers, referred to as "Port Jews," were primarily merchants who resided in and traveled between port towns during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Often Port Jews were descendants of *conversos*—Jews forced to convert to Catholicism under the Inquisition and who may have practiced Judaism in secret for generations before they escape the Iberian Peninsula. Raised in two worlds, Port Jews commonly saw their ties to the "Jewish collectivity" as voluntary and yet saw Jewish (re)education as a must. Many were quite wealthy and had at least indirect ties to the slave trade. They created and sponsored a rich visual and literary culture that trod the line between devotion and heresy. They were deeply messianic, and their belief permeated their shared visual and religious ethos. The course examines this world through close reading of material culture and literary and religious texts. There will be frequent writing assignments.

REQUIRED READINGS

- Luzzatto, *Derech Hashem*

RECOMMENDED

- Stephen Nadler, *Rembrandt's Jews*
- *The Memoirs Of Gluckel Of Hameln*, trans. Marvin Lowenthal
- Menasseh Ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel*
- Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko*

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

WEEK 1: SELF-FASHIONING IN THE JEWISH ATLANTIC

6.28 Monday: People of Three Worlds

João Pinto Delgado, "On Leaving Lisbon," *Marrano Poets of the Seventeenth Century*, ed.

Timothy Oelman, pp. 49-65 (PQ6173.5.J47 M3 2007; Moodle)

Argens, *The Jewish Spy*, Volume I, front matter, Letters I, II, IV,

Pages 1-30, 40-47 (Moodle or EECO)

Sarna, Jonathan. "Port Jews in the Atlantic: Further Thoughts."

Jewish History 20. 2 (2006): 213-219.

<www.jstor.org/stable/20100978>

Sorkin, David. "The Port Jew: Notes Toward a Social Type."

Journal of Jewish Studies 1.1 (1999): 87-97.

Introduction to Moodle in Class

<https://moodle.reed.edu/course/view.php?id=553>

CHOOSE PORTS IN CLASS



6.29 Tuesday: The Invisible World

Luzzatto, *Derech Hashem*, Introduction & Part 1, pp. 21-88 (BM550 .L78128 1997)

Everyone: Please have updated your profile and create a personal page on the wiki.

Introduction to Jewish Atlantic World Database in Class

<<https://cdm.reed.edu/cgi-bin/admin/edit.exe?CISOROOT=/jewishatl>>

6.30

Wednesday: Portraiture

Steven Nadler, Chapters 1 & 2, *Rembrandt's Jews*, pp. 1-103 ((N6953.R4 N33 2003)

Introductory Essays, *Facing the New World: Jewish Portraits in Colonial and Federal America*, pp. 1-21 (E184.J5 F34 1997)

7.1 Thursday: Writing Workshop--Beginnings

WEEK 2: MESSIANIC DREAMS AND THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM

7.5 Monday: No Class Fourth of July Weekend

7. 6 Tuesday: Temples

Leon de Templo, *An accurate description of the grand and glorious Temple*

<http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW3301970213&source=gale&userGroupName=oregon_reed&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>.

Luzzatto, *Secrets of the Future Temple*

<<http://www.azamra.org/TempleSecrets/MishkeneyElyon.htm>>

7.7 Wednesday: Synagogues

Stephen Nadler, "Chapter 4: Esnoga," *Rembrandt's Jews*

(N6953.R4 N33 2003) 144-186

Leibman, "Sephardic Sacred Space in Colonial America" (Moodle)

7.8 Thursday: Writing Workshop

Structure of the Argumentation: Roots and Trees

WEEK 3: THE WORLD OF WOMEN

7.12 Monday: Women's Self Fashioning

The Memoirs Of Gluckel Of Hameln, trans. Marvin Lowenthal,

Introduction and Books I-III, V.1-3 (pp. vii-xviii, 1-89, 146-157)

7.13 Tuesday: Purification and Eschatology

Menasseh ben Israel, *The Hope of Israel* (E61 .M2613 1987 or EEBO)

"Niddah," "Purification," "Immersion," "Marital Relations," *Me'am Loez*,

vol.1 I, pp. 129-160 (BS1225 .M37513 1977 v.1)

7.14 Wednesday: Ritual Baths

Jerzy Gawronski and Ranjith Jayasena, "A mid-18th-century *mikveh* unearthed in the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam,"

Post-Medieval Archaeology 41, no. 2 (2007): 213-221. (Moodle)

7.15 Thursday: Writing Workshop

Paragraphs

If you would like to contribute recipes to next week's meal, please get them to me by this Thursday.

WEEK 4: SOUL FOOD

7.19 Monday: Circuits of Food

"Amsterdam" (Teveth 24, 1777- Iyar 28, 1777) from *The Diary of Rabbi Ha'im Yosef David Azulai*, ed. Benjamin Cymerman. Volume II, pp. 204-250 (BM 755 A95 D53 1997)

"Nov. 23, 1773," *Literary Diary of Ezra Stiles*, Volume I, pp. 422-423

<<http://www.archive.org/stream/diaryezrastilesoristiluoft#page/n433/mode/2up>>

Leibman, "Soul Food" (Moodle)

7.20 Tuesday: No class Tisha B'Av (do readings for next week)

7.21 Wednesday: Recipes

Class Meets at Laura's House 2520 SW Bertha Blvd.

7.22 Thursday: Writing Workshop

Proposals

WEEK 5: THE WORLD OF SLAVES

7.26 Monday: Enslaved Jews, Enslaved Blacks



Isaac de Matatia Aboab, "Harassed but Happy," *The Story of Joseph in Spanish Golden Age Drama*, ed. Michael D. McGaha, pp. 226-317 (PQ6221 .S76 1998)
 Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (PR3317 .O7 1997, or EECO)

7.27 Tuesday: Religion and Slavery

Luzzatto, *Derech Hashem*, Part II (89-180)

Aviva Ben-Ur, "Peripheral Inclusion: Communal Belonging in Suriname's Sephardic community," In *Religion, Gender, and Culture in the Pre-modern World*, eds. Alexandra Cuffel and Brian M Britt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 185-210 (HQ21 .R427 2007)



7.28 Wednesday: Imaging Africans

Chapter Five "Commodities of the West India Company," *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age*, 159 = 227 (ND1393.N43 H63 2007)

7.29 Thursday: Writing Workshop

Paramedic Method

WEEK 6: THE WORLD TO COME

8.2 Monday: Memory Renews Pain

Reread *The Memoirs Of Gluckel Of Hameln*, trans. Marvin Lowenthal, Book V.1-3 (pp. 146-157)
 Miguel de Barrios, "On the death of Rachel," "The true concern of Man," and "Memory renews pain," *Marrano Poets of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Timothy Oelman, pp. 219-223, 225-29 (PQ6173.5.J47 M3 2007; Moodle)

8.3 Tuesday: Immortality of the Soul

Nadler, "Immortality on the Amstel," *Spinoza's Heresy*, pp. 157-181 (B3999.I4 N33 2001)
 Luzzatto, *Derech Hashem*, reread pp. 51-60

8.4 Wednesday: Gravestones

Stephen Nadler, Chapter 5, *Rembrandt's Jews* (N6953.R4 N33 2003) 187-224

8.5 Thursday: Writing Workshop

Closure



FINAL PROJECTS

Your final project consists of a portfolio of your earlier papers with an analytical introduction in Booksmart <<http://www.blurb.com/>> format (post as a pdf). Final Projects need to be posted on your WebPages on the Moodle by Friday August 13th.