

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Instructor	J. Shawn Landres 15600 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90077-1519 shawn@landres.com
Institution	University of Judaism—College of Arts & Sciences (private liberal arts college—the undergraduate program is non-sectarian but the university is affiliated with the Conservative/Masorti Movement)
Course level and type	Upper division/lecture-discussion
Hours of Instruction	40 hours; 2.5hrs/week over a 16 week semester
Enrollment and year last taught	25 students/Winter 2003
Pedagogical Reflections	This course invited students to think critically and comparatively about Judaism and Jewishness in contemporary North America. The course succeeded in exposing students to the wide range of contemporary Jewish experiences; assignments yielded substantial advances in critical thinking skills but the scope of the readings could have been reduced without compromising the course. (Please see “Purpose of Course” below for additional comments.)

JST278 / JWC243, SPRING 2003 — CONTEMPORARY JEWISH LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

University of Judaism, Room 310
Tuesday-Thursday 9:30am—10:45am

Instructor: J. Shawn Landres
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Purpose of Course:

This course invites students to think critically and comparatively about Judaism and Jewishness in contemporary North America. With a focus on qualitative social-scientific approaches, rather than theological, textual, or historical ones, we shall take a comparative view not only of categories of collective identity such as ethnicity, nationality, and religion, but also of issues and themes such as food, gender, immigration, and public policy. Taking case studies mostly from the Los Angeles region where we live, we shall examine Jewish life in the context of Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, and other new and not-so-new immigrant religions with which 21st-century Judaism may well have more in common than it does with the traditional “establishment” of “Protestant, Catholic, Jew.”

Required Texts:

1. Eck, Diana L. *A new religious America: how a “Christian country” has become the world’s most religiously diverse nation*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001.
2. Freedman, Samuel G. *Jew vs. Jew: the struggle for the soul of American Jewry*. New York: Touchstone/Simon & Schuster, 2000.
3. Jacobs, Janet Liebman. *Hidden Heritage: The Legacy of the Crypto-Jews*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002.
4. Mittleman, Alan, Jonathan D. Sarna, and Robert Licht, eds. *Jewish polity and American civil society: communal agencies and religious movements in the American public square*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002
5. See, Lisa. *On Gold Mountain: the one-hundred-year odyssey of my Chinese-American family*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.
6. **Course Reader**, available January 21 at Course Reader Materials, 1137 Westwood Blvd. (opposite The Warehouse), Los Angeles, CA 90024, 310-443-3300.

Course Requirements and Grading:

Attendance and Participation	15% of final course grade	NB: <i>In order to pass the class, you must attend class at least 70% of the time, regardless of your grades on quizzes, abstracts, presentations, and projects. You may not use extra credit points to make up for missed attendance.</i>
Weekly Quizzes	10% of final course grade	
Weekly Abstracts	30% of final course grade	
Written Project	25% of final course grade	
In-Class Presentations	20% of final course grade	

There is neither a midterm examination nor a final examination for this course. Rather than periods of procrastination punctuated by phases of panic, I prefer to try to keep you engaged more or less at the same level throughout the semester. Please note that you must participate fully in all assignments in order to pass the course. You will have opportunities to earn extra credit points by attending special events; I shall announce these in class.

Weekly Quizzes: Once a week (usually Thursdays) at the beginning of class I shall administer a brief quiz on the reading for that week. There will be no trick questions—in fact, if you know enough about each article to write an abstract about it, then you should get 100% on each quiz.

Weekly Abstracts: Each Thursday during the semester (except for the week you give an in-class presentation), you are to submit a typed abstract of one article you have read for that week. Please see my separate handout for specific instructions about what should go into your abstract.

Written Project: A written project is required, based on work done throughout the semester. I shall provide details in a separate memo. The project will be due at noon on Thursday, May 15, 2003.

In-Class Presentations: At least once during the semester you will be asked to make a ten-minute presentation (and distribute a handout) on an assigned reading relevant to the theme of the week. The purpose of these presentations is three-fold: first, to encourage you not simply to *think about* the readings but also to *think with* the readings; second, to introduce to the class material that not everyone will have read and show how it relates to other readings; and third, to kick-off class discussions. I plan to meet with each group of presenters 1-2 weeks in advance of presentations in order to go over the goals for each set of presentations.

Presentation Dates:

Date	Readings to be Presented
February 13	1-3. A new religious America —"American Hindus" (pp. 80-141); "American Buddhists" (pp.142-221); and "American Muslims" (pp. 222-293) 4. Martin E. Marty, "Protestant Christianity in the world and in America," in Jacob Neusner, ed., <i>World religions in America: an introduction</i> (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 33-68. 5. Andrew M. Greeley, "The Catholics in the world and in America," in Jacob Neusner, ed., <i>World religions in America: an introduction</i> (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 93-110.
February 20	1. Benny Kraut, "Jewish Survival in Protestant America," in Jonathan D. Sarna, ed., <i>Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream</i> (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1998), pp.15-60. 2. Nancy T. Ammerman, "Conservative Jews within the landscape of American religion," in Jack Wertheimer, ed., <i>Jews in the center: Conservative synagogues and their members</i> (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 2000), pp. 359-390.
March 6	1. Daniel J. Elazar, "Changing places, changing cultures: divergent Jewish political cultures," in Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen, eds., <i>Divergent Jewish cultures: Israel and America</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 319-331.
March 13	1. Stephen Sharot, "A critical comment on Gans' 'Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity' and other formulations of ethnicity and religion regarding American Jews," <i>Contemporary Jewry</i> 18 (1997), pp. 25-43. 2. Russell Jeung, "Asian American Pan-Ethnic Formation and Congregational Culture," in Pyong Gap Min and Jung Ha Kim, eds., <i>Religions in Asian America: building faith communities</i> (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), pp. 215-245. 3. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Imagining Europe: the popular arts of American Jewish ethnography," in Deborah Dash Moore and S. Ilan Troen, eds., <i>Divergent Jewish cultures: Israel and America</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 155-191.
April 10	1-6. Jewish polity and American civil society —"Conservative movement" (pp. 235-260); "Reform Judaism" (pp. 261-282); "Mainstream orthodoxy" (pp. 283-310); "Haredim" (pp. 311-336); "Reconstructionism" (pp. 337-362); and "Jewish renewal" (pp. 363-388).
May 1	1. Sylvia Barack Fishman, "Women's transformation of public Judaism: religiosity, egalitarianism, and the symbolic power of changing gender roles," in Eli Lederhendler, ed. <i>Who owns Judaism? Public religion and private faith in America and Israel</i> , Studies in contemporary Jewry XVII (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp.131-155. 2. Deborah E. Lipstadt, "The impact of the women's movement on American Jewish life: an overview after twenty years," in Peter Y. Medding, ed. <i>Values, interests and identity: Jews and politics in a changing world</i> , Studies in contemporary Jewry XI (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.86-100. 3. Moshe Shokeid, "'The women are coming': the transformation of gender relationships in a gay synagogue," <i>Ethnos</i> , 66:1 (2001), pp. 5-26.

NB: Currently there are 20 in-class presentations available, reflecting projected enrollment as of December 2002. If additional students are enrolled, then I shall provide additional in-class presentation materials, most likely for dates / themes other than those above.

Course Outline and Reading Assignments

Week	Theme	Assigned Reading ("CR"=Course Reader; "JvJ"="Jew vs. Jew"; "JPACS"="Jewish Polity and American Civil Society")
January 21-23	<i>Introduction (1/21); Food (1/23)</i>	CR 1— Etan Diamond, "Beyond borscht: the kosher lifestyle and the religious consumerism of suburban orthodox Jews" CR 2— Wade Clark Roof, "Blood in the barbecue? food and faith in the American South"
January 28-30	<i>Family Stories</i>	On Gold Mountain
February 4-6	<i>Collectivities and Boundaries</i>	CR 3— Richard Jenkins, "Different societies? Different cultures? What are human collectivities?" CR 4— Barbara A. Holdrege, "What's beyond the post? Comparative analysis as critical method" CR 5— Marcus Banks, "Introduction," "Conclusions" CR 6 — Jonathan Webber, "Jews and Judaism in contemporary Europe: religion or ethnic group?" CR 7— Dean R. Hoge et al., "Catholic identity of young adults," "Catholic identity and tradition"
February 11-13	<i>Diversity</i>	A new religious America— pp. xiii-79
February 18-20	<i>Jews and American Pluralism</i>	CR 8— Charles H. Lippy, "Pluralism and American religious life in the later twentieth century" CR 9— David Biale, "The melting pot and beyond: Jews and the politics of American identity" CR 10— Alan L. Mittleman, "Pluralism v. multiculturalism" JvJ— pp. 13-41
February 25-27	<i>Judaism and Nationality</i>	CR 11— Martin E. Marty, "Religion and nationality" CR 12— Régine Azria, "Jews and Europe: between historical realities and social identities" CR 13— Jackie Feldman, "'It is my brothers whom I am seeking': Israeli youths' pilgrimages to Poland of the Shoah" CR 14— Rebecca Golbert, "Transnational orientations from home: constructions of Israel and transnational space among Ukrainian Jewish youth" CR 15— Chaim I. Waxman, "Center and periphery: Israel in American Jewish life" CR 16— Ellen Friedrichs, "I was a teenage Zionist"
March 4-6	<i>America and Israel</i>	JPACS— "History of Israel advocacy" (103-181) JvJ— pp. 162-216
March 11-13	<i>Judaism and Ethnicity</i>	CR 17— Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity: towards a comparison of ethnic and religious acculturation" CR 18— Steven M. Cohen, "Religiosity and ethnicity: Jewish identity trends in the United States" JPACS— "'Defenders': national Jewish community relations agencies" (pp. 13-67)

Week	Theme	Assigned Reading (" CR "=Course Reader; " JvJ "="Jew vs. Jew"; " JPACS "="Jewish Polity and American Civil Society")
March 18-20	<i>Immigration</i>	<p>CR 19— Georges Sabagh and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, "Secular immigrants: religiosity and ethnicity among Iranian Muslims in Los Angeles"</p> <p>CR 20— Shoshanah Feher, "From the rivers of Babylon to the valleys of Los Angeles: the exodus and adaptation of Iranian Jews"</p> <p>CR 21— Loolwa Khazzoom, "United Jewish feminist front"</p> <p>CR 22— Peter T. Cha, "Ethnic identity formation and participation in immigrant churches: second-generation Korean American experiences"</p> <p>CR 23— Prema Kurien, "Religion, ethnicity and politics: Hindu and Muslim Indian immigrants in the United States"</p>
March 25-27		Hidden Heritage: The Legacy of the Crypto-Jews
April 1-3	<i>Orthodox Conflicts (4/1); Judaism in Canada (4/3)</i>	<p>JvJ— pp. 217-274</p> <p>CR 24— Haym Soloveitchik, "Rupture and reconstruction: the transformation of contemporary orthodoxy"</p> <p>CR 25— Samuel C. Heilman, "Orthodoxy in an American synagogue"</p> <p>CR 26— Jonathan Schorsch, "Making Judaism cool"</p> <p>CR 27— Sandi Simcha Dubowski, "Trembling on the road: a Simcha diary"</p>
April 8-10	<i>Public Judaisms</i>	<p>JvJ— pp. 275-337</p> <p>CR 28— Sherry Israel, "Jewish involvement in the American public square: the organizational disconnect"</p> <p>CR 29— Aliza Maggid, "Joining together: building a worldwide movement"</p> <p>CR 30— Jonathan Krasner, "Without standing down: the first queer Jewish street protest"</p>
April 15	<i>Judaism as Religion—the Limits of Belief</i>	<p>CR 31— Shoshanah Feher, "Managing strain, contradictions, and fluidity: messianic Judaism and the negotiation of a religio-ethnic identity"</p> <p>CR 32— David Novak, "When Jews are Christians"; Isaac C. Rottenberg, "Those troublesome messianic Jews"</p> <p>CR 33— David Berger, "The Rebbe, the Jews, and the Messiah"</p> <p>CR 34— "Letters from readers"</p> <p>CR 35— Chaim Rapoport, excerpt from <i>The messiah problem: Berger, the angel and the scandal of reckless indiscriminatio</i>n</p> <p>CR 36— Samuel C. Heilman, "Still seeing the Rebbe"</p>
April 29-May 1	<i>Gender & Sexuality</i>	<p>JvJ— pp. 115-161</p> <p>CR 37— Asma Gull Hasan, "<i>Hijab</i> in America - why won't Westerners understand?"</p> <p>CR 38— Debra Renee Kaufman, "Four portraits: ba'alot teshuvah as finders", "Paradoxes: feminism and religious-right women"</p> <p>CR 39— Christel Manning, "Stories of ordinary women," "Understanding the differences"</p> <p>CR 40— Melissa M. Wilcox, "Innovation in exile: religion and spirituality in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities"</p> <p>CR 41— Janet R. Marder, "Getting to know the gay and lesbian shul: a rabbi moves from tolerance to acceptance"</p> <p>CR 42— Denise L. Eger, "Ten years and counting..."</p> <p>CR 43— Lisa A. Edwards, "Why I choose to be a rabbi of a GLBT synagogue"</p>

Week	Theme	Assigned Reading (" CR "=Course Reader; " JvJ "="Jew vs. Jew"; " JPACS "="Jewish Polity and American Civil Society")
May 6-8	<i>The Future?</i>	A new religious America — 294-386 JvJ — pp. 338-359 CR 44 — Jonathan D. Sarna, "American Jews in the new millennium" CR 45 — David Ellenson, "Judaism resurgent? American Jews and the evolving expression of Jewish values and Jewish identity in modern American life"

**JST 278 / JWC243, SPRING 2003 — CONTEMPORARY JEWISH LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
COURSE READER — TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1	Etan Diamond, "Beyond borscht: the kosher lifestyle and the religious consumerism of suburban orthodox Jews"	John M. Giggie and Diane Winston, eds., <i>Faith in the market: religion and the rise of urban commercial culture</i> (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), pp. 227-245.
2	Wade Clark Roof, "Blood in the barbecue? Food and faith in the American South"	Eric Michael Mazur and Kate McCarthy, eds., <i>God in the details: American religion in popular culture</i> (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 109-121.
3	Richard Jenkins, "Different societies? Different cultures? What are human collectivities?"	Siniša Malešević and Mark Haugaard, eds., <i>Making sense of collectivity: ethnicity, nationalism and globalization</i> (London: Pluto Press, 2002), pp. 12-32.
4	Barbara A. Holdrege, "What's beyond the post? Comparative analysis as critical method"	Kimberly C. Patton and Benjamin C. Ray, eds., <i>A magic still dwells: comparative religion in the postmodern age</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp.77-91.
5	"Introduction," "Conclusions"	Marcus Banks, <i>Ethnicity: anthropological constructions</i> (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 1-10, 182-190.
6	Jonathan Webber, "Jews and Judaism in contemporary Europe: religion or ethnic group?"	<i>Ethnic and racial studies</i> 20:2 (April 1997), pp. 257-279.
7	"Catholic identity of young adults," "Catholic identity and tradition"	Dean R. Hoge, William D. Dinges, Mary Johnson, S.N.D. de N., and Juan L. Gonzales, Jr., <i>Young adult Catholics: religion in the culture of choice</i> (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), pp. 174-217.
8	Charles H. Lippy, "Pluralism and American religious life in the later twentieth century"	Peter W. Williams, ed., <i>Perspectives on American religion and culture</i> (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 48-60.
9	David Biale, "The melting pot and beyond: Jews and the politics of American identity"	Michael Lerner, ed., <i>Best contemporary Jewish writing</i> (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), pp. 8-14.
10	Alan L. Mittleman, "Pluralism v. multiculturalism"	Richard John Neuhaus, ed., <i>The chosen people in an almost chosen nation: Jews and Judaism in America</i> (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 68-76.
11	Martin E. Marty, "Religion and nationality"	William Scott Green and Jacob Neusner, eds., <i>The religion factor: an introduction to how religion matters</i> (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), pp. 15-31.

12	Régine Azria, "Jews and Europe: between historical realities and social identities"	John Fulton and Peter Gee, eds., <i>Religion in contemporary Europe</i> (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1994), pp. 66-77.
13	Jackie Feldman, "'It is my brothers whom I am seeking': Israeli youths' pilgrimages to Poland of the Shoah"	<i>Jewish folklore and ethnology review</i> 17:1-2 (1995), pp. 33-36.
14	Rebecca Golbert, "Transnational orientations from home: constructions of Israel and transnational space among Ukrainian Jewish youth"	<i>Journal of ethnic and migration studies</i> 27:4 (October 2001), pp. 713-731.
15	Chaim I. Waxman, "Center and periphery: Israel in American Jewish life"	Roberta Rosenberg Farber and Chaim I. Waxman, eds., <i>Jews in America: a contemporary reader</i> (Hanover, NH: Brandeis UP, 1999), pp. 212-225.
16	Ellen Friedrichs, "I was a teenage Zionist"	Danya Ruttenberg, ed., <i>Yentl's revenge: the next wave of Jewish feminism</i> (Seattle: Seal Press, 2001), pp. 119-130
17	Herbert J. Gans, "Symbolic ethnicity and symbolic religiosity: towards a comparison of ethnic and religious acculturation"	<i>Ethnic and racial studies</i> 17:4 (October 1994), pp.577-592)
18	Steven M. Cohen, "Religiosity and ethnicity: Jewish identity trends in the United States"	Eli Lederhendler, ed. <i>Who owns Judaism? Public religion and private faith in America and Israel</i> , <i>Studies in contemporary Jewry</i> XVII (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.101-130).
19	Georges Sabagh and Mehdi Bozorgmehr, "Secular immigrants: religiosity and ethnicity among Iranian Muslims in Los Angeles"	Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Jane Idelman Smith, eds., <i>Muslim communities in North America</i> (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), pp. 445-474.
20	Shoshanah Feher, "From the rivers of Babylon to the valleys of Los Angeles: the exodus and adaptation of Iranian Jews"	R. Stephen Warner and Judith G. Wittner, eds. <i>Gatherings in diaspora: religious communities and the new immigration</i> (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), pp. 71-94.
21	Loolwa Khazzoom, "United Jewish feminist front"	Danya Ruttenberg, ed., <i>Yentl's revenge: the next wave of Jewish feminism</i> (Seattle: Seal Press, 2001), pp. 168-180
22	Peter T. Cha, "Ethnic identity formation and participation in immigrant churches: second-generation Korean American experiences"	Ho-Youn Kwon, Kwang Chung Kim, and R. Stephen Warner, eds., <i>Korean Americans and their religions: pilgrims and missionaries from a different shore</i> (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), pp. 141-156.
23	Prema Kurien, "Religion, ethnicity and politics: Hindu and Muslim Indian immigrants in the United States"	<i>Ethnic and racial studies</i> 24:2 (March 2001), pp. 263-293.

24	Haym Soloveitchik, "Rupture and reconstruction: the transformation of contemporary orthodoxy"	Roberta Rosenberg Farber and Chaim I. Waxman, eds., <i>Jews in America: a contemporary reader</i> (Hanover, NH: Brandeis UP, 1999), pp. 320-376.
25	Samuel C. Heilman, "Orthodoxy in an American synagogue"	Harvey E. Goldberg, ed., <i>The life of Judaism</i> (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 63-77.
26	Jonathan Schorsch, "Making Judaism cool"	Michael Lerner, ed., <i>Best contemporary Jewish writing</i> (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), pp. 331-338.
27	Sandi Simcha Dubowski, "Trembling on the road: a Simcha diary"	David Shneer and Caryn Aviv, eds., <i>Queer Jews</i> (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 215-223.
28	Sherry Israel, "Jewish involvement in the American public square: the organizational disconnect"	Mittleman, Alan, Jonathan D. Sarna, and Robert Licht, eds. <i>Jews and the American public square: debating religion and republic</i> (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), pp. 241-264.
29	Aliza Maggid, "Joining together: building a worldwide movement"	Christie Balka and Andy Rose, eds., <i>Twice blessed: on being lesbian, gay, and Jewish</i> (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), pp. 157-170.
30	Jonathan Krasner, "Without standing down: the first queer Jewish street protest"	David Shneer and Caryn Aviv, eds., <i>Queer Jews</i> (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 119-134
31	Shoshanah Feher, "Managing strain, contradictions, and fluidity: messianic Judaism and the negotiation of a religio-ethnic identity"	Penny Edgell Becker and Nancy L. Eiesland, eds., <i>Contemporary American religion: an ethnographic reader</i> (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1997), pp. 25-49.
32	David Novak, "When Jews are Christians"; Isaac C. Rottenberg, "Those troublesome messianic Jews"	Richard John Neuhaus, ed., <i>The chosen people in an almost chosen nation: Jews and Judaism in America</i> (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), pp. 92-1116
33	David Berger, "The Rebbe, the Jews, and the Messiah"	<i>Commentary</i> 112:2 (2001), pp. 23-30
34	"Letters from readers"	<i>Commentary</i> 112:5 (2001), pp. 5-12
35	(Excerpt—TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN CLASS)	Chaim Rapoport, <i>The messiah problem: Berger, the angel and the scandal of reckless indiscriminatio</i>
36	Samuel C. Heilman, "Still seeing the Rebbe"	http://www.killingthebuddha.com/dogma/still_seeing_rebbe.htm
37	"Hijab in America - why won't Westerners understand?"	Asma Gull Hasan, <i>American Muslims: the new generation</i> (New York: Continuum, 2000), pp. 126-129.

38	"Four portraits: ba'alot teshuvah as finders", "Paradoxes: feminism and religious-right women"	Debra Renee Kaufman, <i>Rachel's daughters: newly orthodox Jewish women</i> (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991), pp. 36-52, pp. 131-142
39	"Stories of ordinary women," "Understanding the differences"	Christel Manning, <i>God gave us the right: conservative Catholic, evangelical Protestant, and orthodox Jewish women grapple with feminism</i> (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999), pp. 3-34, 218-238.
40	Melissa M. Wilcox, "Innovation in exile: religion and spirituality in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities"	David W. Machacek and Melissa M. Wilcox, eds., <i>Sexuality and the world's religions</i> (Goleta, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2003), chap. 11.
41	Janet R. Marder, "Getting to know the gay and lesbian shul: a rabbi moves from tolerance to acceptance"	Christie Balka and Andy Rose, eds., <i>Twice blessed: on being lesbian, gay, and Jewish</i> (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), pp. 209-217.
42	Denise L. Eger, "Ten years and counting..."	Rebecca T. Alpert, Sue Levi Elwell, and Shirley Idelson, eds., <i>Lesbian rabbis: the first generation</i> (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), pp. 161-172
43	Lisa A. Edwards, "Why I choose to be a rabbi of a GLBT synagogue"	Rebecca T. Alpert, Sue Levi Elwell, and Shirley Idelson, eds., <i>Lesbian rabbis: the first generation</i> (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), pp. 152-160
44	Jonathan D. Sarna, "American Jews in the new millennium"	Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I. Smith, and John Esposito, eds., <i>Religion and immigration: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim experiences in the United States</i> (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2002), pp. 117-127.
45	David Ellenson, "Judaism resurgent? American Jews and the evolving expression of Jewish values and Jewish identity in modern American life"	Eli Lederhendler, ed. <i>Who owns Judaism? Public religion and private faith in America and Israel</i> , Studies in contemporary Jewry XVII (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) pp.156-171.

Weekly Abstract Assignment

Weekly Abstracts: Each Thursday during the semester (except for the week you give an in-class presentation), you are to submit a typed abstract of one article you have read for that week.

The objective of this assignment is to encourage you to become an active, critical, and efficient reader of academic texts. Over time, by focusing on and responding to the nine questions outlined below, you will read more purposefully and you will identify more quickly the key elements of a text. (You also may notice that you will become a more efficient reader as you learn to skim over extraneous commentary.) I hope that the skills you acquire through this assignment will help you in your other reading-intensive courses.

An abstract is similar to a summary, but whereas summaries tend to focus on the main arguments, abstracts cover all aspects of a text, including purpose, objectives, hypotheses, methods, results, and conclusions. The primary purpose of an abstract is to convey the most important information about an article without forcing the reader to study the complete text. An abstract is *not* a review: evaluation or assessment does not figure into an abstract.

Your abstract should consist of two short paragraphs (no more than 100-150 words per paragraph). Be sure to provide a complete bibliographic reference for the article you are abstracting.

I. In the first paragraph, write a sentence to answer each of the following five questions:

1. What is the topic / subject of the article?
2. What is the stated objective / purpose / hypothesis of the article?
3. What procedures or methods are used?
4. What are the main findings or results? Are they consistent with the initial hypotheses?
5. What are the conclusions of the article?

II. In the second paragraph, write four or five sentences to answer each of the following four questions:

6. What claims does the article make to approach the material in a new or innovative way?
7. What key issues or categories does the article address that allow us to compare the material with other groups?
8. What follow-up questions or new research approaches emerge as a result of reading this article?
9. Why is this article relevant to a course on contemporary Jewish life in America?

Some stylistic advice:

1. In general, use your own words. If there are particularly concise, pithy phrases in the article that capture the point, feel free to use them in the abstract but you must put them in quotation marks.
2. Use the present tense. Simple sentences and active verbs work best.
3. Avoid jargon and neologisms peculiar to the article; try to reframe the article in language accessible to an educated generalist.
4. Do not use the names of the authors in the text; we know who they are. Also, do not start sentences with, "The topic of the article is..." or "The following methods are used: ...". A clear sentence will speak for itself.

You may find the following websites helpful if you would like more advice on writing abstracts:

<http://www.technical-writing.net/articles/Abstract.html>

<http://www.ids.ac.uk/eldis/sampleab.htm>

http://www.uaf.edu/csem/ashsss/abstract_writing.html

http://calfed.ca.gov/Programs/Science/adobe_pdf/How_to_Write_an_Abstract.pdf

<http://cornellcollege.edu/politics/courses/allin/Misc/IR-reading-abstract.pdf>

<http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/el21abst.htm>

<http://www.rpi.edu/dept/llc/writecenter/web/abstracts.html>

In-Class Presentation Assignment

At least once during the semester you will be asked to make a ten-minute presentation (and distribute a handout) on an assigned reading relevant to the theme of the week. The purpose of these presentations is three-fold: first, to encourage you not simply to *think about* the readings but also to *think with* the readings; second, to introduce to the class material that not everyone will have read and show how it relates to other readings; and third, to kick-off class discussions.

The objective of this assignment is to encourage you not only to reflect on what you are reading but also to formulate and communicate your findings.

Your presentation has two parts, oral and written.

Oral Presentation: your spoken presentation should take up to 10 minutes. Be sure to practice at least once so you know how much you can (or cannot) cover in that time. In your presentation, you should address the same issues as you would in an abstract. In addition, please be sure to comment specifically on the relationship between your text and the general readings for the week. Generally your text will provide additional texture to the theme of the week; in a number of instances, however, your text will be a counter-argument or otherwise stand in opposition to the material read by the class. Therefore, you should be clear about what your text brings to our discussions on the theme of the week.

10. What is the topic / subject of the article?
11. What is the stated objective / purpose / hypothesis of the article?
12. What procedures or methods are used?
13. What are the main findings or results? Are they consistent with the initial hypotheses?
14. What are the conclusions of the article?
- 15. How does this text relate to the other readings for the week?**
- 16. What are the key points of agreement and/or disagreement between this text and those read by the whole class?**
17. What claims does the article make to approach the material in a new or innovative way?
18. What key issues or categories does the article address that allow us to compare the material with other groups?
19. What follow-up questions or new research approaches emerge as a result of reading this article?
20. Why is this article relevant to a course on contemporary Jewish life in America?

Written Handout: Your handout (photocopied 25 times before class—if you give it to me in advance, I'll photocopy it for you) should convey the main points of your spoken presentation plus any additional information you don't have time to cover orally. It should also contain a complete bibliographical listing as well as page references to any key ideas that you highlight.

Instructions and advice specific to your presentation will be given when we meet prior to your presentation.

Notes: _____

JST278 / JWC243, SPRING 2003 — CONTEMPORARY JEWISH LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**Written Project: Studying Jewish Life Through a Comparative Lens****Purpose of Assignment:**

This paper, like this course, invites you to think critically and comparatively about Judaism and Jewishness in contemporary North America. The specific topic of the paper is up to you; however, you must take a comparative view (using the approach advanced by Holdrege in her essay, "What's beyond the post? Comparative analysis as critical method") to produce your analysis. Areas of inquiry might include ethnicity, nationality, religion, as well as food, gender, immigration, and public policy—indeed any of the themes or specific issues we have taken up in the course. Whatever method you choose—participant observation, textual analysis, documentary research, etc.—you must examine your topic by comparing Jewish life to that of another religion or ethnic group.

Your paper should be between 1,800 and 2,000 significant words. That's about 8 to 10 pages of double-spaced 11-point text with 1-inch margins. Please see pages two and three of this handout for advice in writing research papers.

An important part of this assignment involves developing a research question. Therefore, the first part of the assignment is to develop a paper proposal, using a format very similar to the one you use to write your weekly abstracts. Since your paper will be based on research, your proposal must include a list of at least 4 sources of data (this could be a 4-item preliminary bibliography, or a list of sites or archives you plan to visit, or some combination of these). Your paper proposal, which must answer each of the following questions, is due via email to me by 11:00am on Tuesday, April 15, 2003.

1. What is your topic?
2. What is your hypothesis, purpose, or objective?
3. What method(s) do you plan to use? What groups do you intend to compare?
4. What do you *expect* your findings to be? (Of course, this may change in the course of your research.)
5. What theoretical conclusions do you expect to be able to draw from your research?
6. How will your project shed light on the aspect of Jewish life you are studying? (In other words, what is new here?)
7. What key general issues are implicated in your subject matter?
8. If you had time, how would you expand your paper? What can you cover in 2,000 words? What can't you cover?
9. How is your paper relevant to this course? Why *this* proposal as opposed to another you might submit?

Project Grading: This project counts for 25% of your final course grade, as follows:

Timely and sufficient paper proposal that answers each of the questions above.	20% of project grade	PAPER PROPOSAL DUE TO ME VIA EMAIL— jslandres@uj.edu — by 11:00 AM ON TUESDAY, APRIL 15, 2003.
Topic & purpose/hypothesis clearly stated and adequately developed	15% of project grade	
Comparative approach and chosen method (participant observation, textual analysis, etc.) sufficiently integrated and used appropriately	15% of project grade	
Sufficient and effective use of data to support your thesis; adequate and effective use of sources; proper citation format	15% of project grade	
Proper grammar, usage, spelling, and style	15% of project grade	
Overall fulfillment of the assignment	20% of project grade	
		FINAL PAPER DUE TO ME BY NOON ON THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2003.

WHAT IS A RESEARCH PAPER?

by Eve Darian-Smith & Philip McCarty

Adapted for JST278/JWC243 by J. Shawn Landres

This is an opportunity for you to draw upon, reflect, and engage with some of the themes, theories and materials presented in this semester and which are of interest to you. Research papers constitute their own genre and are qualitatively different from other forms of writing such as fiction, policy statements, personal journals, and news articles. While material produced using these other forms of writing may occasionally be used as data for research papers, or are in some cases designed to produce data for research, these forms do not themselves constitute a research paper. The following pages describe the major components and standards of a research paper, and provide tips on how to write a good research paper. **Please note that these pages are supplementary to your assignment. In addition to the suggestions contained here, you must follow the instructions contained in the paper assignment itself.**

A) Make a clear argument.

The main objective of a research paper is to use academic theories, accepted research methods, and reliable data to support a coherent argument that is relevant to a given topic (namely your research topic). Since the purpose of a research paper is to make a clear argument, a good paper will state the main argument, often called a thesis, as directly as possible. Even if you conclude that there are not enough data to come to a clear conclusion, then your thesis should argue against the possibility of reaching conclusion. The main argument should organize the rest of the paper. Every section, paragraph, and example used in a research paper should have an explicit link to the thesis. You should put your thesis statement at the front of the introduction. Unless you are writing for publication, it is a good idea to **bold** or underline your thesis as we have the thesis sentence above.

Theories used in a research paper by definition come out of, and relate back to, existing bodies of academic literature. In general, good theses develop from your own reaction to the theories and concepts discussed in the course and readings. Yes, this means you must engage with the relevant literature in order to write a research paper. Whether or not you agree with the theoretical framework of the course, or even if your main objective is to challenge a given theoretical framework, you must demonstrate your ability to use that framework and the available data to make an effective argument.

B) Support your argument with data and evidence.

Your argument must be supported by reliable data. Reliable data are collected by accepted research methods. Your data may come from a variety of sources including other research articles, it may be assigned in a course, or, in some cases, you may generate the appropriate data yourself. In any event, whether you borrow your data or generate original data, you should be as explicit as possible in the paper about the sources and methods used to collect the data that support your argument. Any data cited in your research paper should be directly relevant to the thesis of the paper.

C) Use the proper format.

Every research paper should have (1) a title, (2) an introduction with a thesis that relates to the literature, (3) a body of argument that relates to the thesis, (4) a conclusion, (5) standard footnotes/endnotes and bibliographic references, and (6) any necessary appendices (see below). There should be no part of the paper that does not bear directly on the main argument.

Write a full introduction. The introduction is a road map for the reader, it sets out your thesis, introduces the sources you will use, and outlines the argument that will be made in the rest of the paper, and foreshadows the conclusion. A good introduction states in plain terms what the paper is about without using technical terms that have not yet been defined in the paper. It should leave no room for surprises in the paper. It is usually safe to assume that the majority of your readers will not get past the introduction. They will read it to see if your paper contains anything of interests to them. For these reasons, the introduction is often the last part of the paper to be written.

The conclusion of your paper should retrace the main points of your argument, point out the examples you have used to support your argument, and restates the thesis in its final, fully supported and most sophisticated form. From this it should be clear that both the introduction and conclusion mirror each other. This repetition and structure is crucial for the reader to be able to follow what otherwise may look suspiciously like impenetrable, pointless blather.

The paper's format must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins, 11-point font, and a minimum 8 pages / maximum 11 pages of text. You should aim for approximately 1,800 significant words (a word processor's word-count tool counts *all* words, including "a," "an," "the," etc.; parenthetical citations also are counted — if you are using such a tool to count your words, you should aim for it to report approximately 2,400 words). If your paper is longer than 11 full pages, it is too long for this assignment. You must also have attached to your paper complete footnote citations and a full bibliography. You should use the APA style to reference books and articles in the body of your paper as well as properly cite them in a list at the end of your paper. You should also use the "Scientific Style" in the *Columbia Guide to Online Style*, which may be located at http://www.columbia.edu/cu/cup/cgos/idx_basic.html. This includes references taken from the Internet, television, movies, personal conversations, and all sources that are not the direct, original product of your own mind. Failure to cite sources is called plagiarism. Marks will be deducted for incorrect referencing procedures, so pay close and careful attention to this element of your paper. Remember, the point of careful referencing is that anyone reading your paper could go and find the exact text and page from which you quote or from which you draw your information, data, article, or theoretical model.

Your paper title, your name, the course name (JST 278/JWC 243 — Contemporary Jewish Life in the United States of America), and the date *must* appear on page 1.

Remember that you can also attach any appendices that are necessary to your argument (these do not count as part of your 6-8 pages). For example, it may help your reader if you attach copies of any acts, treaties, propositions, pictures, graphs, or source articles that are central to your argument. The first time you refer to this material in your paper, use a parenthetical note to inform your reader that the material is attached.

D) Make strong transitions.

Academic research is not easy to write or to read. In order to keep your reader with you as you progress through your argument you should notify the reader of transitions. In its simplest form, a research paper should have a transition sentence at the end of each paragraph that clearly shows the relationship of that paragraph to the topic of the next paragraph (for example, use “but,” “then,” “however,” and “nonetheless” statements). Repeated use of key terms and consistent use of defined vocabulary helps the reader follow your connections. Section headings can be most helpful to those of us that read hundreds of papers. In addition to labeling your introduction and conclusion, use simple section headings like “Summary of Durkheim’s Theory,” and “Methodology,” wherever possible and appropriate. Taken together the sections and paragraphs of your paper should form a continuous, coherent, logical chain. Achieving this with an academic paper takes practice and several revisions. If you want your argument to be understood (translation “good grade”) take special care to develop this skill.

E) Be explicit about the connections you are making.

Take special care also to spell out the dot-to-dot connections on which your argument hinges. Bring the underlying logic to the surface. If $A + B = C$ then say so. Do not assume that your reader will understand why you think that this theory fits the data better than the other one. Make connections and comparisons in as direct a way as you can. For example, “I have summarized these points of Marx’s theory of surplus labor in this way in order to highlight their connection to similar points in Durkheim’s theory. The corresponding points in Durkheim’s theory are....”

The same emphasis on making clear connections applies to using examples, data, and graphs. In any argument, a simple and well-placed example can be the single most effective tool you can use to communicate complicated or abstract ideas. However, even if the appropriateness of the example seems entirely obvious to you, be very careful to spell out exactly how the example connects to your argument.

F) Make appropriate use of your own opinions.

Your interests, opinions, and values are an integral part of any research paper. They will necessarily influence your thesis, the material you select, and how you structure your argument. In general, students who are excited about their thesis start their papers earlier, do more work, and end up with a more interesting product (provided they are not so excited or involved that they can’t be reasonably objective about the argument).

However, recognize that your unsupported opinions and values are different from a research argument. Everyone has an opinion, but opinions are not scholarship. If you cannot support your opinion with data and theory then it does not belong in a research paper. Scholarship is about making well structured, soundly supported, convincing arguments that are in some way related to existing scholarship. In the context of this paper assignment, it is important to remember that a research paper is not an appropriate forum for advancing your personal religious beliefs or political views. You should be able to support your thesis without editorializing.

G) Re-read, revise and rewrite. (Repeat.)

If you are writing your paper at the last minute, and you do all of the above correctly, you most probably will end up with a “B” paper, likely less. To write a sophisticated, university-level research paper requires time, insight, and several revisions. In the first revisions, you will pick up technical errors including misspelling and bad grammar, improper references, unnecessary information, etc. At this stage, you should eliminate clichés, colloquialisms, jargon, and familiar qualifiers (like, really, very, so, sort of, kind of, etc.). Also, work to smooth out your transitions and make your links clear.

As you read through your drafts, ask yourself each of the following questions, based on (A) through (F) above: Do I make a clear argument? Do I support my argument with data and evidence? Am I using the proper format? Do I make strong transitions? Have I been explicit about the connections I have made? Do I make appropriate use of my own opinions? If you cannot answer “yes” for each of these questions, your paper is not yet ready. If you do submit a paper for which you can answer “yes” for each of these questions, you should feel confident that you have produced a high-quality research paper of which you can be justly proud.

More importantly, the process of revising your paper will allow you to reflect on and refine both the structure and quality of your argument. To achieve a high level of refinement in a research paper you must leave yourself time to put the work down, have colleagues read and comment on your paper, and then return to the argument yourself to critically rethink your earlier drafts. The end goal of all this, creating publishable research from which others can learn and create new knowledge, takes years of practice, and even then it takes many revisions.