

## TH371.01 Turning Points in Jewish History

Fall 2010, Tuesday 2-3:50, McGuinn 303

Prof. Ruth Langer

Office: 21 Campanella Way #331

Phone: 617 552-8492

Email: [langerr@bc.edu](mailto:langerr@bc.edu)

Office Hours: Tues 4:30-5:30, Thursday 10:30-11:30 or by appointment

Jewish history stretches from creation to today. This course will focus on the major turning points which shape today's Jewish world, focusing on major intellectual and theological trends, figures, and events from the development of rabbinic Judaism to the twentieth century. Through this, students will come to have a basic understanding of the outlines of Jewish religious, cultural and intellectual history, of the nature of the Jewish experience as a minority culture in the Christian and Muslim worlds, and of the shapes of contemporary Judaism.

### TEXTS:

#### **A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People : From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present (Hardcover)**

by Eli Barnavi (Schocken, 1994), ISBN 0805241272

Most additional readings will be posted on the course's Blackboard Vista (BV) site as pdf files or will be available via the internet. Students may access BV via their Agora accounts. Consider the syllabus posted on BV to be your official syllabus as it may well be updated as the semester goes on depending on the interests of the class.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- **Attendance** at class is mandatory. If you know in advance that you cannot attend, please just let Professor Langer know.
- **Participation:** Your active contributions to class discussions are expected. This includes posting a brief reflection on the readings on the BV Discussions page by 10AM on the day of class. Use these postings to ask questions, to reflect on issues raised in the readings that intrigue you, or as a chance to think more deeply about some aspect of the course. In addition, make sure that what you write demonstrates that you have indeed prepared for class. Prof. Langer will do her best to respond to your reflections, either in class or on the discussion page if the issue is of general concern to the class, or privately by email. Weekly postings will not be graded but will receive feedback. You are also encouraged to respond to your classmates' postings. Your total contributions to in-class and BV discussions will constitute 30% of your grade (20% for graduate students).
- **Papers and Exams:**
  - **Jewish Studies minors and undergraduates:**
    - **Midterm Project:** Write a *focused* paper of 1500-2500 words that explores further one of the units or a theme that has come up in more than one unit of the first half of the course. You are encouraged to consult on your topic and bibliography before writing your paper. (30% of grade)

- **Final:** take home, open book final, due Monday December 20, 5PM. (40% of grade)
- **Graduate Students:**
  - **Midterm Project:** reflection paper of 2500-3500 words elaborating on a topic or theme covered in the first half of the course. This reflection might be in the form of a proposal for a more elaborate research paper, complete with an annotated bibliography. Other alternatives, appropriate to your specific program and interests, may be suggested. (30% of grade)
  - **Final Project:** A research paper on a topic relevant to the course. A proposal must be submitted by November 15. Consultation with Prof. Langer on bibliography and scope of the paper is strongly advised, as well as on questions that emerge in the process of writing. Due at the scheduled exam time of the course. Length: 15-20 pages (MA students), 20-30 pages (PhD students). (50% of grade).
- **Academic Integrity** is an absolute requirement. Plagiarism or cheating will be reported. Please see the [university's policy](#) for more information.

**SYLLABUS:**

<p><b>I.</b> 9/7</p>	<p><b>Introduction: Origins of Israel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, vi-xiii (Introductions I, II, III), skim through p. 27.</li> </ul>
<p><b>II.</b> 9/14</p>	<p><b>Jewish Life in Late Antiquity: What Makes One a Jew?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 28-73.</li> <li>• Shaye J.D. Cohen, <i>The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties</i> (University of California Press, 1999), Chapters 1-2 (undergraduates) or 1-3 (graduates -- entire book recommended).</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Seth Schwartz, <i>Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 BCE-600 CE</i> (Princeton, 2001)</li> <li>○ Leon Feldman, <i>Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World</i> (Princeton, 1993)</li> <li>○ Daniel Boyarin, <i>Border Lines: The Partition of Judaeo-Christianity</i> (U. of Penn, 2004)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>III.</b> 9/21</p>	<p><b>The Rise of Rabbinic Leadership: The Crown of Torah</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 74-89</li> <li>• Shaye J.D. Cohen, <i>From the Maccabees to the Mishnah</i> (Westminster Press, 1987), Ch. 7, "The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism." Rest of book recommended.</li> <li>• Lawrence H. Schiffman, <i>Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader...</i> (Ktav, 1998), Sections 10:3 and 12:4.</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lawrence H. Schiffman, <i>From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism</i> (Ktav, 1991) [<i>Texts and Traditions</i> is published as a accompaniment to this -- also recommended]</li> <li>○ Gedaliah Alon, <i>The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age</i> (Harvard, 1989)</li> <li>○ Jacob Neusner, <i>There We Sat Down: Talmudic Judaism in the Making</i> (Ktav, 1972)</li> <li>○ Lee. I. Levine, <i>The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity</i> (Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1989)</li> <li>○ <i>Essential Papers on the Talmud</i> (NYU 1994)</li> </ul>
<p><b>IV.</b> <b>9/28</b> <b>Class in</b> <b>Prof.</b> <b>Langer's</b> <b>Sukkah</b></p>	<p><b>Rabbinic Judaism: The Fall Holy Days</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Biblical Calendar:</b> Leviticus 23, Numbers 28-29, Deuteronomy 15:19-16:17</li> <li>• <b>Rosh Hashanah:</b> Mishnah Rosh Hashanah</li> <li>• <b>Yom Kippur:</b> Leviticus Ch. 16, Mishnah Yoma Ch. 8 (recommended Chs. 1-7)</li> <li>• <b>Sukkot:</b> Mishnah Sukkah</li> </ul>
<p><b>V.</b> <b>10/5</b></p>	<p><b>Jews in the World of Islam: The Emergence of Jewish Philosophy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 90-97, 100-103</li> <li>• Saadia Gaon, <i>The Book of Beliefs and Opinions</i>, trans. S. Rosenblatt (Yale, 1948), xxiii-37, "Introduction" and "Introductory Treatise"</li> <li>• Isadore Twersky, <i>A Maimonides Reader</i> (Behrman, 1972), 33-50 (beginning of <i>Mishneh Torah</i>), 231-246, 278-296 (selections from <i>Guide for the Perplexed</i>)</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Isaac Husik, <i>A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy</i></li> <li>○ Shlomo Pines ed. (U. of Chicago) of the <i>Guide for the Perplexed</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>VI.</b> <b>10/12</b></p>	<p><b>Jews in the World of Islam II: Secular and Religious Poetry</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 112-113, 116-117, 124-125, 128-9</li> <li>• Raymond P. Scheindlin, <i>Wine, Women and Death: Medieval Hebrew Poems on the Good Life</i> (Jewish Publication Society, 1986), 3-13, 19-49</li> <li>• Raymond P. Scheindlin, <i>The Gazelle: Medieval Hebrew Poems on God, Israel and the Soul</i> (Jewish Publication</li> </ul>

	<p>Society, 1991), 3-29, 33-69</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leon J. Weinberger, <i>Jewish Hymnography: A Literary History</i> (Litman, 1998) [most literature on this topic is in Hebrew!]</li> <li>○ Israel Zinberg, <i>A History of Jewish Literature</i> (Jewish Publication Society, 1972-)</li> <li>○ Vivian Mann, <i>Jewish Texts on the Visual Arts</i> (Cambridge, 2000)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>VII.</b> <b>10/19</b></p>	<p><b>Jews in Medieval Christian Europe: A Lachrymose History</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 98-99, 104-111, 114-115, 118-123, 126-127</li> <li>• <a href="#">The Christian Teaching of Contempt for Jews and Judaism: A Primary Source Sampler</a> - read the texts linked there for the medieval period.</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ writings of Jeremy Cohen and/or Robert Chazan</li> <li>○ Jacob Katz, <i>Exclusiveness and Tolerance</i></li> <li>○ <i>Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict</i> (NYU, 1991)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>VIII.</b> <b>10/26</b></p>	<p><b>Kabbalah</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 130-145 (background on the early modern period)</li> <li>• Arthur Green, <i>A Guide to the Zohar</i>, Ch. 3 Teachings of the Kabbalists: The Ten Sefirot (Recommended: the entire book)</li> <li>• <i>The Zohar</i>, Pritzker edition, trans. Daniel C. Matt, Vol. 1:107-115, 122-127.</li> <li>• Joseph Dan, <i>The Heart and the Fountain: An Anthology of Jewish Mystical Experiences</i> (Oxford, 2002), Introduction, Chs. 12, 13, 17. (Recommended, the entire book)</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Essential Papers on Kabbalah</i> (NYU, 1995)</li> <li>○ Gershom Scholem, <i>Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism</i> and many other books.</li> <li>○ Moshe Idel, <i>Kabbalah: New Perspectives</i>, and many other books.</li> <li>○ Isaiah Tisby, <i>The Wisdom of the Zohar</i>. (translations of Zohar passages with some commentary and good general introductions to each section)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>11/2</b></p>	<p><b>MIDTERM DUE</b></p>

<p><b>IX.</b> <b>11/2</b></p>	<p><b>Messianism: Shabbetai Zvi</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 146-149, 262-3</li> <li>• R.J.Zwi Werblowsky, "Messianism in Jewish History" (rpt. from <i>Journal of World History</i> 11 (1968)), in <i>Essential Papers...</i>, 35-52.</li> <li>• Gershom Scholem, "Sabbetai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah," (rpt. from book of same name, trans. Werblowsky, Princeton University Press, 1973), in <i>Essential Papers...</i> 289-334</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History</i> (NYU 1992) - other articles</li> <li>○ Gershom Scholem, <i>The Messianic Idea in Judaism</i></li> <li>○ Raphael Patai, <i>The Messiah Texts</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>X.</b> <b>11/9</b></p>	<p><b>Hasidism</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 162-163</li> <li>• Shmuel Ettinger, "The Hasidic Movement - Reality and Ideals", (rpt. from <i>Journal of World History</i>, 11 (1968)), in <i>Essential Papers...</i>, 226-243.</li> <li>• Aaron Wertheim, "Traditions and Customs in Hasidism," (rpt. from <i>Halakhot ve halikhot ba-hasidut</i>, 1960), in <i>Essential Papers</i>, 363-398.</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Essential Papers on Hasidism, Origins to Present</i> (NYU, 1991) - other articles.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>XI.</b> <b>11/16</b></p>	<p><b>Emancipation and Enlightenment I: Joining the Western World and Moving West</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 150-161, 164-195, 204-207, 210-219, 222-223</li> <li>• <a href="#">From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America</a> - explore the Library of Congress' on-line exhibit, especially its time line and "sections"</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>From Haven to Home: 350 Years of Jewish Life in America</i>, ed. Grunberger (Library of Congress, 2004) - articles in the exhibit catalogue</li> <li>○ Jonathan D. Sarna, <i>American Judaism: A History</i> (Yale, 2004).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>XII.</b> <b>11/23</b></p>	<p><b>Emancipation and Enlightenment II: The Emergence of the Modern Movements and Secular Jewish Culture (Religious and National)</b></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 196-199</li> <li>• Sholem Aleichem, <i>The Old Country</i>, trans. Julius and Frances Butwin (Crown, 1946), "The Town of the Little People," "Modern Children," "Hodel."</li> <li>• <a href="#">American Reform Rabbinic Platforms</a>: compare these documents and trace the changes.</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> (video of the musical, or script of the play).</li> <li>◦ Mordecai Kaplan, <i>Judaism as a Civilization</i></li> <li>◦ Michael A. Meyer, <i>Response to Modernity</i></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>XIII.</b> <b>11/30</b></p>	<p><b>The Holocaust: Its Repercussions in Subsequent Jewish Life</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 226-229, 232-241</li> <li>• Michael Wyschogrod, "Some Theological Reflections on the Holocaust," in <i>Living After the Holocaust: Reflections by Children of Survivors in America</i>, ed. Steinitz and Szonyi (Bloch, 1979), 65-68</li> <li>• Michael Wyschogrod, "Faith and the Holocaust," in <i>Abraham's Promise: Judaism and Jewish-Christian Relations</i> (Eerdmans, 2004, originally published in <i>Judaism</i> 20:3 [1971], 100-107), 111-120.</li> <li>• James E. Young, "When a Day Remembers: A Performative History of Yom Hashoah" in <i>Holocaust Memorials and Meaning</i> (Yale, 1993), 263-281.</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Theological responses by Emil Fackenheim, Richard Rubenstein, Yitz Greenberg</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>XIV.</b> <b>12/7</b></p>	<p><b>Return to Zion: The Restoration of the State of Israel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnavi, 200-203, 208-209, 220-221, 224-225, 230-231, 242-279</li> <li>• <a href="#">Hatikvah</a> (Zionist anthem, now Israel's national anthem)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Hatikvah at Bergen Belsen 1945</a></li> <li>• Lyrics of Naomi Shemer's songs (<a href="#">biography</a>): <a href="#">Jerusalem of Gold, For All These Things, Tomorrow</a>,</li> <li>• Lawrence Joffe, "<a href="#">Soundtrack to the State</a>," <i>The Jewish Quarterly</i> 195 (Autumn 2004).</li> <li>• Additional Israeli music TBA</li> <li>• <b>Recommended:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ <i>Essential Papers on Zionism</i> (NYU, 1996)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>12/20</b> <b>5PM</b></p>	<p><b>FINAL due</b></p>

