

**RELIGION 3 : Jews and American Popular Culture**  
**Tues: 3-4:55, Thurs: 4:05-4:55**

Instructor: Rachel Gordan  
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**OVERVIEW**

This course examines the Jewish experience through the lens of popular culture. We'll be thinking about how popular culture presents Jews and Judaism, over a range of media, including fiction, film, radio, and print media.

**GENERAL EDUCATION DESCRIPTION AND STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**ASSIGNMENTS:**

**PRESENTATION = 20 POINTS**

**WRITING ASSIGNMENT WITH FINAL PRESENTATION = 10 POINTS**

**PARTICIPATION = 20 POINTS**

**POP QUIZZES BASED ON READING AND DISCUSSION = 10 PTS**

**TWO ESSAY PROMPTS = 40**

**GRADE SCALE**

<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>GPA points</u>
A	94-100	4.0
A-	90-93	3.67
B+	87-90	3.33
B	84-86	3.0
B-	80-83	2.67
C+	77-79	2.33
C	74-76	2.0
C-	70-73	1.67
D+	67-69	1.33
D	64-66	1.0
D-	60-63	0.67
E	0-59	0

## **POLICIES, RULES, AND RESOURCES**

1. *Handing in Assignments:* Place all papers in Peterson's mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of any office. Please keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.

2. *Late or Make-Up Assignments:* You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances. If possible, please request prior approval from the instructor. If that is not possible, please contact the instructor as soon as possible to arrange for the makeup. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. *Completion of All Assignments:* You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing any assignment or requirement.

4. *Attendance and Participation:* Class attendance is required. Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each day. Students who have more than three unexcused absences will lose 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., from B+ to B).

5. *Common Courtesy:* Cell phones should be turned off during class, except in emergencies, when you may set your phone to vibrate so you can receive notifications. Please notify the instructor at the start of class in this situation. You may take notes on a laptop computer, although the instructor and/or teaching assistant (TA) may ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor and TA reserve the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class.

6. *Honor Code:* The honor code applies to this and all courses taken at UF: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity. On all work submitted for credit by students at the university, the following pledge is either required or implied:

On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment" (<https://archive.catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/1617//advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>).

The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in *any assignment* for this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines may result in judicial action and sanctions, as specified in the Student Conduct Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>).

7. *Accommodation for Disabilities:* Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

8. *Counseling Resources:* Resources available on-campus for students include the following:

- a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
- b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
- c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
- d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

9. *Software Use:* All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Evaluations: “Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.”

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials are prohibited.

## **SCHEDULE**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic/Questions/Assignment</u>
Tues. Sept 1	Why Jews and Popular Culture? Popular culture and American culture, and immigration, diversity, race, pluralism, 75 years ago What does popular culture tell us about our own moment “American Concentration Camp” advertisement in the New Yorker

- Thurs. Sept 3            Why Jews and Popular Culture today and then: The Goldbergs  
Our moment of national reckoning(s).  
Jews, Race, and Antisemitism
- For today, please read Kevin Schultz, *Tri-Faith America*, p. 1-26  
And                      Lindbergh's                      Des                      Moines                      speech:  
<http://www.charleslindebergh.com/americanfirst/speech.asp>
- Tues. Sept 8            Why Jews and Popular Culture? Jenny Caplan
- Thurs. Sept 10           Why Jews and Popular Culture
- Part II: Midcentury Changes in Popular Culture and Jews**
- Tues. Sept 15            **1944:** Lillian Smith, *Strange Fruit*, Race, and anti-antisemitism  
For today, please read *Tri-Faith America*, 26-42
- Thurs. Sept 17            **1945:** Frank Sinatra, *The House that I Live In*
- Tues. Sept 22            **1946:** Bess Myerson: beauty and antisemitism
- For today, please read: 1) Bess Myerson article on CANVAS and  
2) Kirsten Fermaglich, *A Rosenberg By Any Other Name*, chapter three on  
CANVAS
- Thurs. Sept 24            **1946:** Read chapter one of Jo Sinclair, *Wasteland* on CANVAS
- Tues. Sept 29            **1947:** Jews and antisemitism:  
For today, please read: *Gentleman's Agreement*, read chapter 1-2
- Thurs. Oct 1            1947 *Gentleman's Agreement* and anti-antisemitism in the use  
For today, please read: GA, Chapter three
- Tues. Oct. 6            Grace Overbeke, "Women in Jewish Comedy: Subversiveness in Body,  
Mind, and Song"?
- Thurs. Oct 8            Herman Wouk: cover of *Time Magazine*, 1955

For today, please read “The Wouk Mutiny” on course reserves and *Marjorie Morningstar*, chapter one on CANVAS

By Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, by 12 noon, please email Professor Gordan with topic selection

## Part II Anne Frank and American Jewish Humor

Tues. Oct 13 For today, please read: *The Diary of a Young Girl*, p. 1-12 and “A New ‘Anne Frank’: Still Stuck in the 1950s” on CANVAS

Thurs. Oct. 15 **1997:** Turn of the Century Anne Frank  
For today, please read: “An Uncommon Heroine,” by Cynthia Ozick (1997), read pages: 76-82

Tues. Oct. 20 Turn of the Century Anne Frank  
For today, please read: “An Uncommon Heroine,” by Cynthia Ozick (1997), read pages: 82-87

And “What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank”

For today: Find one secondary source that is relevant to your topic (2 points)

Thurs. Oct. 22 “What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank”

Tues. Oct. 27 What is Jewish Humor?  
For today, please read No Joke, *Introduction* on CANVAS

Thurs. Oct. 29 What’s so Funny about antisemitism?  
Please read *Jewish Comedy*, p. 1-12

Tues. Nov. 3 What’s so Funny about antisemitism?  
Please read, *Jewish Comedy* 13-30

Thurs. Nov. 5 What’s so Funny about antisemitism?  
Please read, *wish Comedy*, 31-49

Tues. Nov. 10 For today: Find **three primary sources** that are relevant to your topic (2 points). Be prepared to tell us about one of them

Part II Love and Dating in late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century American Jewish Popular Culture

- Thurs. Nov. 12      Jews and Non-Jews dating in American Jewish Popular Culture  
For today, please read: Mehta, *Beyond Chrismukkah*, chapter two.
- Tues. Nov 17      Orthodox Israeli Judaism in America Srugim, Professor Shayna Weiss
- Thurs. Nov. 19      For today, please read, Shayna Weiss, “Frum With Benefits” on CANVAS
- Tues. Nov. 24      Religion and Dating in Popular Culture  
For today, please watch, “Keeping the Faith”
- Thurs. Nov 26. Thanksgiving
- Tues. Dec 1      Presentations
- Thurs Dec. 3rd      Presentations continued
- Tues. Dec 8<sup>th</sup>      Concluding remarks