

JUDAISM IN PUBLIC LIFE: COMMUNITY

Prof. Shawna Dolansky
Paterson Hall 2A52
520-2600, ext. TBA
shawna_dolansky@carleton.ca
Office hours: 9:30-11:30AM Tuesday

What is the Jewish concept of “community,” and what’s “Jewish” about it? This course will examine the ways in which "community" in Judaism has been constituted historically - from the concept of a community of the covenant, a "chosen" community, through diaspora, when the Jews defined themselves as a community both in terms of covenant and in relation to the larger communities in which they lived; first Greco-Roman, then Christian and Muslim, and lastly as immigrants to a new and changing world. What did they learn from other communities, and how did they continue to understand their communities as distinct? Who led their communities, and by what virtues? How were communities structured, both formally and purposely, and informally as they developed and adapted to new circumstances? To what extent did Jewish ritual, beliefs, ethics and practices help shape, guide, and determine the make-up of communities, and the qualifications of their leaders? What issues and concerns helped construct, inform, and sustain Jewish communities? Once we have some answers to these questions for antiquity and the medieval periods, we'll follow these trends and themes into the formal and informal community-building that took place as a response to modernity, both in Europe and North America, with a focus on Canada, and Ottawa as the case study.

Seminar: Mondays 6:05PM-8:55PM, Paterson 2A46

Required Texts:

Satlow, Michael L. 2006. *Creating Judaism: History, Tradition, Practice*. Columbia University Press, NY.

Tulchinsky, Gerald. 2008. *Canada's Jews: A People's Journey*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Bialystok, Franklin. 2010 (reprint). *Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community*. McGill-Queen's University Press.

- OR -

Troper, Harold. *The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s*. University of Toronto Press.

Grades for the course will be assigned as follows:

4851B: Attendance and participation: 30% **note: 3 or more absences will not receive course credit**
Weekly reading responses: 40%
Group book report – presentation (5%) and write-up (5%) (Dec 5): 10%
Final Exam: 20%

5851H: Attendance and participation: 20% **note: 3 or more absences will not receive course credit**
Weekly reading responses: 30%
Presentation (Oct 24): 10%
Prospectus (Nov 14): 10%
Final Research Paper (Dec 5): 30%

COURSE SCHEDULE

- Sept 12 Introduction to the Course
Biblical Constructions of Community and Group Identity
we will be looking at selections from the Hebrew Bible in class, so bring one
- Sept 19 The Chosen People
- What did being “chosen” mean to the biblical authors? How did this concept help them define their community and identify with it, and what do we learn here about the Israelite concept of community?
- READ: Exodus 19; Deuteronomy 7, 32; Isaiah 41, 42, 44, 49, 53; Psalms 105, 106, 135; and Satlow ch. 2
- Discussion: Elazar, Daniel J. "Covenant and Community." *Judaism*. (2000): 387-398.
- HAND IN: 1 page Reading Response on Satlow ch2, and 1 page on Elazar
- Sept 26 Jewish Communities in the 2nd Temple Period
- What were the impacts of exile and diaspora on the concept of Jewish “community” and the Jews’ self-identification? What changed, and what remained the same?
- READ: Satlow ch. 3; Judith (in the biblical “apocrypha”)
- Discussion: Satlow Introduction and Chapter 1
- How does Satlow define “Judaism,” “community,” and “Jewish identity”? What are the goals and the assumptions of his study, and how might they impact his selection of historical data, his arguments, and his final conclusions?
- HAND IN: 1 page RR on each bullet question above, total 2 pages
- Oct 3 *Guest Lecture: Rabbi Dr. Reuven P. Bulka*
- Rabbinic Communities
- How did the Rabbis re-define the concepts of covenant and community, and what was the impact on Jewish constructions of self-identity and community?
- READ: Satlow chapters 4-6
- HAND IN: 2 page RR on Satlow 4-6, and 3 discussion questions for Rabbi Bulka on Rabbinic concepts of community
- Oct 10 NO CLASS (Thanksgiving)
- Oct 17 Medieval Jewish Communities
- What impact did cultural and historical factors have on the development of a variety of medieval Jewish communities?
 - What continuities and discontinuities do these communities show with earlier Jewish communities?
- READ: Satlow chapters 7-9
- Discussion: Constructing Jewish Identities

- Students will be divided into 4 groups: Rationalists, Mystics, Ashkenazim and Sephardim
- Each group will present their community's responses to the particular places and times in which they are situated, explaining to the others how their community is defined, both intrinsically and extrinsically, and how they understand their communal identity as "Jewish" in historical, cultural, religious and practical terms.

HAND IN: 2 page RR on Satlow 7-9, with special consideration of the discussion details above

Oct 24 Modernity – 18th-20th Century Communities

- Major cultural and historical upheavals in this period lead to the development of a variety of Jewish responses. How is "community" re-defined here? Is this the same type of re-definition we saw in earlier historical periods, or is something different?

READ: Satlow chapter 10

Discussion: The American Jewish Community

Grad Student Presentations on the following choices:

- 1) Cantor, Aviva. 1995. "The Bankruptcy of American Jewish Communal Life" in Cantor, *Jewish Women/Jewish Men*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, Chapter 11, 255-280
- 2) Bayme, Stephen. 1994. "Intermarriage and Communal Policy: Prevention, Conversion, and Outreach" in Bayme and Rosen *The Jewish Family and Jewish Continuity*. Hoboken, NJ: KTAV, 285 – 293
- 3) Goldscheider, Calvin. 1986. "A Sociological Overview of the American Jewish Community" in Calvin Goldscheider. *The American Jewish Community*. Atlanta: Scholars Press. p.7-31
- 4) Rappaport, Nessa. 1993. "Five Words for Jewish Leaders: You Still Don't Get It" *Tikkun*, Vol. 8 No. 1, Jan-Feb
- 5) Waxman, Chaim. 1990 "Is the Cup Half-Full or Half-Empty?: Perspectives on the Future of the American Jewish Community?" in Lipset Seymour Martin Lipset (ed.). *American Pluralism and the Jewish Community*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books (Ch.5, 71-85)

HAND IN: 2 page RR on Satlow ch 10 and bullet question above

Oct 31 NO CLASS

READ: Tulchinsky, Introduction and chapters 1-7

HAND IN: 2 page RR (email submission by 6 PM)

Nov 7 *Guest Lecture: Gerald Tulchinsky, Professor Emeritus, Queen's University*
The Canadian Experience

READ: Tulchinsky, chapters 8-10

HAND IN: 2 page RR and 2 discussion questions for today's seminar

Nov 14 *Guest Lecture: Bernard Dolansky, Past President Ottawa Va'ad Ha'ir*
The Jewish Community of Ottawa – governance; and the building of the JCC campus in 1998

READ: Tulchinsky chapters 11-12

HAND IN: 2 page RR and 2 discussion questions for today's seminar

and 5851H HAND IN: 2 page Prospectus for Final Research Paper

Nov 21

Guest Lecture: Rebecca Margolis, Professor, University of Ottawa
Yiddish Culture and Community Identity in Montreal

READ: Tulchinsky chapters 13-14 and Epilogue

HAND IN: 2 page RR and 2 discussion questions for today's seminar

Nov 28

Guest Lecture: Mitchell Bellman, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of Ottawa
The Jewish Community of Ottawa – contemporary issues; the community since 1998; and looking to the future

ALL HAND IN: 3 questions for guest lecturer on Ottawa's Jewish Community

4851B In class final exam from 7:30-9:00 pm

5851H READ: either:

The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s
or

Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community

5851H HAND IN: 3-5 page RR to one of the above books

Dec 5

Undergraduate presentations/discussions on:

The Defining Decade: Identity, Politics, and the Canadian Jewish Community in the 1960s
and

Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community

4851B HAND IN: 5 page RR to one of the above books, and 3 discussion questions

5851H HAND IN: 20 page Final Research Paper