

# Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE  
MEDREN 2516/ JEWSHST 2516/HEBREW 2216

Autumn 2016

Instructor:  
Office Hours:

Phone:  
Email:

**DESCRIPTION:**

This interdisciplinary GEC course surveys ten centuries of medieval Jewish history, literature, religion, and culture from the rise of Islam to the death of the false messiah, Shabbetai Zvi. Students will read a wide range of primary sources in English translation. We will examine the transformation of Jewish culture in Europe and the Middle East and will explore the impact of host societies upon specific Jewish communities.

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. to introduce you to Jewish history, literature, culture, and thought in the Middle Ages;
2. to acquaint you with the Islamic and Christian worlds in which medieval Jews lived;
3. to teach you how to analyze and evaluate a wide range of primary sources — written and visual.

**College of Arts and Sciences General Education Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes**

**CULTURES AND IDEAS**

**GOALS:**

Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; and interpretation and evaluation.

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture, and expression.
2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

**DIVERSITY**

**GOALS:**

Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

**EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

**Global Studies**

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

## THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE (AUTUMN 2016)

### CLASS PARTICIPATION:

1. Students are expected to attend all classes and arrive punctually. In the event of absence, please contact other students for material covered in class. Please notify the instructor in advance of any unavoidable absences.
2. Students are expected to read all assigned material.
3. Students are expected to prepare the short-answer questions posted on CARMEN.
4. Students are expected to participate in class discussions.

### HOMEWORK:

- There will be **six** written assignments (**Due on August 30; September 8, 22; October 27; November 10, 29**). Each will consist of a **250 word** response to an assigned question (you will be given a choice). **Note:** Assignments are to be submitted electronically via the CARMEN Dropbox. We will discuss them in class. They will be checked, but not individually graded or marked. Assignments must be completed on time.
- In addition each student will be expected to make one class presentation (guidance will be provided).

### QUIZZES:

There will be **six** quizzes: **September 6, 20; October 6; November 1, 15; and December 1** — all at **12:50 p.m.** Quizzes will be drawn directly from the short-answer questions posted on CARMEN. The lowest grade will be dropped. **No make-ups will be given.**

### BOOK REVIEW:

There will be one book review of **five** pages. Guidelines and a list of books are provided in a separate document. The reviews must be submitted electronically by **Thursday, November 17**. Late essays will not be accepted.

### EXAMINATIONS:

There will be two examinations:

1. The First Examination will be held on **Tuesday, October 11** and will cover material presented in sessions 1-13. It will consist of both short-answer and essay questions.
2. The Second Examination will be held on **Tuesday, December 6** and will cover material presented in sessions 14-24. It will consist of both short-answer and essay questions.
3. Study Guides will be distributed in advance of each Examination.

### GRADING:

The final grade will be calculated on the following basis:

Participation and Homework	10%
Quizzes	15%
Book Review (5 pages):	25%
First Examination:	25%
Second Examination:	25%

THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE (AUTUMN 2016)

**GRADING SCALE FOR THIS COURSE:**

A	95-100	B-	75-79	D+	55-59
A-	90-94	C+	70-74	D	50-54
B+	85-89	C	65-69	D-	45-49
B	80-84	C-	60-64	E	-44

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

The following three titles are required; they can be purchased from SBX:

1. Gerber, Jane S. *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*
2. Stow, Kenneth R. *Alienated Minority: The Jews of Medieval Latin Europe*
3. Marcus, Jacob R. *The Jew in the Medieval World*. REV. ED., ed. M. Saperstein. (Hebrew Union College / Wayne State University, 1999).

**Note:** This edition *may* be out of print, but numerous copies are available from online booksellers. Please try to obtain *this* edition.

**•Note concerning readings online:**

Additional Required Readings, guiding questions and notes will be posted on the CARMEN website. You will have to consult other websites noted below.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ONLINE:

*The Encyclopaedia Judaica*. 17 vols. (Jerusalem, 1972). Online via OSU Library.

*Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World Online*. (Brill). Online via OSU Library.

*The Jewish Encyclopedia* (New York 1901-1905). Online: [www.jewishencyclopedia.com](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com)

Internet Medieval Sourcebook: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook.asp>

Internet Jewish Hist. Sourcebk: <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/jewish/jewishsbok.asp>

**STUDENT CONDUCT:**

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term “academic misconduct” includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).

**DISABILITIES**

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave. Columbus, OH 43210; telephone 292-3307; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

**LECTURES AND READINGS**

**NOTE:** All readings are to be done *prior* to the lecture under which they are listed.

**Tuesday, August 23**

Introduction: The Medieval Jewish Experience

- Readings posted on CARMEN. **Note:** To be read following the first lecture

**Thursday, August 25**

2. The Jews and the Rise of Islam

- Readings:

*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2d edition (OSU Library, electronic resource):

articles: "Muhammad" and "Koran"

Marcus #3 (14-21)

- Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, August 30**

**Written Assignment No. 1 Due**

3. The Old Center in Iraq

- Readings:

*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2d edition (OSU Library, electronic resource):

articles: "Gaon"; "Exilarch" (pp. 600-606); and "Saadia (ben Joseph) Gaon"  
(pp. 606-608)

Marcus, #38 (209-12), #57 (323-28).

- Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT NO. 1:**

Please write a short essay (250 words = a double-spaced typed page) on **one** of the following questions:

1. Compare and contrast at least two of the three primary sources relating to the Exilarch (posted on CARMEN). Which features of the institution attract comment? Why did the Jewish community invest the office of Exilarch with such importance? How did Muslims behave toward the Exilarch? Why? What was the significance of the elaborate public ceremony conducted for a new Exilarch? How were the Exilarch's functions expressed by means of this pageant?
2. What were the central roles of the Yeshivot ("academies") and the Geonim, who led them? What was the main source of geonic authority? How did the Geonim maintain and extend their power? Which factors led to a decline in prestige of the academies and their leaders?
3. Basing yourself upon the assigned primary sources and secondary readings, draft a brief pen-portrait of Saadia b. Joseph Gaon. What were his goals? What, do you suppose, were the principles, which guided his actions? Why did he seem so frequently to be at odds with his fellow Jews?

FRANK, "THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE"

**Thursday, September 1**

4. The Karaite Challenge

•Readings:

Marcus, #47 (262-69).

*Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2d edition (OSU Library, electronic resource): "Karaites"  
(Leon Nemoy and Daniel Frank)

•Other readings on CARMEN

**Tuesday, September 6**

**Quiz No. 1**

5. The Jews of Islamic Spain, 1: The Beginnings of Sefardic Culture (711-1000 C.E.)

•Readings:

Gerber, ch. 1.

Marcus #46 (255-61).

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, September 8**

**Written Assignment No. 2 Due**

6. The Jews of Islamic Spain, 2: Sefarad in the Golden Age (1000-1140)

•Readings:

Gerber, 28-79.

Marcus, #59 (335-38), #63 (352-55), #77 (428-32).

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT NO. 2:

Please write a short essay (250 words = a double-spaced typed page) on **one** of the following questions:

A. How did Hasday b. Shaprut and Samuel Ibn Naghrela use their positions as courtiers to benefit the Jews of Andalusia?

B. Why do historians describe 950-1150 as a "Golden Age" for Spanish Jewry?

**Tuesday, September 13**

7. The Jews of Latin Christendom, 6th-11th centuries.

•Readings:

Stow, chs. 1-2

Marcus, #1 (3-8), #4 (22-26), #22 (124-27), #72 (404-406)

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, September 15**

8. Jewish Communities and Their Leaders in the Rhineland

•Readings:

Stow, ch. 4

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, September 20**

**Quiz No. 2**

9. Rashi, Bible Commentator *par excellence*

•Readings:

Stow, ch. 7

Marcus, #60 (340-42), #74 (412-15).

*Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Online): "Rashi"; "Bible: Exegesis and Study"

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, September 22**

**Written Assignment No. 3 Due**

10. The First Crusade

•Readings:

Stow, ch. 5

*Encyclopaedia Judaica* [online via OSU Library catalogue]: "Crusades: The First Crusade"; "Mainz"; "Kiddush ha-Shem: Historical Aspects: Middle Ages".

Marcus, #23 (128-41), #60 (340-43), #61 (344-46).

Albert of Aix and Ekkehard of Aura: Emico and the Slaughter of the Rhineland Jews:

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1096jews.asp>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekkehard\\_of\\_Aura](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ekkehard_of_Aura)

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05371a.htm>

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT NO. 3:**

Please write a short essay (250 words = a double-spaced typed page) on **one** of the following questions:

A. How do the Hebrew Crusade chronicles present the murder of Jews and Jewish suicides? What are the terms of reference used in these texts? What, do you suppose, is the purpose of these texts? For whom were they intended?

B. See: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1096jews.asp>

In an integrated essay, analyze the account of Albert of Aix, discussing its value as a historical source. Your analysis should address the following points:

(1) literary genre; (4) place and period in which the text was written;

(2) authorship; (5) purpose;

(3) intended readership; (6) specific subject matter.

**Tuesday, September 27**

11. The Discovery of the Cairo Genizah

•Readings:

Solomon Schechter, "A Hoard of Hebrew Manuscripts, I" in *Studies in Judaism*,  
Second Series (1908), pp. 1-11:

[https://openlibrary.org/books/OL23343003M/Studies\\_in\\_Judaism](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL23343003M/Studies_in_Judaism).

*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2d edition (electronic resource): "Genizah, Cairo."

Please go to the website of The Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit, Cambridge University Library: <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter>

FRANK, "THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE"

Please go to the menu on the left and choose "Fragment of the month." When the page appears, you will see over forty short dated titles (April 2007-May 2014). Read any four of these.

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, September 29**

12. A Mediterranean Society

•Readings:

Posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, October 4**

**No Class (Rosh Hashanah)**

**Thursday, October 6**

**Quiz No. 3**

13. Moses Maimonides, the Sage of Fustat

•Readings:

Gerber, 79-89.

*Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2d edition (OSU Library, electronic resource):

"Maimonides, Moses" (author: Isadore Twersky)

*Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (OSU Library, electronic resource):

"Maimonides, Moses (Joel L. Kraemer)

Marcus, #62 (347-51), #75 (417-19).

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, October 11**

**Exam No. 1**

**Thursday, October 13**

**No Class (Autumn Break)**

**Tuesday, October 18**

**No Class (Sukkot)**

**Thursday, October 20**

**Written Assignment No. 4 Due**

14. Hasidei Ashkenaz: The Pietists of Medieval Germany

•Readings:

Stow, ch. 6

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT NO. 4:

Please write a short essay (250 words = a double-spaced typed page) on **one** of the following questions:

A. What are the characteristics and ideals of the pietist (*hasid*)? How does the *hasid* differ from the typically observant Jew? How does one achieve this kind of piety?

B. Describe the pietists' theology of reward and punishment as it is presented in *Sefer Hasidim*. What is distinctive about it? Please illustrate your essay with one or two examples from your reading.

FRANK, "THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE"

**Tuesday, October 25**

**No Class (Simḥat Torah)**

**Thursday, October 27**

15. The Medieval Jewish Family

•Readings:

Stow, ch. 9

Marcus #63 (esp. 355-57)

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, November 1**

**Quiz No. 4**

16. Economic Life in Northern Europe: Money-Lending

•Readings:

Stow, ch. 10

Marcus#6 (31-37), #26 (147-52)

•Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, November 3**

17. Religious Life: Sabbath and Passover

•Readings posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, November 8**

18. Jewish Folklore and Material Culture

• Readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, November 10**

**Written Assignment No. 5 Due**

19. Libels Against the Jews: From Ritual Murder to Well-Poisoning

•Readings:

Gerber, 110-12.

Stow, 231-42.

Marcus, #24-#26 (135-52), #28 (159-61), #30 (169-73), #31 (174-77), #9 (49-55).

•Additional readings posted on CARMEN

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT NO. 5:

A. Briefly compare and contrast Marcus #24 (William of Norwich, 1144) and Marcus #25 (Blois, 1171). Your essay should touch on the following points:

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| (1) literary genre;      | (4) place and period in which the text was written; |
| (2) authorship;          | (5) purpose;  |
| (3) intended readership; | (6) specific subject matter.                        |

B. Compare Thomas of Monmouth's account (Marcus #24) with Pope Gregory X's Bull (Marcus #30). What is each trying to accomplish? How do you explain their very different attitudes toward the charge of ritual murder?

FRANK, "THE MEDIEVAL JEWISH EXPERIENCE"

**Tuesday, November 15**

**Quiz No. 5**

20. Church, State, and Jews in Latin Christendom (13th-14th centuries)

Gerber, 91-114

Stow, 242-80

Marcus, #19 (113-14); #22 (124-27), #27 (153-58), #29 (163-68), #30 (169-73, esp. 171-72), #7-8 (38-47).

- Additional readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, November 17**

21. Spain, 1391-1492: Massacres, Conversions, Inquisitions, Expulsion

- Readings:

Gerber, ch. 5

Stow, ch. 12, esp. 295-302

Marcus, #11-12 (59-69); #35 (195-200)

- Other readings on CARMEN
- Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, November 22**

22. Under Ottoman Rule

Readings:

Gerber, 145-175.

Marcus, #52 (289-93), #64-65 (359-65), #83 (470-76).

- Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Thursday, November 24**

**No Class (Thanksgiving)**

**Tuesday, November 29**

**Written Assignment No. 6 Due**

23. Italy: Leon Modena, Renaissance Jew

Marcus, #34 (191-93), #78 (438-45), #82 (460-67), #84 (477-80), #88 (497-500).

- Readings posted on CARMEN

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT NO. 6:

Please write a short essay (250 words) on **one** of the following questions:

1. Compare and contrast Jewish culture in Renaissance Italy and in Islamic Spain.
2. How did Leon Modena exemplify the ideals of a seventeenth-century Italian Jew?

**Thursday, December 1**

**Quiz No. 6**

24. Shabbetai Zevi and the Sabbatian Movement

Gerber, 173-75

Marcus, #50, #51 (278-88), #53 (295-302), #56 (314-19)

- Additional Readings posted on CARMEN

**Tuesday, December 9**

**Exam No. 2**