

HUNTER COLLEGE - HEBR.211 - Class Schedule Fall 2022

- 1) Thursday, 08/25/2022 **Introduction**
- 2) Monday, 08/29/2022 **Origins of Christian "Antisemitism"**
- 3) Thursday, 09/01/2022 **Byzantine Judaism before the Advent of Islam (330-634)**
 (((Monday, 09/05/2022 NO CLASS: LABOR DAY)))
- 4) Thursday, 09/08/2022 **Byzantine Judaism after the Advent of Islam**
- 5) Monday, 09/12/2022 **Origins of Islamic "Antisemitism"**
- 6) Thursday, 09/15/2022 **Saadia Ga'on (882-942) – Part 1**
 Sunday, 09/18/2022 -- BOOK EXAM - CHAPTER 1 --
- 7) Monday, 09/19/2022 **Saadia Ga'on – Part 2**
- 8) Thursday, 09/22/2022 **Anan ben David (715-795), Qara'ites**
 Sunday, 09/25/2022 -- BOOK EXAM - CHAPTER 2 --
 (((Monday, 09/26/2022 NO CLASS: ROSH HA-SHANA)))
- 9) Thursday, 09/29/2022 **The Golden Age: Ḥasdái ibn Shaprūt (910-970)**
 Sunday, 10/02/2022 -- BOOK EXAM - CHAPTER 3A --
- 10) Monday, 10/03/2022 **The Golden Age: Andalusian Poetry**
- 11) Thursday, 10/06/2022 **The Golden Age: Ibn Gabirol (1021-1071)**
 Sunday, 10/09/2022 -- BOOK EXAM - CHAPTER 3B --
 (((Monday, 10/10/2022 NO CLASS: INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY & SUKKOT)))
- 12) Thursday, 10/13/2022 **The Crusades**
 Sunday, 10/16/2022 -- BOOK EXAM - CHAPTER 4A --
 (((Monday, 10/17/2022 NO CLASS: SHEMINI `ATZÈRET)))
- 13) Thursday, 10/20/2022 **Rashi (1040-1105)**
 Sunday, 10/23/2022 -- BOOK EXAM - CHAPTER 4B --
- 14) Monday, 10/24/2022 **Tosafot (ca. 1100 - ca. 1600)**
- 15) Thursday, 10/27/2022 **Yehuda haLevi, his Philosophy (1075-1141)**
 Sunday, 10/30/2022 -- TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAM --
- 16) Monday, 10/31/2022 **Yehuda haLevi, his Poetry**
- 17) Thursday, 11/03/2022 **Ritual Murder and Blood Libel (1st incident 1144)**
 Sunday, 11/06/2022 -- PARAGRAPH 1 DUE --
- 18) Monday, 11/07/2022 **Ḥasidé Ashkenaz (ca. 1170-1238)**
- 19) Thursday, 11/10/2022 **Qabbala, Part 1**
 Sunday, 11/13/2022 -- PARAGRAPH 2 DUE --
- 20) Monday, 11/14/2022 **Qabbala, Part 2**
- 21) Thursday, 11/17/2022 **Moses Maimonides, the Philosopher (1135-1204)**
- 22) Monday, 11/21/2022 **Moses Maimonides, the Rabbi**
 (((Thursday, 11/24/2022 NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING)))
 Sunday, 11/27/2022 -- ESSAY DUE --
- 23) Monday, 11/28/2022 **Abraham Maimonides (1186-1237)**
- 24) Thursday, 12/01/2022 **The Maimonidean Controversy – Part 1**
- 25) Monday, 12/05/2022 **The Maimonidean Controversy – Part 2**
- 26) Thursday, 12/08/2022 **Disputations**
- 27) Monday, 12/12/2022 **The New Sephardi Identity**
 Thursday, 12/15/2022 -- FINALS --

Hunter College
Department of Classical and Oriental Studies
Division of Hebrew and Hebraic Studies

Hebrew 211 *Masterpieces of Medieval Hebrew Literature*

Fall 2022

Mondays and Thursdays 10:00 - 11:15 AM

Hunter West 522

Professor Sjimon den Hollander

Office Hours: By Appointment

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Website link: www.sjimondenhollander.com/medieval-hebrew-texts-course.html

Introduction

My name is Professor Sjimon den Hollander.

I grew up in the Netherlands and moved to New York in the year 2000.

My background is somewhat unusual. I grew up as a (Protestant) Christian, I studied Arabic and Islam in Leiden, converted to Judaism, and received a rabbinical degree at Yeshiva University.

For those who would like to read a more about my background, I described it on my website:

www.sjimondenhollander.com/my-journey-to-judaism.html

I plan to post useful information on this website.

The link is: www.sjimondenhollander.com/medieval-hebrew-texts.html

You can find the Syllabus there and other vital information.

Contacting me

I will look at my hunter email address from time to time, but a faster way to contact me is through:

sjimon@flatironre.com. In cases of emergency, you can call or text me on my cell phone: **917-805-6234**

Or you can send me a message through: www.sjimondenhollander.com/contact.html

Please send me your *preferred email address* and (for urgent circumstances) your *cell phone number*.

Course Description

This course will present a survey of Hebrew writings from the Middle Ages. It will address the different genres of Jewish literature and their historical contexts, both from Jewish communities in Islamic lands as well as from those in Christian domains.

Course Objectives

- Students will gain a familiarity with the different literary genres of Jewish writings from the Middle Ages.
- Students will develop the skill of critical textual reading.
- Students will learn how historical context is important in understanding texts and writings.
- Students will develop the ability to compare texts from different periods and learn to identify common themes and types of writing.
- Students will gain insight in interreligious relations during the Middle Ages.

Class Attendance Policy

Even though I would hope to see you every single session, things can come up that prevent you from coming. Therefore, if you have good reasons, five absences during the course will not negatively affect your grade. If for any reason you end up missing more than five classes, there will be a deduction of your grade. However, you can get your full credit back by writing a paper for *every* missed topic.

Code of Courtesy

Arrive on time with your **cell phone or smart phone turned off**. Give the professor your full attention. **Please bring paper and a pen or a pencil. You are not allowed to use your computers or tablets for taking notes.** Remain in the room until the lecture or section ends. Conduct yourself in a manner respectful to all present. Never hesitate to ask a question, to express a doubt, or to request clarification.

Assigned Texts:

- Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom: 1000-1500*. Cambridge University Press, 2006 (**will be provided!**)
- Blackboard Site
- My website: www.sjimonenhollander.com/medieval-hebrew-texts-course.html

Further Expectations

- Students are expected to attend all lectures on time, participate actively and to refrain from talking, passing notes or text messaging while class is in session.
- Readings are to be completed before class on the day for which they are assigned.
- The CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity will be strictly enforced. Any violation of these regulations, including acts of plagiarism or cheating will be dealt with on an individual basis according to the severity of the misconduct.
- Finally, it is your responsibility to be alert and pay attention to announcements in this class. The syllabus, the sequence of lectures and the nature of the assigned work are all subject to change.

ASSIGNMENTS AND PERCENTAGES OF TOTAL GRADE:

Absences and Use of Electronic Devices (10%):

Attendance on time and staying away from electronic devices accounts for 10% of your final grade (5% each)

Attendance: Even though I would hope to see you every single session, things can come up that prevent you from coming. Therefore, if you have good reasons, five absences during the course will not negatively affect your grade. If for any reason you end up missing more than five classes, there will be a deduction of your grade. However, you can get your full credit back through compensatory assignments.

No Electronic Devices: There are several reasons why I do not allow the use of electronics in the classroom. Here are some important ones:

A) Research has shown that students who take notes in longhand perform better on quizzes and exams than those who take notes on laptops, etc. It turns out that taking notes by hand results in better understanding of the material. This partially has to do with brain-movement synchronicity.

B) Also, as you cannot write down everything you hear in class by hand, your brain must comprehend, analyze, and process while taking notes in order to summarize in your head and write down the main points and facts, choose important data, and drop irrelevant details. This is already half the study!

C) In order to teach to the best of my abilities, I need eye contact to get a feeling if things are understood or if they go over your heads, if am I too fast or too slow, funny, or annoying. In other words, seeing your faces gives me necessary feedback!!

D) No one is perfect. Electronic devices are huge distractors, and we all fall into their temptations.

Book Exam (18%) This exam will be on assigned chapters of Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom: 1000-1500*. Further details will be discussed in class.

Midterm Exam (25%) The exam will be a take-home exam and will cover material from the provided sources as well as from the lectures.

Written Assignment (12%) You are to write a clear excerpt of two assigned paragraphs from: Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom: 1000-1500* (provided on my website). As this text is somewhat dense at times, you will be required to understand the text well, research anything that is unclear, and explain/rewrite the paragraphs so that anyone can understand it. This will be part of a joint project in which each student will be assigned a section of the book. Be concise with your words but cover the main contents as fully as possible.

Essay (10%) You are to write an essay on a topic of choice from the course, using information given in the class and in the provided sources related to that topic. Your paper should be **between three and four pages** in length (double spaced), the bibliography not included. The paper should be related to one of the discussed topics. Both paper and assignment must be sent in **Word or PDF** to my email address: sjimon@flatironre.com before the end of the day on which the assignment is due.

I assign only one essay, but..... It needs to be EXCELLENT!!!!

As college students, you are expected to write with **correct spelling and proper grammar**.

Based on mistakes that I have encountered in past semesters, I have composed a list of points that you should pay attention while writing in your essay. If you read this well and use it, it will help you produce better papers not just for this course, but for others as well!

Final Exam (25%) The final exam will cover material from the second half of the course.

Opportunities for Students:

Students of Jewish Studies at Hunter College have various opportunities to receive scholarships and merit-based awards to support their studies at Hunter, as well as in Israel.

In addition, the College offers financial award and recognition each year to students who have prepared exemplary essays or writing for a professor teaching courses in Hebrew, Hebraic, or Jewish Studies.

To see the application instructions, please choose this link: <https://hunter.cuny.edu/artsci/jewish-studies-center/jewish-studies/scholarships-and-prizes>

Robert Seltzer Lunches:

Save the dates for the following free lectures-and-lunches (room number and zoom option info to follow):

September 28 (1:00 – 2:15 PM): Allison Shachter, Vanderbilt University:

“Fradl Shtok and Yiddish Women’s Cultural Modernity”

October 26 (1:00 – 2:15 PM): Noah Gelfand, Hunter College:

“The Same as in the Portuguese Synagogue in New York”; Colonial New York’s Emergence as a Center of North American Jewish Commercial and Communal Activity.

November 30 (1:00 – 2:15 PM): Sarah Benor, Hebrew Union College:

Trends in American Jewish Names

December 8 (1:00 – 2:15 PM): Professor Laura Schor, Hunter College:

Sophie Halaby’s Jerusalem Art