I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine some of the major trends in Jewish history using a thematic framework. Key issues such as interfaith relations, host cultures, assimilation, emancipation, messianism and the emergence of different groups within the Jewish community will be examined over time. The ways in which the Jewish minority existed within various majority cultures will be examined, with special attention given to both the internal evolution of Jewish culture as well as to the ways in which Jews adapted elements of the external culture with which they were surrounded into a Jewish framework. Students will become familiar with the primary sources from the various time periods, and will learn about the methodology used by historians in their study of the Jewish experience.

II. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will
1. Become familiar with some of the major cultural trends and movements in Jewish history.
2. Understand how these cultural trends and movements have impacted contemporary Jewish community life and identity.
3. Learn how to read and analyze a primary source and connect it to its contemporary meaning and relevance.
4. Understand Jewish identity and society in its historical context, with an awareness of internal developments and acculturation processes.
5. Become familiar with the similarities and differences between Jewish society and culture and Christianity and Islam.

III. LEARNING METHODS

Learning will occur through a variety of methods, with the main focus on reading primary sources together in class, along with active class discussion. Additional readings and brief overviews will also serve as a tool for understanding the context of the historical themes under discussion.

IV. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Text

A Short History of the Jewish People from Legendary Times to Modern Statehood, Raymond P. Scheindlin, (Oxford University Press, 1998)

The Heritage Source Reader and other required readings can be found on e-res and on general reserve in both Pollack and Gottesman libraries under this course number. Please bring to each class a copy of the assigned primary sources taken from the Heritage Source Reader.

B. Assignments

1. Oral Presentation

Select one Primary Source reading from the syllabus. Prepare and present a 10-15 minute oral presentation that addresses the following topics:
   - The historical context of the source reading – What were the relevant historical developments of the time?
   - A clear and concise summary of the source reading – Summarize the main points of the Primary Source in terms of its content and relationship to the topic.
   - Implications of the source reading and the historical issues on contemporary Jewish identity and community.

A signup sheet will be utilized to select the Primary Reading and the date for the presentation. Submit a one-page outline of your oral presentation on the day you present.

2. Final Paper

The aims of this paper are for students
   1. To read a primary source of interest to them
   2. To analyze it with an original focus, such as its contemporary relevance or its significance for its own time
   3. To learn how to read secondary literature critically

PROCESS: Students will
   1. Select one topic of interest to them either from the syllabus or in collaboration with the instructor
   2. Select a primary source or sources dealing with that topic as well as three secondary sources related to the topic.

The instructor must approve all topics and sources and will share ideas and suggestions with students.

CONTENT:
   1. Based upon a close reading of the primary source, students are to develop a clear thesis statement that reflects an original argument or discussion of the primary source or sources. This thesis will relate the source to a larger theme or issue in Jewish history or culture.
   2. This thesis statement must be grounded in the text and based on historical evidence from the primary and secondary sources. Secondary sources must be read critically.
Further instructions will be presented in class.

The final paper should be 10-12 content pages and include citations from a minimum of five sources. The paper must be double-spaced and written and organized according to APA style.

V. PLAGIARISM

Students should remember that the school does not condone plagiarism in any form and will sanction acts of plagiarism. A student who presents someone else’s work as his or her own is stealing from the authors or persons who did the original thinking and writing. Plagiarism occurs when a student directly copies another’s work without citation; when a student paraphrases major aspects of another’s work without citation; and when a student combines the work of different authors into a new statement without reference to those authors. It is also plagiarism to use the ideas and/or work of another student and present them as one’s own. It is NOT plagiarism to formulate your own presentation of an idea or concept in reaction to someone else’s work. However, the work to which you are reacting should be discussed and appropriately cited. Any student who can be shown to have plagiarized any part of an assignment for this course will FAIL the course and will be referred to the Assistant Dean automatically for disciplinary action that may include expulsion.

VI. HIPAA ALERT

In line with the new HIPAA regulations concerning protected health information, it is important that you understand that any case information you present from your work, will need to be de-identified. What this means is that any information that would allow another to identify the person needs to be changed or eliminated. This includes obvious things like names and birth dates but may also contain other information that is so unique to the person that it will allow for identification, including diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender. If diagnosis, race/ethnicity, or gender is directly related to the case presentation it can be included if it will not allow for identification.

VII. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with disabilities who are enrolled in this course and who will be requesting documented disability-related accommodations are asked to make an appointment with the Office of Disability Services, Rochelle Kohn, Beren Campus, 917-326-4828, rkohn1@yu.edu, Abby Kelsen, Wilf Campus, 646-685-0118, akelsen@yu.edu, during the first week of class. After approval for accommodations is granted, please submit your accommodations letter to Disability Services Office immediately.

VIII. COURSE EXPECTATIONS

Students should attend all classes and be on time. All assigned readings, which can be found on reserve at the libraries, must be completed before the class in which they will be discussed. Primary sources found in the Heritage reader and those handed out, should be brought to class, as they will form the basis of group discussion. Students should bear in mind the discussion questions listed under each section while preparing for class. Grades are based primarily on written assignments and class participation, but attendance will also be considered
IX.  GRADING

1. Oral Presentation and Outline  20%
2. Final Paper  50%
3. Class Participation  30%

COURSE OUTLINE

Session 1: Introduction: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Study of Jewish History and Biblical Foundations
Topics include the study of history, Biblical foundations of the Jewish People.
Readings: Scheindlin, Chapter One, 1-23.
For discussion: From the rule of G-d (Theocracy) to Israel’s experiment with monarchy.
Challenges and benefits of strong central leadership.
Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4

Sessions 2: The Rabbinic Legacy: Jewish Civilization Prior to the Rise of Islam
Topics include the evolution of Judaism after the destruction of the Temple, the Background of Rabbinic Judaism, the replacement of the Temple with Torah learning and law.
Readings: Scheindlin, Chapters Two and Three, 25-69.
For Discussion: The portability of Judaism in Post-Temple history, the development of Rabbinic Judaism and classical rabbinic literature, The Talmud, homiletical and ethical literature, and liturgy.
Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4

Session 3-4: Jews in Arab Lands
Session 3 – Rise of Islam and Status and Acculturation of Jews
Session 4 – Golden Age of Spain
Topics include the rise of Islam, the secondary status of Jews under Muslim rule, the Golden Age of Spain, The Jewish Courtier Class, The Spanish Jewish Poet and His Clientele, and the significance of Maimonides' philosophy and halachic codification.
Readings: Scheindlin, Chapter Four, 71-96.
Primary Sources: Heritage, pp. 82-86, 96-119: The Koran and the “Children of Israel”, Pact of Umar, Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, Samuel Ibn Nagrela, Yehuda Halevi Sefer Ha-Kuzari, Maimonides’ Laws and Philosophy

For discussion: The ways in which the Jews under medieval Islam were able to adapt elements of their host culture into a Jewish framework. The contributions and impact of Jews on general culture, society, and political developments of that time.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Sessions 5-7: Jewish-Christian Relations

Session 5: Status and Foundation of Conflict
Topics include the basis of the conflict between Judaism and Christianity, the development of Christian anti-Semitism, and the introduction of Jews into medieval Latin Christendom.

Readings: Scheindlin, Chapter Five, 97-121.

For discussion: The ways in which two faiths with shared texts compete with one another.

Theological expression to the roots of Anti-Jewish attitudes in the church traditions.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Session 6: The First Crusade: Jewish Martyrdom
Topics include the First Crusade as an example of the tensions between Jews and Christians in Western Europe. The response of Jewish martyrdom will be discussed in terms of its innovation and relationship to the host culture’s culture of martyrdom.

Primary Sources: Heritage: 124-129: Crusade Chronicles, Bernard of Clairvaux on the Crusades

For discussion: Was the First Crusade a watershed? How does the Jewish reaction to the Crusade relate to acculturation? What was the impact of the Crusades on Jewish-Christian Relations?

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Session 7: The Development of Antisemitism: The Medieval Period
Topics include the advent of clerical and popular anti-Semitism in the thirteenth century and follow its development through the Black Death and the expulsions of Jews from areas of Western Europe.

Primary Sources: Heritage 129-134, 136-139: The Popular Image of the Jew in Medieval Christian Society, Disputation of Barcelona, Architecture and Artwork, Nostra Aetate (handout)

For discussion: Medieval Antisemitism and the ways in which contemporary papal policy has addressed some of the pertinent issues.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Session 8: Jewish Communal Structures: Medieval and Early Modern Periods
Topics include some of the different ways in which the Jewish communities were organized in the medieval and early modern periods, and the relationships between family and community.
Primary Sources: Heritage 134-136, 177-180: Ritual Murder at Blois, Nathan Hanover’s Eulogy on the life of Eastern European Jewry, Vaad Arba Arazot

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

**Session 9: Hasidism**
Topics include the rise of Hasidism in the eighteenth century and exploration of the novelties of the Hasidic approach to Judaism.
Readings: Scheindlin, Chapter Eight, 173-197.
Primary Sources: Heritage, pp. 190-194: Ba’al Shem Tov and Early Hasidism
For discussion: Influence of modern day Hasidism and its relationships with general culture and society.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

**Session 10: The Enlightenment, Emancipation and Issues of Jewish Assimilation**
Topics include the Enlightenment philosophy of Moses Mendelssohn, the Emancipation of Western European Jewry and the struggles of the emancipated Jew with modern society.
Readings: Scheindlin, Chapter Seven, 149-171.
For discussion: The impact of Enlightenment and Emancipation on Jewish identity. The Legacy of the Emancipation on Jewish communities and communal organization.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

**Session 11: Holocaust**
This session will focus upon the rise of the Third Reich. Testimony from Nazi voters in the 1930’s will be read in order to understand the motivations guiding those Germans who voted for the Nazi party.
Primary Sources: Heritage, 265-268: Mein Kampf, the Nuremberg Laws, Counter-Emancipation
For discussion: The exclusion of Jews from mainstream society. Holocaust deniers and revisionist history.
Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Session 12: Zionism
Topics include the rise of Zionist ideology in Western Europe, the Dreyfus Affair, Political Zionism, and Cultural Zionism.
Readings: Scheindlin, Chapter Ten, 217-233.
Primary Sources: Heritage, pp. 233-238: Emile Zola, Theodor Herzl, Ahad Ha’Am
For discussion: Varieties of Zionist thought and expression.

Session 13: The Modern Era: Arab Responses to Zionism
This session will focus upon the Jews in Arab Lands and their attitudes and commitments to the Zionist movement as well as the Arab responses to Zionism during the nineteenth century.
Readings: Scheindlin, Chapter Six, 123-147.
Bernard Lewis, The Jews of Islam, pp. 54-191
For discussion: Attitudes towards Zionism in Arab Lands, and the Arab Response to Zionism.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Additional Topics and Suggested Readings:

1. Messianism in Jewish History
Topics include Messianism as a concept on Judaism, the messianic movement of Sabbatai Zevi and the debate over Chabad messianism.
Primary Sources: Heritage: 185-188: Sabbatai Zevi
For discussion: Can messianic trends and movements be cross-cultural? How does the loss of the messianic figure affect the community of believers? The debate over contemporary Chabad messianism.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

2. Varieties of Modern Judaism
Topics include the major approaches to defining the relationship between Jewish law, modernity and history in nineteenth century Germany.
Ismar Schorsch, “Zacharias Frankel and the European Origins of Conservative Judaism,”
Primary Sources: Heritage, pp. 222-226: Reform Judaism, Positive-Historical Judaism and
Orthodox Judaism
For discussion: Different religious approaches to the challenges of modernity and emancipation.

Covers Learning Objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5