Investigation of the traditionally "effeminized" image of the Jewish male, and reactions against that image, have played a critical role in interpretations of modern Jewish culture as diverse as the often misogynist outlook of the eighteenth-century German-Jewish Enlightenment, the muscular Zionist pioneer, and the chic nerd of Dustin Hoffman’s graduate. The Jewish female has been viewed as both powerless and oppressed on the one hand, overbearing and unbearably controlling on the other. This introductory survey of ideal and real gender roles throughout Jewish history, with particular focus on medieval to modern Europe and North America, provides historical background and research tools to assess and contextualize claims such as these and to think about ways in which gender categories have structured society in general and Jewish societies in particular.

Major threads of discussion through the course will include the following. For each, we will examine, at different times both primary source and scholars’ differing viewpoints:

* Ideal images: How did Jews and non-Jews in different times and places envision the ideal Jewish male and Jewish female? “Ideal” here could mean an image one strives to attain, or it could be an “ideal type,” as in a non-differentiated view of a Jewish Other.

* Lived lives: How did Jewish women and men actually live their lives? How do these lived lives compare with ideal images, and how do the two affect one another?

* The challenge of silence: how can we uncover women’s own viewpoints when, throughout most of history, their voices were so rarely recorded.

* Why it matters: How does gender analysis alter our view of a variety of questions in Jewish history, including those that may not appear, at first glance, to have anything to do with history?
**Student Responsibilities.** Students are expected to attend class regularly and to complete the following requirements. Percentages for each give a general idea of how grades will be calculated, but improvement over the course of the semester may also be figured in. Late papers will be graded down, usually 1 point (1% of total course grade) per unexcused day late. In general, papers are assignments are graded on a point scale. For example, an assignment with 15% of the course grade is given a mark from 1 to 15. This eases calculation of the final grade.

*Participation in class and in web site discussions.* Online forum will be posted for each class, providing a space to respond to class readings, raise questions about them, discuss contents with your classmates. Participation in 10 forums during the semester is required. Attendance at lectures will also be figured into the participation grade. 25%

*Two written assignments.* Topics will be distributed. First – 10%, due Feb. 11. Second – 20%, due April 28 (likely preliminary stages include source analysis due April 12, full draft for those who wish due April 19, student presentations TBD).

*Midterm exam:* Tues., Feb. 23 -- 20%

*Final take-home exam, to be submitted online:* Due May 13, 12:00 – 25%

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading scale:</th>
<th>Collaboration Policy:</th>
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<td>A+: 98-100</td>
<td>Discussion and the exchange of ideas are essential to academic work. For assignments in this course, you are encouraged to consult with your classmates on the choice of paper topics and to share sources. You may find it useful to discuss your chosen topic with your peers, particularly if you are working on the same topic as a classmate. However, you should ensure that any written work you submit for evaluation is the result of your own research and writing and that it reflects your own approach to the topic. You must also adhere to standard citation practices in this discipline and properly cite any books, articles, websites, lectures, etc. that have helped you with your work.</td>
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<td>A: 93 – 97</td>
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<td>A-: 90 – 93</td>
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<td>B+: 88 – 90</td>
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<td>C+: 78 – 80</td>
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<td>And so on.</td>
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Special Needs and Accommodations. The class as a whole benefits from the inclusion of a diverse group of students, including all types of learners. If you anticipate requesting accommodations of any kind for assignments or exams, please be in touch with the instructor during the first two weeks of class.
Required Books (available at Broad Street Books and on Reserve at Olin):

Beth-Zion Abrahams, trans. and ed. *Life of Gluckel of Hameln*
Judith Baskin, ed. *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*
Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*
Paula Hyman, *Gender & Assimilation in Modern Jewish History*

Recommended Books:

Elisheva Baumgarten, *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz*
Sander Gilman, *The Jew’s Body*
Riv-Ellen Prell, *Fighting to Become Americans: Jews, Gender and the Anxiety of Assimilation*
Chava Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs*

Michael Brenner, *A Short History of the Jews*
Raymond Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood*

*Please note:* Thursday evenings, Jan 28 - March 3, at 8 pm are screenings of the *Ring Family Wesleyan Israeli Film Festival*. A complete line-up is [here](#). Submit a 2-3 page gender analysis of any film for extra credit in this course.

Course outline

Specific dates and assignments are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. If you miss a class, please be in touch with a classmate or with the instructor to double-check assignments for the following class meeting. If readings on Moodle are different than those listed on the syllabus, please follow what appears on Moodle.


   [Joan Scott “Gender: a Useful Category of Historical Analysis”](#)

   Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs*, chapter 2 (pp. 36-50); recommended: chapter 3 (pp. 51-65)

   Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, pp. ix-xxiv, 1-23

*We begin our historical analysis at a moment spanning the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a moment when idealized versions of male and female Jews with which we still live today were crystallized.

Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, ch. 1 “Goyim Naches,” (pp. 31-80)


**Distributed:** Instructions and prompts for Assignment 1 to be distributed today.


*In class, we analyze together Genesis Chapters 1, 2; Proverbs 31

Susan Niditch, “Portrayals of Women in the Hebrew Bible” in Baskin, ed., *Jewish Women* (pp. 25-45).

***Please use the time afforded by the light reading load this week to work on Assignment 1. There is more reading next week.***

5. Thurs. Feb. 4. Rabbinic understandings

*In class, we read together from the *Mishna*, tractate *Nashim* (“Women”)

**DUE:** If you would like to submit a draft of Assignment 1 for comment, please do so by today.


Natan Margalit, “Priestly Men and Invisible Women: Male Appropriation of the Feminine and the Exemption of Women from Positive Time-Bound Commandments,” *AJS Review*

Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, ch.3, “Rabbis and their Pals” (pp 127-150)

Recommended: Elizabeth Shanks Alexander, *Gender and Timebound Commandments in Judaism*


Elisheva Baumgarten, *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz*, ch. 4, “Positive Time-Bound Commandments: Class, Gender and Transformation” (pp. 138-171)
Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct*, first half of ch. 4, “Feminization and its Discontents” (pp. 151-172)

Judith R. Baskin, “Jewish Women in the Middle Ages” in Baskin, ed., *Jewish Women* (pp. 101-127)

**DUE:** Assignment 1, due electronically by 5 pm.


* In class, we will read together Elazar HaRokeach’s elegy to his wife and daughters, and selections from Crusade literature

Susan Einbinder, “*Jewish Women Martyrs: Changing Models of Representation*”

Recommended:


Renée Levine Melammed, “Sephardi Women in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” in Baskin, ed., *Jewish Women* (pp. 128-149)


Moshe Rosman, “Poland: Early Modern (1500-1795),” *Jewish Women’s Archive Encyclopedia*


Recommended:


Abrahams, ed., *The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln*


Abrahams, ed., *The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln*


Recommended: Robert Liberles, “‘She Sees That Her Merchandise Is Good, and Her Lamp Is Not Extinguished at Nighttime:’ Glikl’s Memoir as Historical Source”


March 7-18: Mid-semester recess


*Guidelines Distributed:* Assignment 2

Weissler, *Voices of the Matriarchs*, chpts. 1, 6, 8.

15. Thurs. March 24 – Purim day.

Screen Yentl, part 1.

16. Tues. March 29. Exceptional Women/Learned Women

Screen Yentl, part 2.

Readings TBA

RECOMMENDED lecture: Wed, March 30, 8 pm, Daniel Family Commons. Deborah Dash Moore “Walkers in the City: Jewish American Photographers”

17. Thurs. March 31. The Yeshiva World of Eastern Europe & the Challenge of Anachronism

*No office hours today

I. B. Singer, “Yentl the Yeshiva Boy”

I. B. Singer interview in NYT

DUE: Preliminary Bibliography for Paper 2

18. Tues. April 5. Enlightenment, Emancipation and Assimilation in Central Europe

Paula Hyman, Gender and Assimilation, ch. 1, “Paradoxes of Assimilation” (pp. 10-49)


Marion Kaplan, “Tradition and Transition: Jewish Women in Imperial Germany,” in Baskin, ed., Jewish Women (pp. 227-248)

19. Thurs. April 7. Enlightenment, Emancipation and Assimilation in Eastern Europe

Paula Hyman, Gender and Assimilation, ch. 2, “Seductive Secularization” (pp. 50-92)

Additional readings TBA

Paula Hyman, Gender and Assimilation, ch. 3, “America, Freedom and Assimilation” (pp. 93-133).
Additional Readings TBA

   DUE: Source analysis for Paper 2

*All readings for class meetings from April 14 through the end of the semester will be announced by March 24. I hope this approach will allow me to tailor the final portion of the course more closely to student interests than would be possible otherwise.*


   DUE: Draft of Assignment 2 for students wishing feedback before final submission

23. Thurs April 21. Student Presentations

24. Tues. April 26 (4th day of Passover). Student Presentations

26. Thurs. April 28 (6th day of Passover). In the Jewish world today.

   DUE: Assignment 2

27. Tues. May 3. Review & Conclusions

Online Essay Exam: Due May 13 – 12:00 pm