

## COURSE SYLLABUS



# THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN ROME

IFSA Rome

**US semester credit hours:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Course Code:** HST386-03 / RL386-03

**Course Length:** Semester

**Delivery Method:** Face to face

**Language of Instruction:** English

**Suggested Cross-listings:** History, Religion

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will explore the history of the Jewish community in Rome, the oldest one in Europe and one of the oldest continuous Jewish settlements in the world. The presence of a Jewish community in Rome dates back to at least the first century BC, and, despite dark moments such as the creation of the *Ghetto* during the Renaissance and the tragic promulgation of the racial laws in 1938 and subsequent deportation during World War II, it contributed to shape the city of Rome and its culture as it is today. In this course, students will utilize historical, artistic, and anthropological sources to learn *in situ* in the Jewish *ghetto* about the historical and religious events that have shaped it.

## COURSE DELIVERY

The course is delivered in thematic units, as described in the Course Outline below. Selected class sessions will be delivered *in situ* in the Jewish *ghetto* of Rome. The course instructor will designate these sessions at the start of the course.

Students are expected to read or view assigned resources in advance and be prepared to actively discuss them in class. In most meetings, the instructor will overview the topic and then facilitate a group discussion, drawing out relevant themes, following up on specific lines of inquiry, and prompting students' thoughtful engagement with the topic.

Students are encouraged to bring their prior learning experiences into class discussions (based on experiential learning theory) and to make cognitive connections between this course and others in the IFSA Program whenever possible (based on the philosophy of integrative learning).

## STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Know the history of the Jewish community in Rome
- Become aware of Jewish lifeway throughout the centuries
- Expand their knowledge of the concept of "ghetto"
- Become aware of the formation of Jewish stereotypes
- Discuss the relationship between Jews and the culture of the city of Rome

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- Identify specific buildings and monuments in the city of Rome and relate them to the history of the Jewish community in Rome
- Develop critical reading skills
- Demonstrate increased cultural and intercultural awareness
- Compose successful papers, that defend arguments with the support of text-based evidence
- Become familiar with resources available for further research on the Jewish community in Rome
- Make cognitive connections between learning in this course and other learning experiences in IFSA Rome

## COURSE OUTLINE

### Week 1 – Introduction to course and topic

#### Session 1: Introductions

- Overview of Course
- Syllabus Review
- Instructor and Student Introductions; Build Community
- Personal Student Goals for the Course
- Instructor and Student Expectations

#### Session 2: Introduction to the Jewish presence in Italy

- Overview of the Jewish presence in Italy: first evidences and the Roman Pagan Era

Electronic resources:

1. Timeline of Jewish History in Italy

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-of-jewish-history-in-italy>

2. History of Jewish presence in Italy

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/italy-virtual-jewish-history-tour#freedom>

3. Jewish trade in the Mediterranean Sea

Rosenberg, David M. *Il Ghetto: Forging Italian Jewish Identities*, pp. 3-6.

### Week 2 - The Jewish community in Ancient Rome

- Jewish communities of ancient Rome
- The Jews as the Roman authors saw them
- The Greeks and the Jews in Ancient Rome
- Semitic Inscriptions in Rome

Donfried, Karl P, and Peter Richardson. *Judaism and Christianity* (excerpts)

- Life under the Emperors

Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy*, pp. 20-28.

**Week 3 - Field Visit #1: Rome and Ostia Antica** (logistical details and expectations for the field visit to be provided by the instructor).

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- The Arch of Titus, and the Monteverde Jewish Catacombs

In preparation for the field visit, read:

Steven Fine, *The Menorah: From the Bible to Modern Israel*, excerpts from pp. 1-40.  
Dello Russo, Jessica. *The Monteverde Jewish Catacombs on the via Portuense* (excerpts).

- Ostia antica: *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia*

In preparation for the field visit, read:

Olsson, and others. *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia* (excerpts).

### Week 4 – Medieval Rome: Popes and Jews

- *Sicut Iudaeis*: The Jews are taken under papal protection

Rebecca Rist, *Popes and Jews, 1095–1291*  
Chapter 1: “Jewish Ideas about Papacy” (pp. 28-65).  
Chapter 7: “The City of Rome” (pp. 226-245).

Champagne, Marie Thérèse and Ra'anan S. Boustan. “Walking in the Shadows of the Past,” pp. 52-82.

\*\*\* Quiz 1\*\*\*

### Week 5 – The Creation of the *Ghetto*

- The word *ghetto*  
Debenedetti-Stow, Sandra. “The Etymology of ‘Ghetto’: New Evidence from Rome,” pp. 79-85.  
Benjamin C. Ravid, “From Geographical Realia to Historiographical Symbol,” pp. 373-385.
- A brief overview on the first *ghetto* in Venice  
Rosenberg, David M. *Il Ghetto: Forging Italian Jewish Identities*, pp. 7-8.
- The new *ghetto* in Rome  
Rosenberg, David M. *Il Ghetto: Forging Italian Jewish Identities*, pp. 23-24, 27.
- *Cum nimis Absurdum*, The Pope revokes all the rights of the Jewish community  
Kenneth Stow, *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy*, pp. 291-298.
- Representations of the Jews at the times of the *Ghetto*: Shakespeare’s Shylock  
Pullan, Brian S. “Shakespeare’s Shylock: Evidence from Venice,” pp. 193-208.

**Film screening:** The Merchant of Venice (2004), directed by Michael Radford (selections)

### Week 6 – Life in the *Ghetto*

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- Jewish Perception of the Pope's measures
- Preserving Jewish identity in a hostile environment
- Life in the *Ghetto*

Kenneth Stow, *Theater of Acculturation*, pp. 3-38 and 39-66 (selections).

### Week 7 – Rome and the Jews during the Renaissance

- The Role of Jews in the Early Modern Carnival of Rome  
Åsa Boholm, "Christian Construction of the Other," pp. 37-52.
- Michelangelo and the portrait of Moses  
Stephen Bertman, "The Antisemitic Origin of Michelangelo's Horned Moses," pp. 95-106.  
Asher D. Biemann, *Dreaming of Michelangelo*, pp. 27-35, 37-77.

**\*\*\* Mid-term Exam \*\*\***

**\*\*\* deadline for research paper topic\*\*\***

### Week 8 – Opening the gates and renewal of the Ghetto

- The Jews during the *Risorgimento*  
Di Napoli, Thomas P. *The Italian Jewish Experience*, pp. 107-115.
- The Emancipation of the Jews  
Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy*, pp. 474-489.

### Week 9 – Field Visit #2 – The Ghetto and the Sistine Chapel (logistical details and expectations for the field visit to be provided by the instructor).

Visit to the *Ghetto* and the Sistine Chapel. In particular, in the *Ghetto* we will explore: the Great Synagogue, the Jewish museum and the Spanish Temple, the fountain of the turtles, Teatro Marcello (the "small Colosseum") and Portico d'Ottavia

- The new synagogue  
L. Scott Lerner, "Narrating over the Ghetto of Rome," pp. 1-38.

**\*\*\* Book Review, due date\*\*\***

### Week 10 – Roman Jews Under Fascism

- Mussolini and fascist anti-Semitism  
Di Napoli, Thomas P. *The Italian Jewish Experience*, pp. 133-140.
- Nationalisms and internationalism: the response of Italian Jews to fascism  
Di Napoli, Thomas P. *The Italian Jewish Experience*, pp. 141-154.

**Film screening:** *Concorrenza Sleale* (2001)

### Week 11 – Italian Jews and the holocaust (I)

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- Vatican-Jewish Relations during the war  
“The Baptized Rabbi of Rome,” in Robert G. Weisbord and Wallace P. Sillanpoa, *The Chief Rabbi, the Pope, and the Holocaust*, pp. 127-146.
- The Di Veroli family in the Roman *ghetto*  
“A Family of the Ghetto: The Di Verolis of Rome” in Alexander Stille, *Benevolence and Betrayal*, pp. 167-222, 325-335.

### \*\*\* Quiz 2\*\*\*

#### Week 12 – Italian Jews and the holocaust (II)

- Giorgio Goldenberg, and Gino Bartali: how Italy saved its Jews

**Documentary:** *My Italian Secret: The Forgotten Heroes*

#### Week 13 – Roman Jewish after the War

- The myth of the good Italian: making peace with postwar Italy  
Klein, Shira. *Italy's Jews: From Emancipation to Fascism*, pp. 204-227.
- Reflections on the Priebke Affair on massacres, trials, history and memory  
Di Napoli, Thomas P. *The Italian Jewish Experience*, pp. 117-126.

#### Week 14 – Final Presentations

- This week will be devoted to final presentations. Students’ final presentation is based on their research papers

#### Week 15 – Roman Jewish today

- Jewish food and Roman cuisine  
Cooking demonstration of Jewish-Roman cuisine at the *Instituto Pitigliani* - Italian Jewish Community Center  
(logistical details and expectations for the field visit to be provided by the instructor)
- Content Review
- Concluding Questions and Comments
- Course evaluations

### \*\*\* Final Exam\*\*\*

## RESOURCES

Required texts:

Cecil Roth, *The History of the Jews of Italy* (available online)

## COURSE SYLLABUS

### Recommended readings:

Gregorovius, Ferdinand, and Moses Hadas. *The Ghetto and the Jews of Rome*. New York: Schocken Books, 1966. Print.

### Media resources:

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/> for a quick overview of the considered historical period  
<https://museoitaloamericano.org/wp-content/uploads/Ghetto-Guide.pdf> for in-situ information  
<http://www.pitigliani.it/menu.aspx?id=100> the Italian Jewish Community Center website

### Movies:

*Unfair Competition* (Concorrenza sleale) (2001) directed by Ettore Scola  
*The Merchant of Venice* (2004), directed by Michael Radford

## COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bertman, Stephen. "The Antisemitic Origin of Michelangelo's Horned Moses" in *Shofar* 27.4 (2009), pp. 95-106. Print.
- Biemann, Asher D. *Dreaming of Michelangelo: Jewish Variations on a Modern Theme*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012. Print.
- Boholm, Åsa. "Christian Construction of the Other: The Role of Jews in the Early Modern Carnival of Rome," *Journal of Mediterranean Studies* 24,1 (2015), pp. 37-52. Print.
- Champagne, Marie Thérèse and Ra'anan S. Boustan. "Walking in the Shadows of the Past: The Jewish Experience of Rome in the Twelfth Century," in *Rome Re-Imagined: Twelfth-Century Jews, Christians and Muslims Encounter the Eternal City*. Louis I. Hamilton and Stefano Riccioni, Eds. Leiden: Brill, 2011.
- Debenedetti-Stow, Sandra. "The Etymology of "ghetto": New Evidence from Rome." *Jewish History*. 6 (1992): 79-85. Print.
- Di Napoli, Thomas P. *The Italian Jewish Experience*. Stony Brook, N.Y: Forum Italicum, 2000. Print.
- Donfried, Karl P, and Peter Richardson. *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome*. Eugene, Or: Wipf & Stock Pub, 2003. Print.
- Fine, Steven. *The Menorah: From the Bible to Modern Israel*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016. Print.
- Klein, Shira. *Italy's Jews: From Emancipation to Fascism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. Print.
- Lerner, L. Scott. "Narrating over the Ghetto of Rome," *Jewish Social Studies* 8 (2002), pp. 1-38. Online resource.
- Mann, Vivian B. *Gardens and Ghettos: the Art of Jewish Life in Italy*. Jewish Museum (New York, N.Y.) Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989. (Available online)
- Olsson, Birger, Dieter Mitternacht, and Olof Brandt. *The Synagogue of Ancient Ostia and the Jews of Rome: Interdisciplinary Studies*. Jonsered, Sweden: Paul Åströms Förlag, 2001. Print.
- Pullan, Brian S. "Shakespeare's Shylock: Evidence from Venice," in *The Jews of Italy: Memory and Identity*. Bernard D. Cooperman and Barbara Garvin, eds. Bethesda: University Press of Maryland, 2000, pp. 193-208.

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

- Ravid, Benjamin C. "From Geographical Realia to Historiographical Symbol: The Odyssey of the Word 'ghetto,'" in *Essential Papers in Jewish Culture in Renaissance and Baroque Italy*. David Ruderman, ed. New York: NYU Press, 1992, pp. 373-385.
- Rist, Rebecca. *Popes and Jews, 1095–1291*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. Print.
- Rosenberg, David M. *Il Ghetto: Forging Italian Jewish Identities, 1516-1870*. San Francisco: Museo ItaloAmericano, 2008. Print. (Available online)
- Stille, Alexander. *Benevolence and Betrayal: Five Italian Jewish Families Under Fascism*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1992. Print.
- Stow, Kenneth R. *Catholic Thought and Papal Jewry Policy 1555-1593*. New York: Jewish theological seminary of America, 1977. Print.
- Stow, Kenneth R. *Theater of Acculturation: The Roman Ghetto in the Sixteenth Century*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2001. Print.
- Weisbord, Robert G. and Wallace P. Sillanpoa. *The Chief Rabbi, the Pope, and the Holocaust: An Era in Vatican-Jewish Relations*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992. Print.

## **EVALUATION METHODS**

The course instructor will provide specific requirements and grading rubrics for individual assignments for the course. Your final grade in the course will be comprised of the following course requirements:

The course has five graded components: an in-class mid-term exam, two quizzes, a book review, a final exam, a research paper, an in-class final presentation, and participation (beyond attendance) throughout the semester. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the material assigned for that day. Excused absences do not relieve students of obligations to submit work on time.

The topic of the research paper has to be approved by the professor by week 7. The final presentation will be delivered in class a week before final week. In the final presentation the student will share with the class his/her findings and receive feedback from them. Submission of late papers must be approved by the professor 24 hours prior to the time of submission.

Final grades will be determined by the following formula:

Participation	25%
Quizzes	10%
Mid-term Exam	15%
Book Review	5%
Research Paper (8-10 pages)	25%
Final Presentation	5%
Final Exam	15%

## **Timely Submissions**

Assignments submitted after the deadline will be accepted at the discretion of the course instructor and generally only in the event of a documented illness or emergency.

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

Any academic endeavor must be based upon a foundation of honesty and integrity. Students are expected to abide by principles of academic integrity and must be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work while studying abroad. Any academic work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Any act of academic misconduct, such as cheating, fabrication, forgery, plagiarism, or facilitating academic dishonesty, will subject a student to disciplinary action.

IFSA takes academic integrity very seriously. Students must not accept outside assistance without permission from the instructor. Additionally, students must document all sources according to the instructions of the professor. Should your instructor suspect you of plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty, you may receive a failing grade for the course and disciplinary action may result. The incident will be reported to the IFSA resident director as well as your home institution.

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