

Course title: The Jews in Spain: History, Heritage and Memory

Language of instruction: English

Professor: Marc Francesch Camps

Professor's contact and office hours: marc.francesch@upf.edu; office hours by appointment

Course contact hours: 45

Recommended credit: 6 ECTS credits

Course prerequisites: There are no pre-requisites for the course. No previous background in either Judaism or Jewish history is required. All reads will be delivered in English or Spanish, English translation is going to be provided if necessary.

Language requirements:

Recommended level in the European Framework B2 (or equivalent: Cambridge Certificate if the teaching language is English, DELE or 3 semesters in the case of Spanish)

Course focus and approach:

This is a course of History with a trans-disciplinary approach. The course focuses on the history of the Hispanic Jews approaching it from Jewish identities and culture and an analysis of Jewish sources and sources about the Jews written by others. In this sense, this is not a course of religious studies or about Judaism *per se*, but an approximation to Jewish identity from the experiences of the Jews in Spain through centuries. Overall, the subject aims to provide of the tools to develop the capacity to build up a critical analysis on the Jewish heritage and memory storytelling.

Course description:

The course proposes an itinerary through the rich cultural heritage of Hispanic Jews to present day along with interpretative elements to understand the recovery of that heritage and to manage it by analyzing the history of the Jewish people in the Hispanic lands and the interrelations, connections and influences between the societies throughout the centuries and Judaism, mainly from the Middle Ages to present day. This is a course of history with a distinct interdisciplinary approach. A general contextual overview and an itinerary through the history of the Jews in Spain frame the discussions to follow. The aim is to develop around a series of selected themes to better understand the boundaries between Spanish Jews and Spanish gentiles from multiple perspectives and across time. Based on the in-class commentary and analysis of primary sources, film debates and case studies, specific topics will be examined: the perception of the self and the perception of the other; the shaping of a Jewish identity in the Hispanic lands versus

the creation of the “Sephardic” cultural construct; the representations of Jews and Judaism; the role played by archetypes in the views on Judaism and Spanish anti-Semitism; and in Modern and contemporary times, the reconfiguration of Jewish identity from Modern Crypto-Judaism to the contemporary reconfiguration of the Sephardic communities. Furthermore, the tasks to be developed by the students are going to go through the contemporary approach different heritage institutions and mediators are developing.

Learning objectives:

- Provide the conceptual tools to analyze historical processes.
- Understand the history of Spanish Jewry and the singularity of the Spanish case.
- Recognize the Hispanic contribution to Jewish culture and vice versa.
- Assess projects developed around cultural Jewish heritage.
- Analyze the situation of minority of cultures in multi-cultural contexts and their development.
- Interpret primary historical sources and audiovisual resources.
- Value the historic, archaeological, and human heritage.
- Show respect to the social values of equality and cultural diversity.

Course workload:

Students are expected to participate in lectures and faculty-led on-site visits and to do daily reads of the required bibliography which will be commented in class. Some sessions are based on active practical work with primary sources. Students will have to produce two short written assignments related to two of the workshop sessions, a midterm exam and a final exam.

Teaching methodology:

The course is organized around several main topics which will be delivered in lecture classes - to provide the historical background- and practical sessions -devoted to the commentary of primary sources relevant to each given topic, film viewings with in-class debates or case study sessions. Some examples of these sources are Canon laws and regulations, Royal decrees, Papal decrees, Inquisitorial procedures, Rabbinical *Responsa* and private correspondence, Halachic texts, Latin and Hebrew apologetic literature, Hebrew lyrical poetry, Spanish literature of the Golden Age, visual representations (from medieval paintings to comics) among others.

The course includes field study tours to the Jewish Quarter and museums, as well as the participation of relevant guest speakers.

Assessment criteria:

The course final grade will be distributed as follows:

- Active class participation and commentary of the reading assignments: 10%
- Midterm exam: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
- 2 short written exercises based on the work with sources: 30% (15%+15%)

BaPIS absence policy:

Attending class is mandatory and will be monitored daily by professors. Missing classes will impact on the student's final grade as follows:

Absences	Penalization
Up to two (2) absences	No penalization
Three (3) absences	1 point subtracted from final grade (on a 10- point scale)
Four (4) absences	2 points subtracted from final grade (on a 10-point scale)
Five (5) absences or more	The student receives an INCOMPLETE ("NO PRESENTADO") for the course

The BaPIS attendance policy does not make a distinction between justified and unjustified absences. All absences—whether due to common short-term illnesses or personal reasons—are counted toward the total amount and cannot be excused. Therefore, students are responsible for managing all their absences.

Only in cases of longer absences—such as hospitalization, prolonged illness, traumatic events, or other exceptional situations—will absences be considered for exceptions with appropriate documentation. The Academic Director will review these cases on an individual basis.

Students must inform the Instructor and the International Programs Office promptly via email if serious circumstances arise.

Classroom norms:

- No food or drink is permitted in class.
- Students will have a ten-minute break after one-hour session.

Weekly schedule:

Monday, January 12th: Introduction. The contemporary conception of Judaism and its historical trajectory

Introduction to the course, assignments, assessment and reading matters.
Opening debate.

Wednesday, January 14th: The Jewish history of Hispania

Context and overview of the history of the Hispanic Jews, starting from the protohistory and till the post-Roman times.

- *Read:* GERBER, Jane (1992) "Volatile Origins: The Early History of Jewish Life in Spain". *The Jews of Spain. A History of the Sephardic Experience*. The Free Press: New York, pp. 1-26.

Monday, January 19th: The Early and High Middle Ages communities

The Jewish communities in the Muslim and Christian contexts up to the second half of 13th century.

- *Work with sources 2:* excerpts from the *Lex Wisigothorum*, the *Usatges de Barcelona*, and the *Canons* of the IV Lateran Council.

Wednesday, January 21st: Late Middle Ages communities, when times change

- *Work with sources:* Hasdai Cresques' letter to the Jewish Community of Avignon; excerpts from the records of the *Book of the Generalitat* (1391).
- *Read:* RIERA, J. (1977): Jafudà Cresques, Jew of Mallorca, Cresques Project.

Monday, January 26th: Self-guided activity. Reading, commentary, and contextualization of the Bishop Sever's letter

- *Read:* AMENGUAL, J. (2018). *La Circular del bisbe Sever de Menorca sobre la conversió dels jueus (418-2018)*. Institut Menorquí d'Estudis, 141-183.

Wednesday, January 28th: Jewish Representation in Jewish Art: Gothic Haggadot of the Late Medieval Period

- Iconography and the Catalan Haggadot.

- *Work with sources*: Catalogue of the exhibition “BARCELONA HAGGADOT. The Jewish Splendour of Catalan Gothic”
- *Read*: Julie A. Harris (2015): Making room at the table: women, Passover and the Sister Haggadah (London, British Library, MS Or. 2884), *Journal of Medieval History*.

Monday, February 2nd: The Jews seen by the Other: The Representation of Jews and Judaism in Gothic Christian Art

- *Faculty-guided visit* to the Museum of National Art of Catalunya (medieval art collections).
- *Work with sources; comment on the paintings representing the Jews*.
- *Read*: MANN, V. (2010) “Jews and Altarpieces in Medieval Spain,” in Vivian B. Mann, *Uneasy Communion: Jews, Christians, and the Altarpieces of Medieval Spain* (New York and London: D Giles Limited, pp. 76-127.

Wednesday, February 4th: Jewish heritage interpretation: the context of Spain and its narratives

Workshop on the construction of the Jewish heritage narratives and the agenda of the several agents that intervene in it.

Friday, February 6th: Within the Call

Professional-guided field study tour to the medieval Jewish Quarter of Barcelona.

- *Read*: RICH, A. (2009). “Coral, Silk and Bones. Jewish Artisans and Merchants in Barcelona between 1348 and 1391”. *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 53, 53–72.

DEADLINE 1st Source assignment delivery

Monday, February 9th: Shaping Jewish Culture in the Hispanic Lands

In class commentary of Shlomo ben Adret ‘s (*the RASHBA*) *Responsa* or the *Hidushei haRashba* (commentary on the *Talmud*), Maimonides’ *Responsa*.

- *Read*: BRODY, R. (2019). Responsa in Geniza Fragments. *Jewish History*, 32(2–4), 463–471.
- *Read*: CHAZAN, R., (1977): "The Barcelona "Disputation" of 1263: Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response," *Speculum* 52, no. 4, pp. 824-842
- *Read*: IFFT DECKER, S. (2015). The public economic role of Catalan Jewish wives, 1250-1350. *TAMID. Revista Catalana Anual d'Estudis Hebraics*, 11, 45–66.

Monday, February 16th: Know your sources (Visit to an archive)

- *Read*: KLEIN, E. (1993). "Protecting the Widow and the orphan". *Mosaic. A Review Of Jewish Thought & Culture*, (14), 65.

Wednesday, February 18th: Converso Identities, a new identity

The expulsion of the Jews from the Crown of Aragon and Castille. A rising social group, a new identity: the *Conversos*.

Work with sources: selected excerpts from the processes of the Inquisition

- *Read*: YISRAELI, Y., & ISRAELI, Y. (2022). Defining "Conversos" in Fifteenth Century Castille. The Making of a Controversial Category. *Speculum*, 97(3), 609–648.

Friday, February 20th: Self-guided activity. Analysis on the storytelling of Jewish heritage locations throughout Spain.

The second written exercise of the subject is going to be focused on the observance and analysis on the narratives, goals, and values of several Jewish heritage sites in Spain.

- [Béjar](#)
- [Córdoba](#)
- [Toledo](#)
- [Tui](#)

Monday, February 23rd: Midterm exam**Wednesday, February 25th: The new Jewish communities in the early 20th century Barcelona city**

The Sephardic Jews come back to Spain.

The arrival of the Ashkenazi Jews in the 1930's

- *Read*: OJEDA, M. (2015) "Spanish 'but' Jewish': race and national identity in nineteenth and twentieth century Spain". *Jewish Culture and History*, n. 1 vol. 16. Routledge, pp. 64-81

Monday, 23rd: A Judaism Without Jews? The *Xuetes* of Mallorca and the Portuguese *Marranos*

- *Work with sources*: documentary *The Xuetes of Mallorca* (currently being produced) and guest lecture by the director of the Association "Jewish Mallorca".

- *Read:* LEVINE, R. (2000) "Crypto-Jewish Women Facing the Spanish Inquisition: Transmitting Religious Practices, Beliefs and Attitudes". *Christians, Muslims and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*. Indiana: University of Notre-Dame Press, pp. 197-219

Monday, March 2nd: Sephardic identities throughout the Diaspora: the footprint on the culture and cuisine.

Workshop on Jewish Sephardic diversity and its footprint on the cultural identities and the depiction in the Sephardic cuisine.

Wednesday, March 4th: A Heritage Recovery Experience: The Case of the Híjar Synagogue

This session will focus on the work of leading a heritage recovery project, specifically the recovery of the Híjar Synagogue. The session will outline the process of the discovery of the site, emphasizing the extraordinary significance of this finding, exploring both the conceptual approach and the management strategies involved in the recovery process. The aim is to provide a comprehensive understanding of how it is approached the restoration and preservation of such a valuable historical and cultural asset.

Friday, March 6th: The European Days of Jewish Culture: a cultural approach to develop the memory policies in the frame of the EU.

- *Watch:* [EDJC Organisers & Coordinators Meeting 2023](#).
[Panel: Memory as a universal question](#)

Deadline 2nd Source assignment delivery

Monday, March 9th: The Jewish heritage in contemporary Spain

The process of recovery and increasing weight in the research, restoration, and narratives of Jewish heritage and its linkage with Antisemitism in the 21st century and Spain's policies on combating it.

- *Read:* SZARFER, F. (2023). *Networks Overcoming Antisemitism Pluralism papers*, 107-112.
- *Read:* [Spanish national strategy on combating antisemitism](#), 37-49.

Monday, March 16th: Being Jewish in Spain Today

An approach to the perception of Jews by present day's Spanish society.

- *Visit to a Jewish Community in Barcelona and guest lecture by a representative of the Community.*
- *Read: Zwiép, I. E. (2011). "Goodbye to All That? Jewish Views of Europe after 1945". In *European Identity and the Second World War* (pp. 225–233).*
- *Read: ARAGONESES, A. (2016) "Convivencia and filosefardismo in Spanish.*

Wednesday, March 18th: Final exam

Last revision of the syllabus: Monday 31st March 2025

Required readings:

Required Reads as indicated in each class session will be provided by the professor (in electronic format).

Recommended bibliography:

Alfons Aragoneses. "Polishing the Past? The Memories of Deportation and the Holocaust in Spanish Law and Society" IVS FVGIT
Revista de Cultura Jurídica, 2015

Michael Alpert. *Cryptojudaism and the Spanish Inquisition*. New York: Palgrave, 2001
Ramon Álvarez de la Vega (Dir.) *El patrimonio cultural como símbolo*. Valladolid: Fundación Patrimonio Histórico de Castilla y León, 2011

Yom Tov Assis, *The Golden age of Aragonese Jewry: Community and Society in the Crown of*

Aragon: 1213-1327, Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, London, 1997

Elisheva Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children. Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2013

Haim Beinart *The Expulsion of the Jews from Spain*, The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, Oxford, 2002

Charles Chavel ed., *Ramban. Writings & discourses*. New York: Shilo Pub. House, 1978

Chazan, Robert. *Reassessing Jewish life in Medieval Europe*. Cambridge University Press, 2010

Maite Ojeda-Mata. "Spanish' but 'Jewish': race and national identity in nineteenth and

twentieth century Spain”, *Jewish Culture and History*, 16:1, 64-81

Paloma Diaz-Mas, *Sephardim. The Jews from Spain*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1992

Jonathan Elukin, *Living Together, Living Apart. Rethinking Jewish-Christian Relations in the Middle Ages*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2007

David L. Graizbord, *Souls in Dispute. Converso Identities in Iberia and the Jewish Diaspora, 1580-1700*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2004

Manuel Hernández Martí, *La memoria construida: patrimonio cultural y modernidad*. Valencia: Editorial Tirant lo Blanch, S.L., 2005.

Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: An Historical Revision*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1997

Amnon Linder, *The Jews in the legal sources of the early Middle Ages*. Detroit: Jerusalem: Wayne State University Press; Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1997

Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the medieval world: A source book: 315-1791*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965

David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1998

Sílvia Planas i Marcé, *A History of Jewish Catalonia: the life and death of Jewish communities in medieval Catalonia*, Ajuntament de Girona, Girona, 2009.