

**TOPICS IN PENINSULAR SPANISH LITERATURE AND CULTURE:  
JEWISH AND MUSLIM HERITAGE IN SPAIN**

**Prof. Pablo A. Torijano**

Language of Instruction: English

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course tries to define and to analyze the diverse Iberian Islamic and Jewish societies and cultures, the Andalusian Caliphate, Taifa and Nasrid periods, as well as a detailed study of the Islamic and Jewish minorities under Christian dominance in the Late Middle Ages (14-15<sup>th</sup> centuries), from a comprehensive social, economic and cultural perspective, stressing the relevance of the period for the study of Islamic-Christian-Jewish strategies of co-existence.

The co-existence of Jews, Christians and Muslims in Spain during the Middle Ages has been conventionally described as a Golden Age of tolerance and cultural development. According to this view this golden age came to an abrupt end with the expulsion of the Jews in 1492 which terminated the "convivencia" and that would mark the beginning of a new era both in Spain and in Europe. However this view was built on Americo Castro's works and his ideas about the co-existence and tolerance between different religious groups in Medieval Spain. Both ideas, the myth of the "convivencia" and the myth of the "catastrophic" expulsion have marked the work of Spanish historians: the importance of such coexistence and its extraordinary character as well as the negative weight of the expulsion of the Jews have had a huge impact in Spanish and European historiography.

In the present course, a different approach and view will be pursued. First we will study briefly those ideological constructs and will compare the historical situation of Medieval Spain with those of other European countries where different religious communities co-existed during the same period. In this way, we will be able to decide if the Spanish reality was so extraordinary.

Students will have appropriate reading assignments for each topic. Class participation and comments are encouraged and will further comprise part of the student's final grade. A detailed bibliography will be provided. The class is complemented by excursions with the professor to Toledo and / or Segovia.

**OBJECTIVES**

This course aims that the students develop the following aptitudes by the end of the term:

1. Development of a critical approach towards different ideological and historical constructs that form Spanish and European identities from the Medieval period on.
2. Application of the main methods in the academic study of religion and translation of those methods to historical situations.
3. Comparison of historical and ideological situations in which the European Jewry played the fundamental role during the medieval and early modern periods
4. Comprehension of religious identity as a dialogical construct with shifting characteristics depending on the cultural and ideological contexts.

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS

0. **PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS:** Definition of Religion; private vs public exposition. Minorities. Internal and External Diaspora.
1. **IMAGINED COMMUNITIES?** Communities and identities in Medieval Iberia. Preliminary concepts. Historiographical trends. Baer and Zionist historiography. The Diaspora as Identity [Anderson, Myers, Boyarin]
2. **BEFORE ISLAM.** Iberian Jews under Roman and Visigothic Rule and its historical resonances.
3. **BEING A DHIMMA MINORITY UNDER ISLAM** in the land of al-Andalus. The Umayyad political and social system and its structures. Conversion to Islam. Ecological systems in conflict. The *fitna* and the disintegration of a political entity. Praying in al-Andalus. The *story of the four captives* by Abraham ibn Daud and the beginnings of a new Jewish Andalusian cultural concept. Center and peripheries.  
[Ibn Daud, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, Glick, Makki]
4. **THE TIME OF ŠEMUEL HA-NAGID:** The period of the *Taifas*. Ethnic struggles. The merchants of the *Genizah*  
[Goitein]
5. **FROM MUSLIM FORTRESS TO CHRISTIAN CASTLE.** Societies organized for war. A first Andalusian and Sephardic diaspora. Jacob and Ishmael under Esau: Christian policies toward the Jews and the Mudejares.
6. **HISPANO-JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN TRANSITION.** Mudejares in thirteenth century Iberian Crusader kingdoms. Cultural hegemony and resistance: Arabic culture and the beginnings of a Romance culture. Science and mysticism in thirteenth Century. Castilian and Aragonese Jewish Communities. Mudejar rebellions: The dilemma of living under Christian dominance.  
[Septimus, Wanšarisi]
7. **TWO MINORITIES CONFRONTING EACH OTHER.** The Jewish and Muslim *Aljamas* Communities and their internal social dynamics. Nasri Grenade: The last, Jewish-Islamic rivalry as reflected in religious polemics.
8. **VIOLENCE AND SOCIAL BOUNDARIES IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.** Late medieval structural crisis and its impact on the minorities. Towards a Castilian hegemony: the Trastamara dynasty. Cultural centers and periphery. Development of Castilian Jewries and the impact of the social crisis. Patronage and corruption. Women of the minorities.
9. **CONVERSION DEVELOPMENTS.** The campaigns against Jews in Castile and Aragon: Christian preaching and riots (1378-1414). Religious polemics: From Barcelona (1263) to Tortosa (1414). Parallelism between conversions: Middle Ages and Early Modern Judaism.
10. **THE TAQQANOT OF VALLADOLID (1432).** Transformations of Castilian Jewry's social

and communal structures.

Communication and reception. Two different economies: Mudejares and Jews. Renaissance and the court nobiliarian culture in fifteenth century Castile. The Conversos, a social and cultural characterization. Abomination of conversion. Social and religious movements. Orality and textuality in Jewish and Islamic fifteenth century culture. *Cancionero* and Jewish humour. Islamic sunni literature in Spanish.

11. **HERESY AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE.** The idea of *limpieza de sangre*. The establishment of the Inquisition, its impact on the Jewish communities. The last Crusade: The conquest of Granada and its impact on Mudejares and Jews.

12. **EXPULSION AS A TRAUMA.** Social dynamics or political developments. Expulsions of the 1490s: A new Sephardic diaspora. The expulsion of the Muslims in modern Spain.

13. **FROM THE CONVERSO TO THE NEW JEW.** Conversos and their descendants in the Hispanic Monarchy. The Moriscos in sixteenth century Spain.

14. **EARLY MODERN JUDAISM:** The New Beginning. Sephardic Judaism in Europe. The making of European identities.

15. **EPILOGUE.** What remains today?

## EVALUATION

Students will be required to write an essay on a topic chosen from the program, and according to a format to be provided. Due dates will be announced at the beginning of the term.

Class participation	30%
Essay	20%
Mid-Term exam	20%
Final exam	25%

This is a course about society and culture. At the end of each week, I will provide a list with selected readings (both secondary and primary sources) as well as with additional (optional) readings --recommended for students seeking to explore further the topics under discussion. I will send you every week some articles and stuff by email, in order to have easier access to it.

Participation: The course is discussion-oriented. This requires regular attendance, preparation, and commitment and cooperation in class. Consult in advance if you think you will miss a session. Make up personal classes can be scheduled if needed.

Essay: You must write a short essay (5-10 pages long) about a topic chosen in consultation with me. The main objective is to assess critically the material they have read for the course.

Mid-Term Exam: It will consist of several short questions to be answered in a period of time of one and a half hours maximum.

Final exam: You will write at home a short essay to be chosen from among several options. You will have a week to complete this assignment.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sources and selected readings taken from the following bibliographical list will be available at the beginning of the term. Besides we will read texts taken from different documentary collections such as FONTES IUDAEORUM REGNI CASTELLAE (Salamanca, 1981-1998, 8 vols.) y la NAVARRA JUDAICA (Pamplona, 1994-99, 7 vols.), and some articles taken from the following journals: *Sefarad* (Madrid), *Revue des Études Juives* (Paris), *Zion* and *Tarbiz* (Jerusalem).

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