

## History of the Jews in Italy



### SYLLABUS

The aim of this course is to provide a history of the presence of Jewish communities in Italy from the origins (2nd century B.C.) until today. During the course the students will approach the subject from a chronological point of view and will examine some of the most interesting aspects of the history of the Jews in Italy. It is necessary to abandon the ancient way of studying Jewish history as a “tearful” succession of antisemitic persecutions. It is necessary not to avoid speaking about the many periods of tension and crises, but the focus of the course will be the relationship between the Jewish minority and the Christian majority in cultural, economic, social and religious contexts. Special attention will be devoted to the study of some of the particular aspects of the Jewish culture and way of life in Italy.

The course is held in Italian. It is composed of 44 hours (22 classes of two hours each). A class presentation is required.

### METHOD

Lectures, class discussions, viewing of films and documentaries, visits to historical sites.

### SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNA FOA, *Storia degli ebrei in Europa*, Laterza, Bari-Roma 1991

ATTILIO MILANO, *Storia degli ebrei in Italia*, Einaudi, Torino 1963

CORRADO VIVANTI (ed.), *Storia d'Italia. Gli ebrei in Italia*, 2 voll., Einaudi, Torino 1997/8

Additionally, we will use articles, papers and books on the specific item of each lesson.

Each student should purchase the book: **PIERO STEFANI, *Gli ebrei*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1997**

### CHRONOLOGY

1. March 4 - Introduction to the course: the “geography” of the Jews’ presence in Italy.  
**Homework: pages 7-22 of the book**
2. March 5 - Who are the Jews? Jewish culture between religious tradition and secular experience.

3. March 11 - Who are the Jews? Jewish culture between religious tradition and secular experience. **Homework: pages 23-48 of the book**
4. March 12 – Visit to the Jewish cemetery of Padova.
5. March 18 – Historiography and the Jews in Italy / Italian Hebraism today. **Homework: pages 75-96 of the book**
6. March 19 - The Shoah in Italy. Film “Memoria” by Ruggero Gabbay
7. March 25 - The Jews and the Church in the Middle Ages: theological questions and political consequences.
8. March 26 - Pawn loan as a historiographic issue: “the home of the Jew.” / Definition of items for the class presentation. **Homework: pages 96-124 of the book**
9. April 1 – Venice: a case study.
10. April 2 - The expulsion from Spain and the Sephardi in Italy.
11. April 8 - **Mid-term exam**

April 9 **no class**

12. April 22 – The Marranos and the Inquisition. The cultural and artistic heritage of the Italian Jews.
13. April 23 - The age of the ghetto: geography and features of the ghetto
14. April 29- The age of the ghetto: stories of cohabitation and oppression.
15. April 30 - Visit to the Ghetto of Padova
16. May 6 – Great transformations in modern Jewry
17. May 7 - The first emancipation of the Italian Jews: the Napoleonic age.
18. May 13 – The rise of a new Anti-Semitism.
19. May 14 – Visit to the Ghetto of Ferrara
20. May 20 - The second emancipation: the Jews and the Risorgimento.
21. May 21 – Class Presentation
22. May 27 - **Final exam**

#### GRADING CRITERIA

Attendance and active class participation: 20 %

Mid-term exam: 30%

Class presentation: 20 %

Final exam: 30 %

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Excused absence due to illness: If you will be absent from class due to illness, you must notify a staff member before the beginning of class (or you may leave a message on the Centro’s answering machine). If you are absent more than one day, a doctor’s note is required from the second day on. You are allowed ONE excused absence due to illness per course.

Unexcused absences: If you are absent from class for any other reason than illness, this is considered an unexcused absence. You may have ONE unexcused absence per course. Further absences will result in the automatic reduction of your grade.

#### PLAGIARISM

All the students are responsible for having read the Boston University statement on plagiarism, which is available in the Academic Conduct Code. Students are informed that the penalty against students at Boston University program for cheating on examinations or for plagiarism may be

"... expulsion from the program or the University or such other penalties as may be recommended by the Committee on Student Academic Conduct , subject by approval by the Dean".