



Beyond Bagels: Jews and Food

JST/REL 098 Professor Jodi Eichler-Levine

How to reach your professor:

Dr. Jodi Eichler-Levine

joe315@lehigh.edu

Office: Williams 186

Office hours: In person OR on Zoom, by appointment. See Course Site for links to my calendar appointments.

Class materials: You are required to purchase one book: Michael Twitty's *Koshersoul* (HarperCollins, 2022). All other readings are on Course Site

Fun fact: My favorite Jewish food is cinnamon *rugelach* (a rolled, flaky cookie), but only if the dough is made with enough butter.

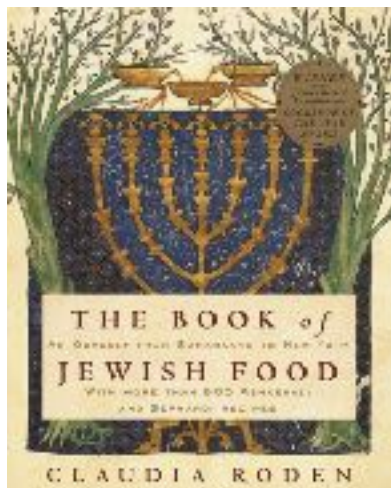
Course Description

What does Crisco have to do with Jewish history? What is eco-kashrut? And why do so many Jews eat Chinese food on Christmas? This course explores Jewish life through the diverse history of Jewish foods. From New York deli to matzah ball gumbo, we will dig into a rich stew of diverse Jewish practices, regions, genders, ethics, and rituals.

Student Learning Outcomes

In this course, you will:

- 1) Learn how to interpret human experiences and differences—particularly around religion, ethnicity, region, and gender
- 2) Understand contemporary conflicts about food, religion, and ethics—particularly with regards to sustainability, climate change, and power
- 3) Build information literacy and writing skills through in class assignments and the “virtual class cookbook” final project



Welcome to the Humanities, Fall 2023!

Yes, this class is for YOU! Classes in the **humanities**, like this one, help us to think deeply about what it means to be a **human being**, and what it means to face fragility and also find moments of joy.

Religion, Religions, Religious. Judaisms, Jewish.

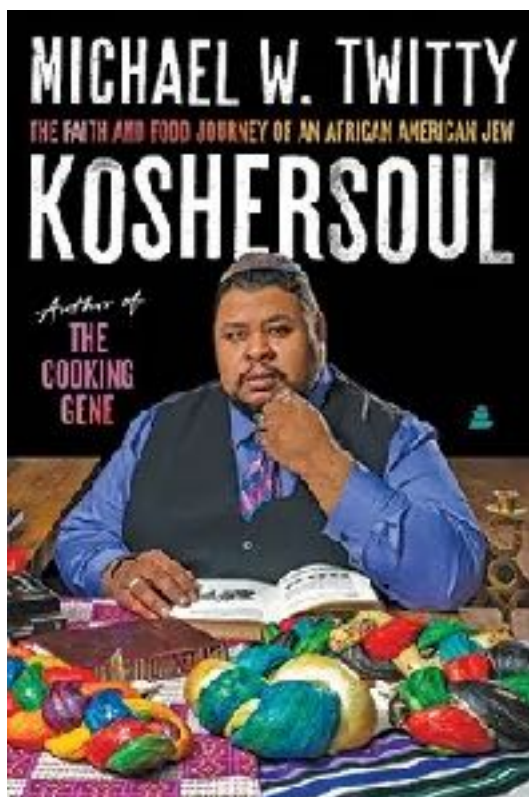
This course is cross-listed between Religion Studies and Jewish Studies. Neither of those subjects are taught at the average high school, so studying religion or Judaism academically will be new for some of you. It is quite different from studying religion in what we call a “confessional” setting such as a synagogue, church, or mosque. I **don’t expect you** to be either Jewish or not-Jewish, religious or not religious. I’m not here to judge your religiosity or beliefs—nor will extra piety (or lack thereof) earn you a better grade! That said, we also learn with our whole selves, so a class like this might impact how you feel about the world and your own place in it, whatever your identity. You won’t like (or agree with) everything you read, or find it all comfortable. If you did, you wouldn’t be learning.

Assignments

This is a *brief* overview of your assignments for this term. Much more detail will be available on Course Site.

1) CLASS WORK: The weekly work of our class is what is most important—doing the readings, attending class, participating, and doing in-class assignments. You will have many in-class short writing assignments and other activities. These will be collected and graded on a credit/no-credit basis. I will drop the three lowest grades (meaning, you can miss three of these with no penalty). **NOTE: Come to every class with your readings PRINTED OUT, some paper and a pen/pencil, and a phone or laptop.** Most of the time, **we will be working without phones or laptops**, unless you have a documented need for accommodation OR are a documented notetaker for a student in need of accommodation.

VALUE: 30% of final grade



2) **TESTS:** There will be two tests (multiple choice/fill in the blank) in class, on **October 9** and **November 15**. These are *not* huge exams, but you will need to study for them. They will be based on both the readings *and* material covered in lecture/classroom activities.

VALUE: 20 percent each (40 percent of grade)

4) **Digital cookbook final project:** As a group, we will produce a collaborative digital cookbook. Each student will contribute one small section. (I.e., a recipe and some history; a photo essay on a particular type of food or foods; a creative map of the Jewish foods of a region). It will involve some research skills, which we will work on together. There will be various smaller deadlines as we work towards the end of the term, as well as in-class time to work on the project together. Grades will be **individual** but the whole project will fit together as a final product. Your final steps for this project will be due during finals week.

VALUE: 30% percent of final grade.

Policies— at the END of the syllabus.

LOTS OF OFFICIAL POLICIES— on things like academic integrity and accommodations for disabilities—can be found at the *end* of this syllabus, and must be read in detail. But for now, let's get to the heart of it: our schedule of readings and activities.

The Schedule

M= Monday W=Wednesday

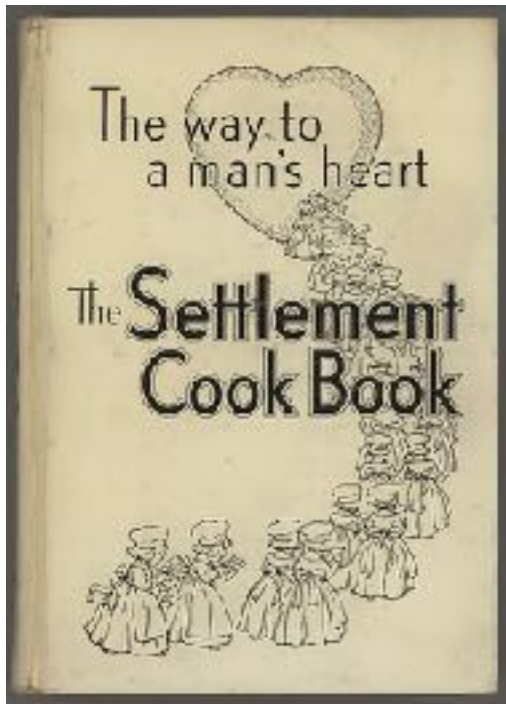
Readings should be completed *before* the date for which they are assigned. I'll also be bringing some shorter texts into class sessions for us to work on together.

INTRODUCING THE STUDY OF JEWISH FOOD

M 8/28: First class. Welcome!

W 8/30: Simone Cinotto and Hasia Diner, "Introduction," *Global Jewish Foodways*, 1-17 (CS)





8/30 cont: Rachel Gross, “Table talk: American Jewish foodways and the study of religion”

UNIT I: RITUALS, REGIONS, RULES

M 9/4: Claudia Roden, *The Book of Jewish Food*, excerpt on “The Jewish Year”

W 9/6: Sue Fishkoff, *Kosher Nation*, excerpts

M 9/11: Sara Gardner, “Sephardic Food,” from the Encyclopedia of Jewish Women

<https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/sephardic-food>

Deborah R. Prinz, *On the Chocolate Trail*, excerpt

W 9/13: FOOD LAB DAY

M 9/18: Joan Nathan and Marcie Cohen Ferris, “Food in the United States,” *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*

Rachel B. Gross, “Jews, Schmalz, and Crisco in the Age of Industrial Food,” in *Feasting and Fasting*, 189-211

W 9/20: FOOD LAB DAY

M 9/25: NO CLASS: JEWISH HOLIDAY: YOM KIPPUR

W 9/27: Nora L. Rubel, “The Feast at the End of the Fast: The Evolution of an American Jewish Ritual,” from *Religion, Food, and Eating in North America*

M 10/2: Adrienne Krone, “Ecological Ethics in the Jewish Community Farming Movement” from *Feasting and Fasting*

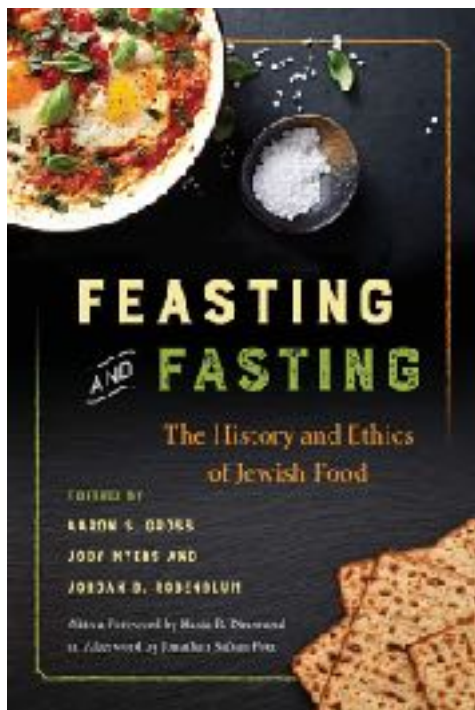
W 10/4: FOOD LAB DAY (SUKKOT THEMED)

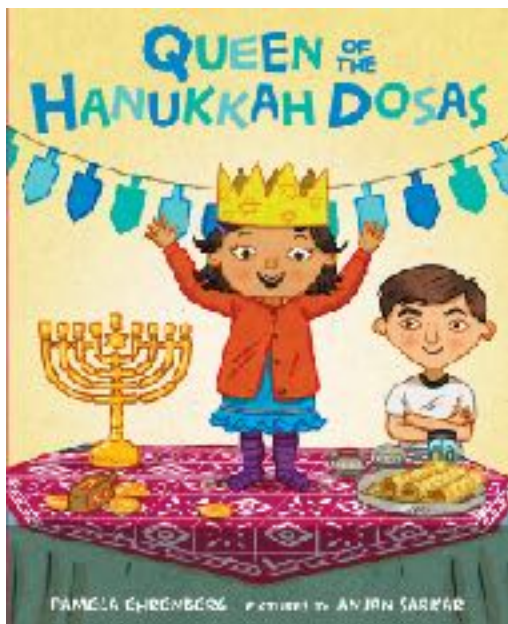
M 10/9: TEST 1 IN CLASS

UNIT II: CASE STUDIES

W 10/11: Shlomo Guzman-Carmeli, “Eating the Bubble: Culinary encounters between secular and haredi Jews in Bnei Brak”

M 10/16: FALL BREAK NO CLASS





- W 10/18: ONLINE LECTURE OR LIBRARY DAY
- M 10/23: Michael Twitty, *Kosbersoul*, xiii-81
- W 10/25: FOOD LAB DAY + Michael Twitty, *Kosbersoul*, 82-132
- M 10/30: Michael Twitty, *Kosbersoul*, 133-226
- W 11/1: Michael Twitty, *Kosbersoul*, 227-263; skim recipes/biblio
- M 11/6: Esther David, “Discover the World of Indian Jewish Cuisine.”
- Angela Warner Buchdahl, “Kimchee on the Seder Plate”
- Pamela Eisenberg, *Queen of the Hanukkah Dosas*, excerpts
- W 11/8: Jordan D. Rosenblum, “A Brief History of Jews and Garlic,” from *Feasting and Fasting*, 147-156



M 11/13: Ted Merwin, *Pastrami on Rye*, excerpts

W 11/15: TEST 2 IN CLASS

WEEK OF 11/20: NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

M 11/27: Samira Mehta, “I Chose Judaism But Christmas Cookies Chose Me”

W 11/29: Adam Chandler, “Why American Jews Eat Chinese Food on Christmas.”

M 12/4: IN CLASS RESEARCH OR FOOD LAB DAY

W 12/6: IN CLASS RESEARCH OR FOOD LAB DAY



Class Policies

Ch-ch-ch-changes: The instructor reserves the **right to alter readings, assignments, or the class schedule** as dictated by the needs and interests of the class. This is why attending class, finding out if you missed any announcements **from a colleague**, and checking your e-mail and Course Site are all crucial.



I love e-mail. It is the best way to reach me. That said, I get a lot of it, and I try to take the weekends off from working. Please be patient when awaiting a reply— **it could take up to 48 hours so plan ahead.** *Always indicate your name and what course you are taking in your e-mail! Your university e-mail address is an official form of university communication; check it daily.*

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY POLICY ON HARASSMENT AND NON-DISCRIMINATION:

Lehigh University upholds The Principles of Our Equitable Community and is committed to providing an educational, working, co-curricular, social, and living environment for all students, staff, faculty, trustees, contract workers, and visitors that is free from harassment and discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, genetic information, marital or familial status, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. Such harassment or discrimination is unacceptable behavior and will not be tolerated. The University strongly encourages (and, depending upon the circumstances, may require) students, faculty, staff or visitors who experience or witness harassment or discrimination, or have information about harassment or discrimination in University programs or activities, to immediately report such conduct.

If you have questions about Lehigh's Policy on Harassment and Non-Discrimination or need to report harassment or discrimination, contact the Equal Opportunity Compliance Coordinator (Alumni Memorial Building / 610.758.3535 / eocc@lehigh.edu).

If you are still reading this syllabus, please email a funny meme or picture of your cat/dog/rabbit/etc to me at joe315@lehigh.edu by no later than August 30 for 2 points of extra credit on your first exam.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Lehigh University is committed to maintaining an equitable and inclusive community and welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a





disability must contact Disability Support Services (DSS), provide documentation, and participate in an interactive review process. If the documentation supports a request for reasonable accommodations, DSS will provide students with a Letter of Accommodations. Students who are approved for accommodations at Lehigh should share this letter and discuss their accommodations and learning needs with instructors as early in the semester as possible. For more information or to request services, please contact Disability Support Services in person in Williams Hall, Suite 301, via phone at 610-758-4152, via email at indss@lehigh.edu, or online at <https://studentaffairs.lehigh.edu/disabilities>.



Academic Integrity: From the Lehigh Student Senate: “We ... reaffirm the duty and obligation of students to meet and uphold the highest principles and values of personal, moral and ethical conduct. As partners in our educational community, both students and faculty share the responsibility for promoting and helping to ensure an environment of academic integrity. As such, each student is expected to complete all academic course work in accordance to the standards set forth by the faculty and in compliance with the University's Code of Conduct.”

