This course, which is being offered for the first time in Spring 2011, is an undergraduate seminar in the history of the Jewish book that also serves as an introduction to the remarkable riches of the Judaica collections of the Library of Congress and the Kiev Library in Gelman. In this course we will learn about the history of books in general and Jewish books in particular, studying how texts were made, circulated, and read. We will also learn about the ways in which books gave rise to new conceptions of knowledge and authority and even to new ideas of what it meant to be Jewish. And we will do all this on site at the Library of Congress and the Kiev Library, in the physical presence of the primary sources we are studying, many of them centuries old and exceedingly rare.

The inaugural version of “Bookmarks” will be divided into two halves. In the first half of the semester, we will examine the impact of print on Jewish cultural development from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, a period often referred to as “early modern” in Jewish historiography, in part on account of the transformations wrought in Jewish life by the invention of movable type. Topics to be discussed include the transition from manuscript to print and the first Hebrew printed books; early printed editions of such foundational works as the Babylonian Talmud, the Shulhan Arukh, and the Zohar; Christian-Jewish collaboration in the print shops and the influence of censorship in the shaping of the Jewish book and of Jewish identity; women as printers and readers, and new books for women; and new illustrated works, by Jews and non-Jews alike, depicting Jewish customs and ceremonies in novel ways. In the second half of the semester, we will trace Jewish book history through the lens of a single genre—the Passover Haggadah. The Haggadah is recited every year at the Seder, the festive evening meal that ushers in the Jewish holiday of Passover and commemorates the ancient redemption of Israel from Egyptian slavery. A mixture of story, song, and prayer, the Haggadah is perhaps the best known of all Jewish books; it is certainly the most widely printed and distributed. With its vast, enduring popularity and relative brevity, its iconic rituals (“The Four Questions”) and themes (“The Four Sons”) as well as legacy of artistic illustration and illumination unique among Jewish sacred texts, and its persistent tension between tradition and innovation the Passover Haggadah stands out as a particularly valuable prism for viewing the history not only of the Jewish book, but of Jewish culture, memory, and identity in a broader sense. In our survey of the Haggadah, we will explore everything from medieval illuminated Haggadot to milestone early modern...
printed Haggadot to mass-produced twentieth-century Haggadot. We will explore Hebrew-language Haggadot, to be sure, but also Haggadot in English, Yiddish, and even Marathi. And we will explore nontraditional Haggadot of all kinds, including Reform Haggadot, kibbutz Haggadot, Soviet Haggadot, post-Holocaust Haggadot, and feminist Haggadot.

**Learning Objectives**

This course has several learning objectives that will serve as the basis for assessment. Students will be evaluated on their ability to:

- **Identify** various dimensions of the impact of the invention of print on Jewish culture
- **Contextualize** the history of the book in Jewish culture within the history of the book more generally (e.g. through exposure to some of the chief approaches to, and debates within the growing field of Book History).
- **Grasp** major trends in the history of the Passover Haggadah as both a physical object and a social and cultural phenomenon (e.g. the impact of print on both the text and the very idea of the Haggadah as well as on the experience of the Passover Seder).
- **Reason** historically, e.g. by thinking contextually and concretely, avoiding unwarranted generalizations and anachronisms, perceiving change and continuity over time, considering how historians with divergent orientations (political, social, intellectual) might approach and explain the same historical phenomenon differently, appreciating complexity, periodizing, etc.
- **Analyze** both primary and secondary literature (historiography) critically, e.g. by attending to things like context, structure, and argument, distinguishing thesis from supporting evidence, considering alternative explanations for given data, discerning possible authorial biases, etc.
- **Write** essays that draw on all the above skills and are clear, cogent and concise.

**Requirements:**

- **Short Paper** (20%). One short paper of roughly 1500 words, analyzing a particular scholarly controversy within the field of Book History, is required of all students. The essay will be due **Wednesday, February 9** at the beginning of class. Since our meeting that day will be devoted in part to discussing the texts that are the subject of the paper, no extensions will be granted.

- **Research Paper** (40%). A term paper of no fewer than 4000 words that draws on the Judaica collections of the Library of Congress and/or the Kiev Library to produce a work of original research in the history of the Jewish book is the core requirement of the course. Early in the semester, each student, with the assistance of the instructor and possibly one of the Judaica librarians at either of the two sites, will formulate a paper
topic well suited to his or her research interests. The final version of the essay will be
due at our last meeting, **Wednesday, April 13**. However, there will be two other graded
components of the research project due earlier in the semester. A **Research Paper**
Proposal (10%) of roughly three pages in length that articulates the main research
question(s), identifies the methodology and sources to be used, and previews the tentative
argument of the paper will be due, in class, on **Wednesday, February 23**. And an
**Annotated Bibliography** (10%), which lists and briefly describes the primary and
secondary sources on which the paper is based, will be due, in class, on **Wednesday,
March 23**.

- **Attendance and Participation** (20%). This class is an upper-level undergraduate
  seminar, and its success will depend in large part on the work students do in preparation
  for each meeting and their contributions to class discussions. As you can see, the weight
given to “Attendance and Participation” is equivalent to the percentage of your final
grade that will be determined by the short paper (20%). So you are strongly encouraged
to contribute in class in a constructive manner, by posing and responding to questions,
making comments, asking me to clarify something I have said, and just in general
demonstrating a high level of engagement. The reading will run anywhere from 75 to
150 pages per week. Students should plan on devoting some time most weeks to doing
readings that are on Gelman reserve [**GR**] or that are part of the Kiev Judaica Collection
and thus can only be studied during the hours that the latter is open (typically, Mondays
through Fridays 10 to 5). Moreover, for the weeks that we meet at the Library of
Congress, students must allocate sufficient time for travel to Capitol Hill from Foggy
Bottom. Attendance in class mandatory. Two or more unexcused absences—or repeated
lateness to class—will reduce your grade for attendance and participation.

- Laptops may be used only to take lecture notes or to look at scanned excerpts of materials
  we are studying online. Text messaging, sending e-mail, playing computer games, and
  web surfing of any kind are unacceptable during class. Using electronic technology
  inappropriately will negatively affect your Attendance and Participation grade.

- Academic dishonesty is a serious university offense. While it is expected—at least in the
  research paper for this class—that you will assimilate the work and ideas of others, you
  must give credit to your sources when appropriate. Furthermore, you need to integrate
  your findings into an essay whose style and argument are incontrovertibly your own. I
  will be available to answer any questions you might have about the nuances of when to
cite, but know from the outset that I am obliged to report suspected cases of plagiarism
  and cheating. Be sure to familiarize yourselves with both the Chicago Manual of Style
  (15th edition) and the GW Code of Academic Integrity, which can be found at
  [http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html).

- In order to receive accommodations on the basis of disability, students with special needs
  must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support
  Services, Marvin Center 436, 994-8250.
Readings

There are no books that you are required to purchase for this course, though you are encouraged to buy the new facsimile of the Washington Haggadah that will be published in early March by Harvard University Press.

With few exceptions, the readings for the course can be found in seven places: on Blackboard, under Electronic Reserve [ER]; online, with a URL listed on the syllabus; in Gelman, on reserve [GRes]; in Gelman, as a reference work [GRef]; in Gelman, as an E-Book [Gelman E-Book]; in the Kiev Library on the seventh floor of Gelman; and in the Library of Congress. Materials for the Kiev can be reviewed only during the hours it is open. You are not expected to travel to the Library of Congress to prepare the week’s readings, though you may well find yourself doing so for your research paper.

Schedule of Classes

I. Print and Jewish Cultural Development

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<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>Jan 12</th>
<th>Introduction (LC)</th>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>Jan 19</td>
<td>From Manuscript to Print; Early Hebrew Printing (Kiev)</td>
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Led by B.S. Hill, Librarian of Kiev Judaica Collection


| W   | Jan 26 | Printing the Talmud (LC) |

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 2</td>
<td>The Shulhan Arukh (“Set Table”) &amp; the Standardization of Halakhah (Kiev)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 9</td>
<td>The Printing of the Zohar and the Popularization of Kabbalah (LC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 16</td>
<td>Censorship, the Counter-Reformation, &amp; the Jewish Book (LC)</td>
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First printed edition of Rabbi David Kimchi’s commentary on Psalms (http://picasaweb.google.com/gomo18/RareJewishBooksJTSILibrar y#5361499285194840130)

“Edict Ordering the Confiscation and Burning of the Talmud,” Venice, 1553, in Printing the Talmud http://www.printingthetalmud.org/objects.html


Women and the Jewish Book (Kiev)

Guest visit: Ms. Jennifer Breger, independent scholar and expert in Jewish women’s liturgy and literature, Jewish women’s printing, and the history of Hebrew printing

Chava Weissler, Voice of the Matriarchs, chap. 2 [ER]


Mahzor (Italian rite, commissioned for woman), Abraham b. Mordecai Farissol (scribe), Italy, 1471, MS 8255, Fol. 5v http://cojs.org/cojswiki/Mahzor_%28Italian_rite%29_commission ed_for_woman%29%2C_Abraham_ben_Mordecai_Farissol_%28s cribe%29%2C_Italy%29%2C_MS_8255%2C_Fol._5v.

CLASS CANCELLED

Picturing Jews:
Early Modern Jewish and Non-Jewish Representations of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies (LC)

Proops Minhagim (Amsterdam, 1707) [LC]

Cérémonies et coutumes religieuses de tous les peuples du monde (Amsterdam, 1728) [LC]
II. The Passover Haggadah

W Mar 23  Haggadah: Origins, Component Parts, Early History; Medieval Illuminated Haggadot  
(LC)

- The Passover Haggadah (read through entirety and prepare outline of its structure)
- Dropsie Genizah Haggadah  
  (http://www.cjs.upenn.edu/publications/breaking%20new%20ground/the_dropsie_haggadah.pdf)
- The Sarajevo Haggadah, facsimile [GRes]
- The Ashkenazi Haggadah, facsimile [Kiev]
- ***The Washington Haggadah*** [LC]
- Abraham Karp, From the Ends of the Earth, pp. TBA [GRes]
- Marc M. Epstein, “Illustrating History and Illuminating Identity in the Art of the Passover Haggadah” [ER]

W Mar 30  Becoming a Book:  
The Early Printed Haggadah; Two Seventeenth-Century Haggadot (Venice and Amsterdam)  
A Passage to India: The Poona Haggadah of 1874  
(LC)

- Facsimile of Mantua Haggadah of 1560 [KIEV]
- Richard I. Cohen, Jewish Icons, pp. TBA [GRes]
- W. Fischel, The Haggadah of the Bene Israel of India, facs. edition (New York, 1968) [ER]

W Apr 6  The Szyk Haggadah (LC—Rare Book Room)
- **Szyk Haggadah** (Abrams, 2011)

**W**  **Apr 13**  **To Each His (or Her) Own Haggadah** (Kiev)

- *The Union Haggadah* (1907) [GoogleBooks]
- *A Passover Haggadah: the New Union Haggadah* [*GRes*]
- *A Survivor’s Haggadah* [*GRes*]
- Muki Tsur, et al. (eds.), *Yot’sim be-hodesh ha-’aviv*, illustrations [*GRes*]
- *The Women’s Haggadah* [*GRes*]
- Arnold Eisen, *Rethinking Modern Judaism*, pp. TBA [*ER*]

**W**  **Apr 20**  **PASSOVER (appropriately)—NO CLASS**