

TEMPORARY SYLLABUS

Andalusia: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, Pt. 1

As described in the catalogue, this course invites us to a thorough, profound, and exciting interrogation of the ways in which we have traditionally approached the study of the interconnections and intersections between Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The broad container for doing this will be through looking at the patterns and practices of co-existence in al-Andalus, from the early 8th century until the end of the 15th century, as well as what the consequences of this period were for the Spanish conquest and colonisation of the Americas and the post-Andalusian Jewish and Muslim dispersions (in Pt. 2 of the course).

To study religions and to study their intersectionalities is also to study people, borders, notions of ethnicities, languages, geographies and all that those things entail and embrace. And this usually entails subverting some of our own dearly-held ideas! For example, in this course, we will be challenged to look at the Africa-Europe axis in different ways; to understand all three religions, we will have to grapple with issues of vast geographical contexts. Often our contemporary notions of nation-states/countries/empires, are based on geographies that reinforce notions of primacy. To put it more simply, we tend to think of the world as being divided into discrete groups which are neatly separated by borders. Of course, the notions of porosity of borders and transnational identities and fluidities come more and more into our consciousness, but when we think of the past, we think of some areas of the world and their populations as being pretty static. For example, that there were transcontinental movements of peoples from the east of Africa to the west of Africa, or from the east of Muslim territories to the west is not something that is usually emphasised in contemporary studies of the histories of religions.

Given the current situation in the world, it is difficult to imagine relations between Jews, Muslims, and Christians that were not relations of constant violence and annihilation. We have come to think of those ways of relating as being almost "just the way things are". This course invites us to enter a space where ways of being that were based on living-in-the-differences grew creatively. How do food, music, spiritual practice, sacred space/architecture, environmental sciences, gender, class, sexualities, embodiment/disabilities, language, notion of community express the intersectional cultures that grew out of la convivencia, the coexistence of these religions? Come, enter into the space that was al-Andalus !

- 1. OVERVIEW: Geographies and identities: How did all of these people end up where we don't usually think of them being?**
- 2. Jewish geographies/Jewish diversities/Jewish Africa/Jewish Iberia**
- 3. Jewish geographies/Jewish diversities/Jewish Africa/Jewish Iberia**
- 4. Christian geographies/Christian diversities/Christian Africa/Christian Iberia**
- 5. Christian geographies/Christian diversities/Christian Africa/Christian Iberia**
- 6. Muslim geographies/Muslim diversities/Muslim Africa/Muslim Iberia**
- 7. Muslim geographies/Muslim diversities/Muslim Africa/Muslim Iberia**
- 8 - 12. Cordoba: Geographies of differences/Architectures of living-in-the-differences/Inner tensions**
- 13-14. Transitions**

This course will be taught as an on-line course. Students desiring to take this course should have both the desire and the motivation to participate in a style of learning that is different from that of the classroom. The class will incorporate chat, webcam, email and web creation as core elements of our work together. Students are not required to have any previous background in educational technology, but a willingness to learn and a motivation to experiment are both key to benefiting fully from this class.

In fulfillment of the course requirements, each student is expected a) to engage with the weekly posted web materials (readings, music, art work, etc.); b) post their reflections weekly on the assigned web materials on the class Discussion Board; c) respond to the reflections of another student on the Discussion Board. Instead of there being a "Final Project", each student will maintain a blog (which may also be a videoblog if they so choose) throughout the course of the semester. This blog will provide a space for them to reflect on what they are studying about al-Andalus in

relation to situations that they are encountering in their own lives, whether those be classes, ritual practice, anti-oppression work, Islamophobia, anti-Jewish sentiment, generalisations, fictions of purity, arbitrary essentialising, personal health, etc.. If the student is already blogging, their pre-existing blog should be expanded to include the above-mentioned reflections. There will also be chats (and possibly conference calls) organized on a schedule decided on by the class. The lecture notes will seek to provide some background for the class materials and eventually raise some pertinent questions. The professor is available by telephone, email, and video-web conversation. For students in the Bay Area, there will also be opportunities to participate in the lives of Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities. Again, while fully recognizing that this is not the same experience as sitting in a classroom in Berkeley, it is hoped that those students who are excited by the possibilities of flexibility and accessibility afforded by on-line learning will want to participate in this multi-dimensional class.