

University of Pennsylvania
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of History

Fall 2023

Neighbors and Strangers: Jews and Christians in Premodern Europe

Thursdays 10:15am-1:15pm

Instructor: Joshua Teplitsky

Contact: Joshua.teplitsky@sas.upenn.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 11am-1pm, or by appointment, College Hall 309C

The history of Christians and Jews—and of Judaism and Christianity—is an entangled one. From antiquity the two groups gained understandings of themselves in relation to the other, and that story defined much of the lives of each throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period. At times this relationship was a hostile one, but it was also a force for creativity and a basic fact of life. This course approaches the history of relations between Christians and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Europe (ca. 1000-1800), exploring both the bases of hatred and the possibilities of coexistence. We will look at episodes of crusader violence, mass expulsion, and religious polemic alongside exchanges in taverns, shared child-rearing, and sexual encounters. We will examine sources from *both* Christians and Jews, recovering voices from across this seeming divide, encountering the ideals imagined by elites and intellectuals, as well as the messy—and more interesting!—realities of living side-by-side for centuries. Class meetings will involve dedicated discussion of a combination of primary and secondary sources, and assessment will be based on writing assignments.



Assessment:

- 30% Class Participation
- 40% Primary Source Analyses
- 30% Brief independent research paper (10-12 pages)

Schedule of Meetings and Assigned Readings:

Readings are indicated for the date on which they will be discussed in class. Make sure you have read them in advance of class and have the text with you for direct discussion. Unless otherwise indicated, all readings are available as files or links on Canvas. If something is missing, please do not assume that it is not going to be discussed. Contact the instructor and graders for more information.

Thurs, Aug 31	Introduction to the Course
Thurs, Sept 7	Ancient Foundations
Thurs, Sept 14	Biblical Re-Readings
Thurs, Sept 21	Crusades and Disputations
Thurs, Sept 28	Representing the Other, Understanding the Self: Medieval Jews and Christians in Each Other's Eyes
Thurs, Oct 5	Family Life: Mothers and Children
Thurs, Oct 12	No Class, Fall Term Break
Thurs, Oct 19	Seeing Like a Jew: Jews in Christian Art
Thurs, Oct 26	Separations and Segregations (Expulsions and Ghettos)
Thurs, Nov 2	Reformations: Martin Luther on the Jews, Jews on the Reformation
Thurs, Nov 9	Spaces of Interaction: Inns, Roads, Markets, and Fairs
Thurs, Nov 16	Cultural Connections: Books, Blood, and Bodies
Tues, Nov 21	Follows a Thursday Schedule: Conversion and Crossing Boundaries
Thurs, Nov 30	Daily Exchanges: Memoirs and Diaries
Thurs, Dec 7	Student Presentations