Course Objectives:
This course examines the role of Jewish women in the broader feminist movement in the U.S. and Israel and the impact of feminist theory and activism on Jewish thought, law, ritual practice and communal norms in the 20th and 21st century. We will explore classic feminist critiques and transformations of traditional Judaism and examine contemporary controversies involving issues such as equality under Jewish ritual and family law, sex segregation in public life, the inclusion of Jewish People of Color and of LGBTQ Jews, and antisemitism in the women's movement.

Workload:
Four-Credit Course (with three hours of class-time per week)
Success in this 4-credit hour course is based on the expectation that students will spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, papers, discussion sections, preparation for exams, etc.

Grading:
8 Weekly responses to readings of 1-2 pages due the day before class, uploaded to class forum on Latte. (10%)

Class participation, including 2 brief (7-10 minute) introductory presentations of weekly readings which summarize key issues and pose questions for class discussion (20%)

2 X 3 page papers (due October 8 and November 8) (20% each)

Final research assignment on a topic chosen in consultation with me (30%) This may be a research paper 8-10 pages or another agreed format.

No Prerequisites. Open to undergraduate and graduate students.
**Academic Integrity**
You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work. Please consult the university webpage for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university.

**Disabilities**
If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me so that we can discuss strategies that will work best for you.

**Materials**
There are no required texts for this course. All the readings are or will be uploaded on the Latte website. Readings will average no more than 50 pages per class. Readings are subject to change as the term proceeds.

**Introduction: Jewish Women in Feminism/Jewish Feminisms**
August 29

*Seneca Falls Declaration of Rights and Sentiments* (1848)

Rachel Adler “The Jew Who Wasn’t There: Halachah and the Jewish Question” (1973)

**Jewish Women and the Struggle for Suffrage in the US and Mandate Palestine**
September 3, 5


**Jewish Women in American Second Wave Feminism**  
September 10

Betty Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name” in *The Feminine Mystique*, 57-78 (1963)

Bell Hooks, *Feminist Theory; From Margin to Centre*, 1-4 (1984)


**Brandeis Feminist Collections**  
September 12

*Visit to Brandeis Feminist Collections/ Lilith Archive* to learn about using Brandeis primary source materials on Jewish feminism. Meet in the Archives and Special Collections, lower level. In preparation, please read:

*Feminists Are Cackling in the Archive*  
https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1057%2Fs41305-017-0024-4.pdf

**Setting the agenda for Jewish Feminisms**  
September 17, 19


Cynthia Ozick. “Notes Toward Finding the Right Question” (1979)

Judith Plaskow, “The Right Question is Theological" (1982)

Ezrat Nashim, *Jewish Women Call for Change* (1972)

Joyce Antler, “We are Well Educated Jewishly... and We are Going to Press You”: Jewish Feminists Challenge Religious Patriarchy” 205- 242 in *Jewish Radical Feminism* (2018)

Assignment #1 distributed, due October 8:
Feminist Critiques of Halakhah
September 24, 26


Tamar Ross, 146-183 in Expanding the Palace of Torah (2004)


No class October 1 (Rosh Hashanah)

No class October 3 (Brandeis Monday)

Israeli Feminism/ Israel in American Jewish Feminism
October 8, 10


Hannah Safran and Sherri Gorelick, Between NYC and Haifa: Conversations of Being Jewish, Feminist and a Peace Activist in Bridges, a Jewish Feminist Journal (2011)

Lihi Ben Shitrit, Righteous Transgression: Women’s Activism on the Israeli and Palestinian Religious Right (2016) 33-79

No class October 15 (Brandeis Monday)

Assignment #2, distributed, due November 5.

Women and Ritual Leadership
October 17, 22


Adam Ferziger, “Female Clergy in Male Space: The Sacralization of the Orthodox Rabbinate”  

**American Jewish Feminism and the Soviet Jewry Movement**  
October 23 2:00-3:30pm

For extra credit, please attend the panel I am moderating on *American Jewish Feminism and the Movement to support Soviet Jewry* (Rapaporte Treasure Hall in the library)

October 24: **Guest lecturer**, Rabbi Lila Kagedan, Yeshivat Maharat , class of 2016

**Mizrachi Feminism**  
October 29, 31

Guest lecture by Ayelet Tsvari to discuss her memoir, *The Art of Leaving* and Yemeni/Mizrachi women in Israel. In preparation, please read:


Please make an appointment to see me this week to confirm your final essay topic.

**Orthodox Feminism in the US and Israel**  
November 5, 7

Ronit Irshai, “Judaism, Gender and Human Rights: The Case of Modern-Orthodox Feminism”  


Beyond Binary Gender Identities in Jewish texts and Jewish Communities
November 12, 14

Charlotte Fonrobert, “Gender Identity in Halachic Discourse” in Jewish Women’s Archive on-line Encyclopedia


Mayyim Hayyim, Gender Transition Milestone

2d, 3rd (and 4th?) Wave Feminism, Jewish Identity and Antisemitism in the Women’s Movement November 19, 21


Bell Hooks, “Keeping a Legacy of Shared Struggle” 204-214 in Killing Rage; Ending Racism (1996)

Yavilah McCoy, Intersectionality as a Jewish Practice (video)

Jews for Racial and Economic Justice, Antisemitism: An Offering to Our Movement (excerpt)

Jewish Women of Color Women’s March Open Letter, January 11, 2019 on Medium
Feminist Struggles against Women’s Inequality under Jewish Family Law
November 26


The Fight against Sex Segregation in Public Spaces: At the Wall and on the Buses
December 3, 5


Sharing final reflections on Jewish Feminisms
December 10