Description

This course will examine why we teach history and what history means in a Jewish context. In particular, we will discuss the similarities and differences between history and heritage and the relationship between history and memory. We will also discuss the dilemmas around teaching Israel and the differences between education and advocacy. In the second part of the course we will explore various pedagogical approaches to the teaching of Jewish history and how it can be taught in various educational settings, using American Jewish history as a case study. The course will include an oral history project component in cooperation with the Jewish Women’s Archive.

Objectives:

Students who complete this course will be able to

1. Provide a set of rationales for teaching history in general and Jewish history in particular.
2. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of David Lowenthal’s distinctions between history and heritage, and apply these concepts to the Jewish experience.
3. Compare and contrast Yosef Yerushalmi and Amos Funkenstein’s approaches to history and memory.
4. Intelligently engage with the proposition that memory can sometimes inhibit progress and reconciliation.
5. Problematicize the gulf between the classroom and the academy.
6. Explore the differences between an advocacy versus educational approach to the teaching of Israel, and the implications of these differing approaches on students.
7. Understand what it means to “think like a historian,” and apply those insights to discussions of pedagogy.
8. Appreciate the strengths and weaknesses of various pedagogical approaches to the teaching of history, including the use of primary sources, textbooks, oral history, and film.
9. Conduct an oral history and discuss the engage with the discourse around best practices and the value and limitations of oral history.
**Required Books:**

Yosef H. Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, University of Washington Press, 1996

All other readings listed on the syllabus will be available on LATTE. All books will be placed on reserve in the library.

**Requirements:**

1. Come to Class Prepared (i.e., complete readings and class assignments on time) and Actively Participate
2. Short Homework and Class Assignments Connected with the Readings and Class Discussions
3. Oral Presentations on Readings (Each student will be responsible for leading one or two discussions on a course reading)
4. Three Mini-Projects (Textbook Analysis, Primary Source Project, and Film Guide)
5. An Oral History and Educational Project on the Soviet Jewry Movement in Conjunction with the Jewish Women’s Archive

**Projects:**

1. **Oral History Project** Working in groups, students will conduct oral histories of American Jewish activists in the Soviet Jewry movement. Students will be trained in how to conduct an oral history by the staff of the Jewish Women’s Archive. The oral histories will be used to create web-based educational resource on the history of the American Soviet Jewry Movement. The oral histories will be also be deposited in the Jewish Women’s Archive. Students will read Gal Beckerman, *When They Come For Us We’ll Be Gone* in conjunction with and as background for their work. Due Date: **Monday, October 31**
2. **Textbook Analysis** Working individually or in pairs, students will choose an event in Jewish history and analyze how it is portrayed in four different textbooks. **Due Date: Thursday, October 20**

3. **Primary Source Project** Working in groups, students will use resources available at the Brandeis University Archives to create a primary source based lesson on the founding of Brandeis University and its significance in American Jewish life. **Due Date: Tuesday, November 29**

4. **Film Project** Working in groups, students will create a teacher’s guide for the 1927 film, *The Jazz Singer*, geared to Jewish educators. **Due Date: Thursday, December 15**

**Grading:**

30% Reading, Participation, Homework  
10% Oral Presentations  
10% Textbook Analysis  
15% Primary Source Project  
15% Film Guide  
20% Oral History and Educational Project

**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, reflection papers, research paper, preparation for oral presentation, etc.).

**Syllabus and Assignments**

August 25  
**Teaching History For What?**  

**September 1**

**Towards a Usable Past**


**September 15**

**Heritage and History**


**September 22**

**History and Memory**

• Yosef Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, University of Washington Press, Chapters 1&4
• Alex Sinclair, “Between History and Memory in Israel Education,” in *HaYidion*, Spring 2014, pp. 22-23, 25.

**September 29**
**Workshop: Conducting Oral History**

Oral History


**October 6**

**Inventing Tradition**


**October 13**

**The Stories We Tell**


**October 20**

**Listening Like a Historian**


**Thursday, October 20 -- Due Date for Textbook Analysis**

October 27

**Teaching Israel: Education versus Advocacy**


***** Monday, October 31 -- Due Date for Oral History Project***

November 3

**Workshop: Using Primary Sources**

Meet at the Farber Archives in the Brandeis Library

November 10

**Thinking Like a Historian**

• Sam Wineburg, *Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Charting the Future of Teaching the Past*

November 17

**Reading Like a Historian: Primary Sources**

• Sam Wineburg, Daisy Martin and Chauncey Monte-Sano, *Reading Like a Historian: Teaching Literacy in Middle & High School History Classrooms*. Teachers College Press, 2013, pp. xi-31, 105-142


** Tuesday November 29: Due Date for Primary Sources Project**

December 1

**Watching Like a Historian: Teaching History Through Film**

• *Hester Street*, 1975 (Joan Micklin Silver, dir.)

• Abraham Cahan, *Yekl*
*** Thursday, December 15 -- Due Date for Film Project