

AMST 3950 / ENGL 3200: Jewish Literature & Film

Spring 2018
TR 9:00-10:15
Dr. Lewis Freedman



This course investigates the roles that traditional Jewish texts play in Jewish American literature and film. We'll examine the ways in which a textual and interpretive tradition centrally informs the history of Jewish diasporic identity, from the Babylonian Talmud, to the birth of Kabbalistic thought in medieval Al-Andalus, to the Hasidic folk-literature of Eastern Europe. We'll then look to the work of Jewish American poets, fiction writers, and filmmakers, like Jerome Rothenberg, Cynthia Ozick, and the Coen Brothers (among many others) who engage specifically with a history of Jewish texts. Closely investigating their work, we'll ask how their use of these texts negotiates the complex tensions between assimilation and religious, ethnic, and cultural continuity in the contexts of the Jewish American diaspora.