The presence of Jewish writers, composers, and performers in American literary and musical culture, both in “serious” and “popular” realms, has been enormous. It has also been revealing of the tensions inherent in American Jewish identity and, for that matter, the identity of Americans in relation to race and ethnicity in general. After reviewing a basic history of Jews in America, we will explore the constant construction and reconstruction of Jewish identity in the modern American setting through select novels, short stories, poetry, and music. We will read and listen with special attention to generational concerns, historical events, cultural contexts, and artistic strategies. We will also compare the varied approaches and themes of Jewish writers to those of other ethnicities. The course will mix introductory short lectures, student presentations, and class discussion. Requirements will include short reaction papers, class presentations, and an in-class final on the last day of class. Faithful attendance and abiding by deadlines for the journal and short papers are absolutely essential.

Grading:

Reaction Papers and Journal: 35%
In Class Participation and Presentations: 35%
In Class Final: 30%

Required Texts for Purchase include:

The readings and some of the musical examples for this course will be posted on blackboard for online and downloaded reading. They will include selections from Emma Lazarus, Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg, Cynthia Ozick, Tillie Olsen, Grace Paley, Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Nathan Englander, Michael Chabon, Adrienne Rich, and Robert Pinsky, and Art Spiegelman. Spiegelman’s Maus I and II should be purchased or borrowed from the library. Recorded selections will either be posted on blackboard for free download if in the public domain or suggested recordings will be purchased on CD or on one or another download site.

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 17 Introduction to the Course: Expression and Identity
Lecture/Discussion: Early Jewish American History
Poems of Emma Lazarus/

Lecture/Discussion-Late 19th Century Jewish Migration
Musical Selections online. Readings from Abraham Cahan.
2 Page Reaction Paper

February 07 First Literary Visions of Migration
Anna Yezierska and immigrant women

14 American Jewish Music—Ethnic, Classical, Pop, Religious
Blackboard Musical Selections

21 The Twenties: The Jazz Singer-Popular Music
Listen Rhapsody in Blue (Gershwin) (online)/2 Page
Reaction Paper

28 The Depression: Copland’s America, Popular Song, Jewish
Activism, and the Artistic Migration
Listen: Copland, various popular composers, etc.
Read: Blackboard Selections

March 06 During the Holocaust: Jewish Writing and Music
Read Kazin (online) and Listen, Bernstein, Symphony #1

13 Spring Break

20 Post-War, Post Holocaust—Issues in Jewish American Life
Read Roth, Ginsberg, Mailer, Bellow, Olsen, Singer, Ozick,
Paley 2 Page Reaction Paper

27 Leonard Bernstein, Musical Polymath
Listen: Symphony #2, West Side Story (original cast)

April 03 The New Jewish American Poetry and Music (1950s onward:
Music: Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Paul Simon
Poetry: Ginsberg, Rich, and others.
Listen and Read/2 Page reaction paper

10 Maturing Giants: Saul Bellow and Philip Roth
Read Bellow’s Ravelstein and Roth, The Human Stain

17 Recovering the Past:
Read Maus and Listen to Different Trains

24 The New Generations: Chabon and Englander
Missed Classes

- For authorized university travel and other legitimate events that take you away from campus, a week's advance notice with documentation will allow you to make up the work of the week with an extra short paper.
- Sudden onset of illness will also be a legitimate excuse if documented with evidence from a doctor or the health center. Again, an extra short paper will allow you to make up the work of the week.
- Other absences will trigger reduction of credit for your final grade.
- Missing the final creates a far more serious situation, in which a rock-solid and documented reason such as the above must be submitted and, even so, a make-up won’t be available in time to avoid an X in the course and must be made up by the end of the fall semester of 2012 at the professor's convenience. Plan your schedule accordingly.

University-Wide Policy Information Relevant to this Course

- Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259 http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssp/.  
- Students seeking assistance with writing may wish to contact The Undergraduate Writing Center http://uwc.utexas.edu/handouts.  
- Information concerning medical assistance and counseling services are available at http://www.cmhc.utexas.edu/.  
- If you miss a class or the due date of an assignment or project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence. Please inform me in advance of your intended absence.
- I strictly abide by the UT Honor Code http://registrar.utexas.edu/catalogs/gi09-10/ch01/index.html on questions of scholastic dishonesty. If you have any questions about what constitutes scholastic dishonesty, especially plagiarism or using the work of another student, please raise that question with me in class or in office hours. Others will appreciate your candor.