

Florida International University

Department of Religious Studies

REL 4312 – THE JEWS OF ASIA AND AFRICA

Instructor: Tudor Parfitt

Textbooks:

Parfitt, T.V. *The Black Jews of Africa and the Americas* (New York, 2013)

Parfitt, T. V., *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* (London, 2002)

Katz, N., *Who Are the Jews of India?* (Berkeley, 2000)

Pollack, F., *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries* (Philadelphia, 1980 or 1983)

Parfitt TV *Israel and Ishmael: Studies in Muslim-Jewish Relations*. London: Curzon 2000

Stillman N. *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book*(1979)

*The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (1991)

Course objectives:

1. Students will expand their knowledge of Jewish life beyond the Ashkenazi and Sephardi worlds.
2. Students will re-vision historical links between West and South Asia and between the Middle East and Africa.
3. The story of the Lost Tribes of Israel will be critically examined, contributing an appreciation of how expectations determine perceptions of Jewish life.
4. The use and misuse of modern genetics, physical anthropology and eugenics will be examined.

Learning outcomes:

1. Students will learn about Jewish communities in sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, India, China, Japan, and Papua New Guinea.
2. Students will learn the concept of a “Judaizing Movement.”
3. Students will learn to think critically about the story of the lost tribes of Israel.
4. Students will learn about commerce in goods and culture between Israel and India from biblical through medieval and modern eras.
5. Students will learn about the new field of genetic anthropology and its applications

Date Topics (Lecturer and readings)

Introduction and course overview

The Black Jews of Africa

The Lemba of Southern Africa

The lost tribes of Israel and Genetic Anthropology

NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK

Beta Israel - the Jews of Ethiopia (Parfitt)

The Judaizing Movement of Papua New Guinea (Parfitt)

The Jews of India

The Jews of India (contd)

The Jews in China and Japan

Jews in Colonial and anti-Colonial Discourse

Muslims and Jews

Jews in Palestine

Jews in the Yemen

The Beginning of Middle Eastern anti-Semitism

Course requirements:

Students will submit a 5000 word essay based on readings beyond the course syllabus that focuses on an African or Asian Jewish community, or literary works dealing with Asian or African Jews. To be submitted by April 20.