

Florida International University
Department of Religious Studies

REL 4312 – THE JEWS OF ASIA AND AFRICA
[REL 6696 – INDIAN \(and African\) JUDAISM](#)

[Wednesdays, 6:45-9:15 p.m. at
The Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU
301 Washington Ave., Miami Beach](#)

Instructors: Tudor Parfitt, Nathan Katz

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)

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)
1/9	Introduction and course overview (Parfitt/Katz)
1/16	Ancient patterns of commerce between west and south Asia. (Katz article)
1/23	The Jews of Kochi, South India (Katz)
1/30	The lost tribes of Israel and Genetic Anthropology (Parfitt) The Black Jews of Africa and the
2/6	The Black Jews of Africa: the Ibo of Nigeria (Parfitt) The lost tribes of Israel and Genetic Anthropology (Parfitt)
2/13	The Bene Israel of Maharashtra (Katz)
2/20	The Lemba of Southern Africa (Parfitt) SPECIAL GUEST: MODRECK ZVAKAVAPANO
2/27	Jews in Colonial and anti-Colonial Discourse (Parfitt) The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng (Katz)
3/6	Shanghai: A home for Sephardim, a refuge for Ashkenazim (Katz) SPECIAL GUEST: FRED EZEKIEL (read Pollock)
3/13	NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK
3/20	Beta Israel – the Jews of Ethiopia (Parfitt) Jews in Colonial and anti-Colonial Discourse
3/27	NO CLASS, PASSOVER
4/3	The Judaizing Movement of Papua New Guinea Beta Israel – The Jews of Ethiopia (Parfitt)
4/10	Baghdadi Jews of Indian Port Cities (Katz)
4/17	The Baghdadi Jews of Asian Port Cities (Katz) Judaizing Movement of Papua-New Guines (Parfitt)

Course requirements:

1. There will be two on-line, multiple-choice examinations.
2. [REL 4312 s](#)Students will submit a brief paper 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. Length is 7-10 pages to be submitted by April 20 on Turnitin.
- 2.3. [REL 6696 students will submit a paper 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. Length is 12-15 pages to be submitted by April 20 on Turnitin.](#)