COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is a survey of the life and crimes of major Jewish gangsters in the United States from the end of the 19th century to the mid-20th century. The course consists of lectures, readings and selected FBI and government documents that relate to the lives of these men, their motivations for engaging in a life of crime, their criminal activities, and their relationship with their families and the Jewish community.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are expected to attend the lectures and do the assigned readings.

Research Paper:

Each student will be required to write a research paper on a subject, theme, topic or period covered in the course. The paper should be double spaced, of 8-10 pages in length, and contain source notes. During the first three weeks of class, students must inform me in person or by e-mail about the subject of their paper and the sources they intend to use. The paper must be turned in on or before the last day of class. Further details about the paper will be given in class.

The final grade is based on a mid-semester exam, the research paper, class attendance and participation. The percentage of the grade is based on the following breakdown.

Attendance = 10%
Mid-semester 40%
Research paper = 50%

Note: All Students are allowed three (3) unexcused absences. Students who have more than three unexcused absences will have points deducted from their final grade.

The following suggested books may be purchased, but students are not required to do so.


**WEEK and TOPICS**

1. Introduction and Overview of Jewish Criminality.

**Required reading:**
Joel Slonim, "The Jewish Gangster," *The Reflex* 3 (July 1928), 36-41

**Suggested reading:**

2. American Jewry, 1870-1914

**Reading:**


**Required reading:**

**Suggested reading:**
**Documents:**
Abe Schoenfeld, "Investigative Reports of the Lower East Side, 1912-1917"

4. American Jewry, 1915-1939

**Reading:**
Sorin, 179-193

5. Prohibition: New York City, 1919-1933

**Required Reading:**
Suggested reading:
Patrick Downey, "Gangster City, 99-110, 199-208 (Waxey Gordon, Dutch Schultz)

6. Prohibition: The East Coast, 1919-1933 (Newark, Philadelphia, Boston)
**Readings:**

**Documents:**
FBI files, for Abner "Longy" Zwillman, Max "Boo Boo" Hoff, Charley "The King" Solomon
**Interview:** Interview with Lester J. Schaffer, attorney for William "Willie" Weisberg on August 14, 1991.

7. MID-SEMESTER EXAM

8. Prohibition: The U.S. Midwest (Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis-St. Paul)
**Required readings:**

**Suggested reading:**

**Documents:**
FBI file, Isidore "Kid Cann" Blumenfeld

9. Perils and Pitfalls of the Gangster Life
**Reading:**
10. The Family Came First

**Reading:**
Rockaway, Ibid., 182-219.

**Documents:**
FBI file, Louis "Lepke" Buchalter
Jake Guzik, "prison letters to his family"

11. Defenders of Their People

**Reading:**
Rockaway, Ibid., 219-254

**Documents:**
Funeral of Samuel "Nails" Morton
**Interview:** Reuven Dafne, June 7, 1989. Gangsters who provided him with money and help for Israel, 1946-1947

12. **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**