

ACTIVITIES

Throughout these activities I suggest “exploring” particular issues with students. Depending on the group or the question posed, the instructor might find it best to do so through a classroom discussion, small-group discussions with findings presented to the entire class, the writing of a short or long essay (in or out of class), etc.

Additional note: Unless stated otherwise, all URLs referenced in the Activities section were active as of November 1, 2015.

Introduction

Twenty-First-Century Identities

(1) *Student Self-Identification.* Have students write down five words that describe themselves. (Common categories for framing self-descriptions include age, citizenship, ethnicity, gender, nationality, physical ability, physical appearance, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, etc.). Have them reduce the list to three words, then to one word. Ask students to explore why they chose the particular descriptive terms they did, addressing questions such as:

- Which of these identities was it easiest to claim?
- Which ones were more difficult to claim? Why?
- What questions were raised for you as a result of this exercise?

During the discussion, if students don’t raise the following issue themselves, be sure to point out that dominant identities (e.g., male and white, or in an American university classroom, also American and student) typically don’t make students’ top five.

Instructors might benefit from reading the following before performing this activity.

Which parts of our identity capture our attention first? While there are surely idiosyncratic responses to this question, a classroom exercise I regularly use with my psychology students reveals a telling pattern. I ask my students to complete the sentence, “I am _____,” using as many descriptors as they can think of in sixty seconds. All kinds of trait descriptions are used—friendly, shy, assertive, intelligent, honest, and so on—but over the years I have noticed something else. Students of color usually mention their racial or ethnic group: for instance, I am Black, Puerto Rican, Korean American. White students who have grown up in strong ethnic enclaves occasionally mention being Irish or Italian. But in general, White students rarely mention being White. When I use this exercise in coeducational settings, I notice a similar pattern in terms of gender, religion, and sexuality. Women usually mention being female, white men don’t usually mention their maleness. Jewish students often say they are Jews, while mainline Protestants rarely mention their religious identification. A student who is comfortable revealing it publicly may mention being gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Though I don’t know most of my students are heterosexual, it is very unusual for anyone to include their heterosexuality on their list. (Beverly Daniel Tatum, “The Complexity of Identity: Who am I?,” in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, 3rd ed., ed. Maurianne Adams, Warren J. Blumenfeld, Carmelita Castaneda, Heather W. Hackman, Madeline L. Peters, and Ximena Zuniga [New York: Routledge, 2013], 6–7; see also 6–9)

(2) *Classification and Categorization.* Have students define, explore, and challenge the terms *religion*, *ethnicity*, *culture*, *nation*, and *race*. (If time allows, have them do the same with the following terms: *age*, *citizenship*, *gender*, *nationality*, *physical ability*, *physical appearance*, *sex*, *sexual orientation*, and *socioeconomic class*.) Though students might initially say that these terms are quite basic,

once the activity begins it will become clear how amorphous, complicated, and multilayered they in fact are. For additional sources that may prove helpful, see Notes for Introduction (specifically those notes on these particular identity categories).

(3) *Dominants and Subordinates*. Ask students to discuss the meaning of the terms *dominant* and *subordinate* in relation to the social identities explored in the two previous activities. Note that some scholars of social justice use the term *subordinated* rather than *subordinate* in an effort to point to the agency dominants play in this process.

Contemporary Expressions of Jewish Identities

(4) *What Is “Jewish” Music?* Using the artists mentioned in special topic 0.1, “What Is ‘Jewish’ Music?” (or others)—both their identities and their songs—analyze what it means for music to be “Jewish.”

The following article may be useful for this exercise: Seth Rogovoy, “Bob Dylan’s Ten Most Jewish Songs,” *Jewish Daily Forward*, October 1, 2012, <http://forward.com/culture/163451/bob-dylans-10-most-jewish-songs>.

(5) *Virtually Jewish*—“Can Someone Be ‘Kinda’ Jewish?” Select examples from Ruth Ellen Gruber’s book *Virtually Jewish: Reinventing Jewish Culture in Europe* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002). Present them to students and ask them what it means for European non-Jews to “perform” Jewish identities. For excerpts on a “virtually Jewish” ritual performed by non-Jews in a Polish village, see Jérôme de Missolz and Frédéric Brenner’s 2003 film *Tykocin* (2003), which can be found on the Frédéric Brenner DVD/CD-ROM *Diaspora* (2003), available for purchase from a number of websites.

Chapter 1. Narratives

The Construction of a Narrative—“Truth” and “Fact”

(1) “*Truth*” vs. “*Fact*.” Review the chapter’s section on “truth” and “fact.” Make sure students understand the distinction between these two ideas and the role they play in shaping communal identities. Based on these working definitions, have students come up with statements that are “true” and/or “factual.”

As part of this activity, have students compare the Mercator projection (fig. 1.1) and the Galls-Peters projection (fig. 1.2). Discuss the role that visual images, such as maps, play in shaping worldviews related to communal identities (i.e., “communal truths”).

There are number of videos with visual projections of the size of the planet earth relative to the universe in terms of actual scale (e.g., www.youtube.com/watch?v=zR3Igc3Rhfg; . . . [v=gIbfYsQfNWs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gIbfYsQfNWs)). Have students compare this depiction of Earth and its place in the cosmos to more standard but simplistic representations.

“Truth” and Dominant American Narratives— “Truth,” Obama, and Racial Identities

(2) *Race in the United States: “What Is ‘Blackness’? What Is ‘Whiteness’?”* Using the sources found below, lead students through a conversation around racial categorization in the United States, including the racialized terms *white* and *black*.

- Have students read Peggy Orenstein’s, “Mixed Messenger” (New York Times, March 23, 2008, www.nytimes.com/2008/03/23/magazine/23wwln-lede-t.html). What are students’ opinions about Orenstein’s arguments, especially in regard to general American perceptions of President Obama and his racial identities?
- Have students consider a paraphrased statement made by scholar Cornel West, that whiteness exists only as a “politically constructed category parasitic on ‘blackness.’”
- Have students consider part of an essay written by poet and writer James Baldwin: “No one was white before he/she came to America. It took generations, and a vast amount of coercion, before this became a white country. It is probable that it is the Jewish community—or more accurately, perhaps, its remnants—that in America has paid the highest and most extraordinary price for becoming white. For the Jews came here from countries where they were not white, and they came here, in part, because they were not white; and incontestably—in the eyes of the Black American (and not only in those eyes) American Jews have opted to become white.”

Possible questions include:

- When were you first aware of yourself as a member of a particular racial group?
- When were you aware of people of other races? Which ones?
- When did you first witness or experience someone being treated differently because of his or her racial group?

- When was the first time that you felt proud of your racial identity/identities?
- When was a time you realized that you would be treated differently because of your race?
- Do students agree with West? Does whiteness (at a minimum, in the United States) only exist in terms of oppressing those identified as black?
- Do students agree with Baldwin? Can a group, such as Jews, become white? If so, what does it mean to become part of a dominant group?

Narratives and Rituals—Dominant Narratives and Dominant Rituals

(3) *Dominants and Subordinates*. Discuss the notion that although subordinates know quite a bit about dominants, the opposite is rarely true (see Notes, chapter 1, “There isn’t anything intrinsically problematic”). Relate this back to one of the activities on identities from the Introduction (i.e., within a racialized group of identities, which ones are dominant and which are subordinated?).

Narratives and Rituals—*The Tribe vs. Diaspora*

(4) *“Ashkenazi Jews” and “Non-Ashkenazi Jews.”* Watch the short films *The Tribe* (18 min.) and *Diaspora* (22 min.). Have students compare and contrast the films’ overarching theses, especially as they pertain to Jewish identities.

As of November 1, 2015, *The Tribe* could be accessed for \$1 at www.moxieinstitute.org/tribe. As for *Diaspora*, the slideshow of Brenner’s project along with his personal commentary can be found on the *Diaspora* DVD (2003) as an “Extra Feature” (called “Diaporama” with commentary). See Introduction, activity 5, above.

Chapter 2. Sinais

Interpreting the Torah—Text and Interpretation

(1) *What Does It Mean to Interpret a Text?* Have students perform rabbinic-esque interpretations of the newspaper article below, parsing each word and sentence to illustrate the text’s ambiguities and the assumed knowledge of its readers. The goal of this activity is to illustrate how even everyday texts are open to interpretation.

CON ARTISTS USE FAKE \$100
TO RIP OFF GIRL SCOUTS

Thieves get cookies, \$93.50 in change;
victimized troop gets \$100 donated

The Associated Press, Feb. 19, 2008

WESTMINSTER, Colo.—A pair of con artists ripped off a Girl Scout group when they exchanged a fake \$100 bill for cookies, police said. The unknown couple handed over the bill Friday night at a supermarket, telling the girls it had been washed when asked about why it looked so strange. “It felt and looked wrong and it was a quarter of an inch shorter than a \$1 bill,” said Jil Hennessey-Seabolt, the cookie director for Junior Girl Scouts Troop 2121. Hennessey-Seabolt said the Girl Scouts gave the couple \$93.50 in change after the purchase.

The exchange eradicated the Scouts’ earnings that day. The money they raise in the sales goes to camping trips and to area charities. “Something like this isn’t fair when it happens to adults, but when it happens to kids who work so hard, it’s so frustrating,” Hennessey-Seabolt said. The story does have a happy ending, though. A resident donated \$100 to the Girl Scouts.

Without much trouble, students are always able to rattle off five to ten questions each about the article, details that are either vague or not addressed, such as:

- What did the con artists look like? How old were they? (I.e., with such descriptions perhaps the police could be tipped off in case they strike again?)
- How old were the girl scouts who were ripped off?
- Which supermarket did the incident take place at?
- What flavor of cookies were stolen?
- How many boxes were the assailants able to purchase for \$6.50?
- What is the cookie director’s gender, given the unique spelling of the individual’s first name? Does it matter? (Did any of students assume Jil was a particular gender?)
- Who donated \$100 to the Girl Scouts at the end of the story? Was the money donated to Junior Girl Scouts Troop 2121 or to Girl Scouts of the USA, their national organization?

Although the stakes are obviously higher when the text being interpreted is sacred, the same premise holds: in the act of reading a text, interpretation happens. All texts, to varying degrees, lend themselves to multiple understandings.

One quote that relates to translation as a form of interpretation is attributed to the Jewish American writer and Nobel Laureate Isaac Bashevis Singer, who said that reading a translation of an author’s work is similar to “kissing a bride through the veil.”

Interpreting the Torah—Methods of Interpretation: PaRDeS

(2) *PaRDeS Methods of Interpretation*. Have the students read Gen. 3: 1–24. Then ask them to interpret the story about Adam, Eve, and the serpent in four different ways—simple or plain, allusive or allegorical, homiletical, and secret or mystical (i.e., the so-called PaRDeS method)—honing in on the serpent in particular. Compare the students’ interpretations with the following:

- Pshat—The serpent convinced Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.
- Remez—The serpent was not a literal snake but represents the human trait of having an evil inclination, a *yetzer harah*.
- Drash—The animal that appeared to Eve was not a serpent but a camel.
- Sōd—The serpent represents Satan, the force of fragmentation in the world, and Adam and Eve represent the dual nature of humans.

The Written and Oral Torahs: From “It” to *Tefillin*—Special Topic 2.2

(3) *What Does “It” Mean?* Bring in a pair of *tefillin* and a *tallit* (prayer shawl) and put them on, or show students images of people wearing them, such as fig. 5.3 or other images found on the Internet. (Alternatively, a number of Youtube videos show individuals putting them on.) Have students read special topic 2.2 and accompanying notes. Also have them read the passages from the Torah on which the mitzvah of *tefillin* is based: Exod. 13:9, 16; Deut. 6:8, 11:18. For the Torah verses describing *tzitzit*, the four fringed corners found on a *tallit*, see Num. 15:38–40 and Deut. 22:12. Lead students in a discussion of these verses from the Torah and their interpretation in terms of how they should look materially.

Interpreting the Torah: An Example (Gen. 4: 1–10—Special Topic 2.3)

(4) *Interpretation and the Bible*. Bring a Hebrew Bible and Christian Bible to class and have students delineate some of the basic structural differences (read special topic 2.1 for examples of these differences). Then walk students through the three translations of Genesis 4:1–10 found in special topic 2.3. Have them figure out the differences.

Interpreting the Torah: The Depiction of God

(5) *Gender and Representing God*. Earlier in this chapter, in the section from *Judaisms* titled “Interpreting the Torah” it says the following: “Marginalizing specific voices is so common that we often don’t notice it at all.” Ask students what they think of this statement alongside Mary Daly’s assertion that “If God is male, then male is God,” and the following statement made by Judith Plaskow:

The representation of God as male, for example, is comprehensible only in the context of an androcentric Torah that is elaborated and rendered plausible by a male-defined community. While this does not mean that the Jewish concept of God is simply the projection of a male-dominated society, it does mean that the experience of God is sustained and interpreted in the categories of patriarchal culture. . . . God’s maleness is so deeply and firmly established as part of the Jewish conception of God that it is almost difficult to document: It is simply part of the lenses through which God is seen. . . . Attributes and actions that are themselves gender-neutral are read through the filter of male language, so that the God who performs these actions is still imagined in male terms.

Do students agree with Daly or Plaskow? Disagree? Why? Why not?

(6) *Bias in Criminal Justice and Video Games?* Ask students to evaluate the statement made in *Judaisms*—“Marginalizing specific voices is so common that we often don’t notice it at all”—in terms of other areas, such as the American criminal justice system and the video game industry. Refer to the following articles: Paul Crawshaw, Alex Scott-Samuel, and Debbi Stanistreet, “Masculinities, Hegemony, and Structural Violence,” *Criminal Justice Matters* 81, no. 1 (September 2010): 2–4; and Janet C. Dunlop, “The U.S. Video Game Industry: Analyzing Representation of Gender and Race,” *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction* 3, no. 2 (April 2007): 96–109.

Interpreting the Torah: “Israel” and Chosenness

(7) *What Does It Mean to Be Chosen?* Have students review the section “Interpreting the Torah: ‘Israel’ and Chosenness.” The following are two rabbinic passages with a similar take on the Jewish community’s chosenness in terms of superiority (they are *midrashim*, a genre of texts discussed in chapter 5):

Straw, stubble, and chaff were contending with each other. One claimed, “It was for my sake that the field was sown,” while another claimed, “No, for my sake.” But

the wheat said, “Wait till threshing time comes—then we shall know for whose sake the field was sown.” When threshing time came and the owner went out to winnow the crop, the chaff was scattered in the wind; he threw the straw on the ground; he burned the stubble. But he took the wheat and stacked it in a heap—and whoever passed by kissed it. So it is with the peoples of the world. Some of them say, “We are essential; it was for our sake that the world was created.” Others say, “No, for our sake.” But Israel says, “Wait till God’s day comes—then we shall know for whose sake the world was created.”

The Israelites were chosen by God to accept God’s Torah based on their exceptional willingness to accept it even before they knew what its content was. The Hebrew for this idea, *na’aseh v’nishmah* (we will do and then we will listen) is based on a passage from Exod. 24:7, which contains these words.

Lead students through a discussion around chosenness, addressing such questions as:

- Given that there are different ways that Jews have historically understood their chosenness, why did certain interpretations emerge at certain times? Is there any potential connection between what was going on historically with a given Jewish community and the particular interpretation about chosenness that emerged at that time?
- Which orientation to chosenness is most relevant to “Jews’ chosenness”? Why?
- What does it say about the Jewish community that multiple understandings of chosenness have existed simultaneously?

See accompanying notes to this section from the book for additional sources.

Chapter 3. Zions

How Does Something Become Sacred?

(1) *A Sacred Classroom?* In many classrooms, students habitually sit in the same seat or same area of the room. After a few classes, disrupt this routine (and perhaps do so again a few times thereafter). Use this as a jumping-off point to discuss how, as individuals, we develop relationships with spaces (e.g., seats in a classroom). Ask students to imagine what it might feel like to have one’s entire community moved from one place to another.

(2) *What Is a Sacred Place?* Visit a local synagogue and tour the main sanctuary, paying particular attention to the room’s layout—such as whether there is an elevated

stage (*bimah*) and a sacred bureau (*aron* or *heikhal*)—the Torah scrolls, and the meaning behind each ritual item. If possible, have your host show students the community’s Torah scroll(s) up close. (If you are able to do this, be sure to remind students of the differences between the “Written Torah” and a Torah scroll; see chapter 2.) You may also want to draw explicit connections—which are often quite conspicuous—between how the Temple is thought to have been laid out and the way space is shaped in the synagogue that you visit.

(3) *What Is a Sacred Place?* After these two activities, have students define “sacred,” especially in relation to space. Then discuss the differences between sacred places, sacred texts, and the literal and metaphorical meanings of each. Thereafter, discuss two dominant ways to understand sacredness as discussed in the section “How Does Something Become Sacred?” Notes accompanying the text to this section from *Judaisms* are also relevant to this discussion.

Temple or Temples?

(4) *The Temple.* Discuss the imagined space of the First and Second Temples in the collective mind of Jewish communities. One can find numerous images from today regarding what the Temple may have looked like millennia ago. What would it mean for a community to have a single sacred center, embodied in a single physical structure? What would it mean to such a group to have its sacred center destroyed, multiple times? Compare to other ethnic and religious communal traditions.

Living under the Romans . . . and Post-70 CE

(5) *Counting Time.* Discuss the system by which people count time in the United States (i.e., days, weeks, the Gregorian calendar).

Ask students the following questions:

- What is today’s date? What calendar is your response based on?
- What are other dates for today? What calendar are these other dates based on?
- How do we know what year it is?

Assuming students gravitate toward the “American calendar,” ask students:

- What calendar is the American dating system based on?

- What is the key date around which this entire calendar is based?

Use these questions to also address some of the challenges in dating ancient events.

You might share the following background information with students:

The attempt to date ancient events to particular years—specifically in relation to the Gregorian calendar—is largely a speculative endeavor. At best, we can make educated, often only very approximate estimates. For example, one definitive source (as of the early 1970s) says that most archeologists and biblical scholars date the biblical patriarchs to the twentieth through sixteenth centuries BCE, a range of some four hundred years. Certainly such an approximation—“X year, give or take 400”—would be useless in the contemporary period.

This is to say nothing of the fact that the Gregorian calendar, which organizes time into yearlong blocks of 365 (or 365.25), 24-hour days, wasn’t instituted until the sixteenth century, under Pope Gregory XIII. It made only minor changes to the annual calendar established under Julius Caesar in the first century BCE, which was a corrective to a different calendar probably instituted sometime in the eighth century BCE. In the fourth century CE, the Roman Empire renumbered the years of the Julian calendar so that 1 CE would correspond to the year Jesus was born, even though today’s estimates are that Jesus was born somewhere between 7 and 3 BCE. Interestingly, the Gregorian calendar wasn’t accepted by Great Britain and its colonies (including the American colonies) until 1752, close to two hundred years after its introduction by Pope Gregory XIII, nor by Russia until the twentieth century.

Putting aside these important details, dates attributed to events that took place in the Middle East in the centuries immediately prior to the reign of Alexander the Great are commonly calculated in relation to other ancient events, in particular the periods in which specific kingdoms were ruled, despite the fact that it is possible to date some artifacts, such as pottery or manuscripts, using scientific dating techniques and/or archeological analysis. Some would argue that for this reason alone many systems of dating ancient events are seriously flawed.

In sum, the farther back in time we go, the more inaccurate the dating. All of this is to say nothing of the fact that scholars often disagree, quite passionately, in their attempts to date ancient events. In addition, when we’re talking about dating events such as those described in the Hebrew Bible, at times the only source is the Bible itself, a text renowned for presenting many unscientific,

largely unprovable “facts” that simply do not jibe with archeological evidence. For this reason, many historians of the ancient Middle East consider the Bible, especially as it relates to premonarchical Israel, “worthless” in terms of it being used as a document that outlines historical events.

Zion and Diaspora—Zion/Exile or Zion/Diaspora?

(6) *Exile or Diaspora?* Review the section “Zion and Diaspora.” Discuss the important differences between a “diaspora community” and an “exiled community.” Refer to relevant chapter notes.

(7) *Zion or Diaspora?* Discuss the implications of orienting toward the world as if geographical space can be divided into either Zion (i.e., embodied in the Land of State of Israel) or diaspora (i.e., everywhere else).

Chapter 4. Messiahs

The Messiah Is Dead, Long Live the Messiah!

(1) *Messiahs, Then and Now.* Discuss what it means to believe that a person alive today is the messiah. Does this differ from believing that someone from two thousand years ago was the messiah? What about a contemporary political leader? Look at fig. 4.4 and the following sources that either insinuate or explicitly say that President Barack Obama is a messianic figure: www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/dec/18/barbara-walters-admits-we-thought-obama-was-next-m; www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Barack-Obama-Lesson-Plan-and-Prezi-856562; www.wnd.com/2013/11/school-lesson-portrays-obama-as-messiah; www.cartoonistgroup.com (search “Obama messiah” within website).

See also the following relevant articles: Steven Aoun, “The Rapture: Barack Obama, Marketing, and the Media,” *Metro Magazine* 160 (March 1, 2009): 194–201; Michael Knoz Beran, “Obama in the Bunker: The President’s Acolytes Decide He Is a Different Sort of Messiah,” *National Review*, February 20, 2012, 36–37; Gregory A. Hession, “Obama: Messiah?,” *New American*, October 13, 2008, 10–16; Ralina L. Joseph, “Imagining Obama: Reading Overtly and Inferentially Racist Images of Our 44th President, 2007–2008,” *Communication Studies* 62, no. 4 (September–October 2011): 389–405; Darryl Lorenzo Wellington, “Barack Obama in the Public Imagination,” *Dissent*, October 1, 2008, 27–33.

(2) *A Twentieth-Century Jewish Messiah?* Show students some of the short videos that have been made about

the late Menachem Mendel Schneerson (a number of videos are available, e.g. at www.chabadsf.org/multi-media/media_cdo/aid/1743851/jewish/Video.htm). Discuss the discomfort some Jews have expressed—including Orthodox Jews unaffiliated with Chabad—over his being embraced as a messiah. In particular, refer to statements from chapter 4 such as:

- Former president of Yeshiva University, Maurice Lamm: “Why in heaven’s name do they have to get latched onto this dreadful messianic business? There’s an element of idolatry there that scares me very much.”
- Shlomo Ezagui, a Chabad rabbi who said the following in a 2012 interview, eighteen years after the Rebbe’s death:

I believe that the Lubavitcher rebbe, Rabbi Schneerson, is the *mashiach* [messiah], though I realize that there is a controversy about this within Chabad. The Talmud says that if the *mashiach* is alive, it will be Rabbi Yehuda, but if he’s chosen among the dead, it will be someone like the prophet Daniel. This shows us that the *mashiach* can come from the dead and in fact, there are many different classic sources that talk about the *mashiach* as rising from the dead. It’s not that extraordinary: one of the 13 principles of faith is belief in the resurrection of the dead. I just feel, hope, and pray that it happens soon. Even within Chabad, there are a lot of people who have doubts, and when the rebbe died, I also had many questions. The rebbe’s death shook up a lot of people, and not everyone was able to resolve their questions and move on with greater faith.

The Messiah: A Centuries-old Idea

(3) *What Is a Messiah?* Have students define “messiah.” Using information from chapter 4, discuss the morphing of this term over the course of 2,500 years, touching on how even in a single text, such as the Bible or the Talmud, agreement is lacking on specific.

Jesus, a Jewish Messiah (and “Christian Jews”)

(4) *From a Jewish Perspective, Was Jesus a “Failed” or a “False” Messiah?* Some Jews believe Jesus was in fact a “false messiah,” pretending to be something he was not. Have students read the following article: Byron L. Sherwin, “‘Who Do You Say That I Am?’ (Mark 8:29) A New Jewish View of Jesus,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 31, no. 3–4 (Summer-Fall 1994): 255–267. Discuss the difference between Sherwin’s notion of a “failed messiah” and a “false messiah.” Ask students: Does such an interpretation soften the historical relationship between Jews and Christians with respect to Jesus? From a Jewish perspective? From a Christian perspective?

Many More Jewish Messiahs—Special Topic 4.1

(5) *Jewish Messiahs.* Have students conduct research aimed at illustrating the similarities and differences among the messianic figures found in special topic 4.1.

The Persistence of the Messianic Idea among Contemporary Jews

(6) *Messiah vs. Messianic Age.* Based on the information provided in chapter 4, discuss the distinction between a messiah and a messianic age. Ask students: What does it mean to identify as “secular” or “nonreligious,” yet still believe in either idea? (For more on “secular” and “religious” see chapters 8 and 10.)

The Messiah Will Come (but That’s Not Him!)

(7) *The Messianic Paradox.* Discuss the paradox found in the following statements regarding the coming of the messiah:

- Franz Kafka: “The Messiah will come only when he is no longer necessary; he will come only on the day after his arrival; he will come, not on the last day, but on the very last” (see Notes, chapter 4, “A number of texts from the Talmud”).
- Yeshayahu Leibowitz: “The Messiah who comes, the Messiah of the present, is invariably the false messiah” (Notes, chapter 4, “According to scholar Kenneth Seeskin”) and “The Messiah is essentially he who always will come, he is the eternal future” (Notes, chapter 4, “According to scholar Kenneth Seeskin” and “Within the Jewish community”).
- Amos Oz: “In Judaism, the messianic idea is only relevant in the future tense . . . that’s where he should always be. It doesn’t mean not to do much and everything will be taken care of. In the Jewish tradition we have to act, every day, every hour. We have to make moral decisions, almost every minute. Sitting idly waiting for the Messiah is a sin” (Notes, chapter 4, “Within the Jewish community”).

Chapter 5. Laws

Are You Sure You’re Jewish?

(1) *What Makes a Jew?* Discuss the vignette at the beginning of the chapter from the vantage point of definitions and what it means to be defined as a Jew. Possible questions include:

- Should one only be able to become Jewish through a formal, ritualized process?
- Should one's Jewish identities be based on whether one is born to a male Jew or female Jew?
- Is getting American citizenship similar to the process of becoming a Jew?

Halakhah and Agaddah: The *Shma* Prayer (Mishnah)—Special Topic 5.1

(2) *Law, Definitions, and Subjectivity I.* Have students study special topic 5.1. Then discuss the following questions:

- What is “assumed knowledge”? How does it play out in class (e.g., what language are students expected to know? What words and terms are they expected to know?)
- What do students make of the fact that there are multiple opinions presented in the mishnah? Is there a bottom line? If not, what would this mean about how the community may have behaved? Make a point of comparing such a society with America write large.
- How does a de facto legal practice become de jure (i.e., Rabban Gamliel and his son)? Is this okay? Is there anything problematic about it? Are there examples from students' lives where custom becomes law?

Halakhah and Agaddah: Becoming a *Nazir* (Mishnah)—Special Topic 5.2

(3) *Law, Definitions, and Subjectivity II.* Have students study special topic 5.2, considering such questions as:

- Why is it so important for halakhic authorities to be able to define sex and gender? (Make sure students understand the difference between these terms.)
- In relation to contemporary issues surrounding sex and gender, does it seem that the mishnaic rabbis had more nuanced understandings of these ideas than many Jews today?

From Torah to Mishnah and Mishnah to Talmud: “Your Brother's Bloods”—Special Topic 5.3

(4) *The “Extra” S?* Have students read special topic 5.3. Then walk them through the relationship between the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud. They may find the information from Notes, chapter 5, “In this mishnah, the rabbis,” useful in their analysis.

From Torah to Mishnah and Mishnah to Talmud

(5) *The Rebellious Son.* Have students read the following text, which explains the Torah's mitzvah regarding a “rebellious son.”

Deut. 21:18–21 If a man has a rebellious and defiant son who doesn't listen to his father or mother and doesn't obey them even after he's been disciplined, his father and mother take him to the elders of his town in a main area of the community. Then they say to the elders of the town, “This son of ours is rebellious and defiant; he doesn't listen to us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.” Thereupon the people of the town stone him to death. Thus, you will be able to sweep evil out of your community and all of Israel will hear and be afraid.

Now have them look at the Talmudic commentary, from BT San. 71. (The words in capital letters demarcate the verses from the Mishnah that the Talmudic rabbis are discussing.)

HE DOES NOT BECOME A STUBBORN AND REBELLIOUS SON UNLESS HE ATE MEAT AND DRANK WINE. Our rabbis taught [that if] he ate any food other than meat and [if] he drank any drink other than wine, he is not considered to be a stubborn and rebellious son. He has to eat meat and drink wine as it is written. . . .

IF HE STOLE FROM HIS FATHER AND ATE IN HIS FATHER'S HOME [OR STOLE] FROM OTHERS AND ATE IN OTHERS' HOMES [OR IF HE] STOLE FROM OTHERS AND ATE IN HIS FATHER'S HOME, HE IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE A STUBBORN AND REBELLIOUS SON. HE HAS TO STEAL [MEAT AND WINE] FROM HIS FATHER AND EAT [THE MEAT AND DRINK THE WINE] IN ANOTHER'S HOME. RABBI YOSI THE SON OF RABBI JUDAH SAYS HE HAS TO STEAL FROM HIS FATHER AND MOTHER. . . . [But how can he steal from his father and mother? Doesn't] everything a mother owns actually belong to her husband? Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Hanina says [this means that he has to take a] meal prepared for his father and mother. . . .

IF HIS FATHER WANTS HIM [PUNISHED] BUT HIS MOTHER DOES NOT, [OR IF] HIS FATHER DOES NOT [WANT HIM PUNISHED] BUT HIS MOTHER DOES, HE IS NOT CONSIDERED TO BE A STUBBORN AND REBELLIOUS SON. BOTH OF THEM MUST WANT HIM PUNISHED. RABBI JUDAH SAID THAT IF HIS MOTHER IS NOT FIT FOR HIS FATHER THEN HE IS NOT CONSIDERED A STUBBORN AND REBELLIOUS SON. What does it mean to be “NOT FIT”? . . . It was taught that Rabbi Judah says, “If his mother wasn't equal to his father in voice, appearance, and height [then] he is not a stubborn and rebellious son. What's the reasoning? Because the verse [from the Torah] says, “He will not obey our voice.” Since we need [their voice] to be equivalent we need their appearance and height to be equivalent. Thus it is taught that there has never been a stubborn and rebellious son and there never will be. Then why was the [law] written?

So that you will study [the Torah] and thereby receive a reward.

In this Talmudic passage, we see the rabbis interpret a verse from the Torah in such a manner that they are unable to apply the Torah's directive. They have interpreted the mitzvah such that a son can never meet the precise criteria for being categorized as rebellious; this means they can never put such an individual to death. Ask the students if they think the Talmudic conclusion is based on an extreme interpretation (i.e., is it a stretch to interpret the verse from the Torah to mean that both the mother and father have to talk the same, etc., well knowing that this is impossible?).

Not only does the passage demonstrate the extent to which the Talmudic rabbis went in this case to avoid the death penalty, but it also shows the degree of interpretive flexibility the rabbis had. According to a passage from the Mishnah (M. Mak. 1:10): "A Sanhedrin that puts a man to death once in seven years is called a murderous one. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah says, 'Or even once in seventy years.' Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Akiba, 'If we had been in the Sanhedrin no death sentence would ever have been passed.'" Some consider their interpretation of this mitzvah to reflect a supreme aversion to the death penalty, thus they never implemented it.

It is important to point out, however, that even if the rabbis had not interpreted this mitzvah in this way, and had instead decided that the death penalty should be applied to a rebellious son, they were not likely to have had the jurisdictional authority to do so.

When living under the Romans in Palestine, for example, from the first through fifth and sixth centuries CE, the Jewish community would not have been able to put anyone to death without permission from the Roman authorities. Some sources relate, moreover, that after the destruction of the Second Temple the Sanhedrin said that they no longer had jurisdiction to apply the death penalty.

Because Jews have been living as a minority for centuries, including the era when the Mishnah and Talmud were being written, it seems that many halakhic discussions are theoretical only and were not actually implemented. In fact, according to one halakhic edict, which continues to this day, Jews are obligated to abide by the civil law code wherever they live (except in situations when it is in direct contradiction to halakhah). One might argue that this position has regularly subordinated Talmudic-based law to non-Jewish authorities

for centuries. This law, repeated a number of times in the Talmud, is known in Aramaic as *dina dimalkhuta dina*.

The Talmud and Self-Proclaimed Authority: "It Is Not in Heaven"—Special Topic 5.4; and Moses and Rabbi Akiba—Special Topic 5.5

(6) *Rabbinic Authority*. After students have read special topics 5.4 and 5.5, have them figure out what the key points are in the texts, as well as the relationship between the two texts. Then have them address such issues as the right to interpret sacred texts, the role of God, and the rabbinic self-understanding of their authority, and how the rabbis would respond to these issues.

Midrash: "Your Brother's Bloods"—Special Topic 5.6; "Sinai"—Special Topic 5.7; and "The Seeker"—Special Topic 5.8

(7) *What Ambiguities Do These Midrashim Answer?* Have students read special topics 5.6, 5.7, and 5.8, as well as the following midrash, which is related to what happened after Abel was killed:

The dog that was guarding Abel's flock also guarded his corpse for the scavengers on land and in the air. Adam and his partner were sitting and weeping and mourning for Abel, and they didn't know what to do with his body [as they were unaccustomed to burial]. A raven [was there alongside] one of his fellow dead birds, and it said, "I will teach Adam what to do." It took the [dead] bird, dug up some land, hid the body, and buried it up. Adam said, "I will act like this raven." He took Abel's corpse, dug up some earth, and buried [the body].

Using the Torah's narrative around Cain and Abel, work with students to figure out what questions, from the vantage point of the author(s) of the midrash, the biblical text itself did not answer explicitly. You might think of this in terms of the game show *Jeopardy*, where students have the answer (e.g., this midrash) and they need to figure out what the question is. For example, one could say the midrash addresses the following questions:

- What happened to Abel's body after he was murdered?
- What was the reaction of other members of his family to his death, such as his father, Adam?
- Abel was a shepherd; what happened to his dog after he died?

We can also see how the beginning of the midrash picks up on the secondary interpretation of the Hebrew plural for blood found in Gen. 4:8 and later discussed in M. San. 4:5 (see special topic 5.3).

(8) *Write Your Own Midrash*. Have students read special topic 2.3, then have them write their own midrash on Gen. 4:8.

Gender: The “Invisible Gorilla” in Jewish Law

(9) *Inattentional Blindness*. Show the “Invisible Gorilla” video (www.invisiblegorilla.com; see also fig. 5.5 and related notes from chapter 5). Invite students to discuss the notion of “inattentional blindness,” both generally and in relation to the development of Jewish identities. Encourage students to reread the section “Gender: The ‘Invisible Gorilla’ in Jewish Law” and look at relevant notes beforehand.

Gender: The “Invisible Gorilla” in Jewish Law— Revealing the Invisible Gorilla

(10) *Gender and Jewish Law*. Have students read the following passage by Judith Plaskow:

Clearly, the implications of Jewish feminism, while they include *halakhic* restructuring, reach beyond *halakhah* to transform the bases of Jewish life. Feminism demands a new understanding of Torah, God, and Israel: an understanding of Torah that begins with acknowledgment of the profound injustice of Torah itself. The assumption of the lesser humanity of women has poisoned the content and structure of the law, undergirding women’s legal disabilities and our subordination in the broader tradition.

This assumption is not amenable to piecemeal change. It must be utterly eradicated by the withdrawal of projection from women—the discovery that the negative traits attributed to women are also in the men who attribute them, while the positive qualities reserved for men are also in women . . . feminism assumes that these changes will be possible only when we come to a new understanding of the community of Israel which includes the whole of Israel and which therefore allows women to speak and name our experience for ourselves.

Have students discuss the following questions:

- Do students agree with Plaskow? Disagree? Why?
- Do they agree with this book’s argument that the exclusion and/or marginalization of female voices within Jewish law is akin to an “Invisible Gorilla”?

(11) *Assumptions and Jewish Beliefs*. Have students read the following passage by Judith Plaskow:

If theology is understood as sustained and coherent reflection on the experiences and categories of a particular religious tradition, and as reflection on the world in light of that tradition, then how can Jews not be at least closet theologians? The practices that are supposedly central to Judaism are grounded in a series of theological claims: that God gave the law to Moses on Sinai, that revealed law is both written and oral, that the law constitutes part of the obligation of the covenant, that there is a special covenantal relation between God and Israel, and so forth. All Jewish observance rests on some sort of theological preunderstanding, some relation to these fundamental claims, however they are interpreted, modified, or even rejected.

Do students agree? Disagree? Invite them to explain their thoughts and reasons.

(12) *Are You a Feminist? If So, Which Kind?* Discuss the various perspectives found in the sections “Defending the Invisible Gorilla,” “Revealing the Invisible Gorilla,” and “Radical Jewish Feminism.” Have students defend the one they agree with most.

Belief vs. Practice

(13) *To Believe or to Practice?* Invite students to reread the section “Belief and Practice” and then discuss whether they think one is more important than the other.

Modern Jewish Customs, Laws, and Meta-Halakhah

(14) *Meta-Halakhah*. Discuss the concept of meta-halakhah by asking students to choose one or more of their various identities and discuss how those who identify with that community differ in terms of laws, social norms, customs, and individual practices. Do students believe they perform these identities in strict adherence to particular behaviors? Why or why not?

(15) *Exploring Jewish Life Cycle Events*. Directly related to halakhah and meta-halakhah, have students read special topic 12.2 on life cycle events. Then suggest ways students might learn more about this subject, whether through observation of an actual life cycle event or watching one online. Many synagogues permit non-members to attend Bar and Bat Mitzvah prayer services, for example. As for rituals connected to birth, marriage,

and death, the range of videos one can find on Youtube is almost limitless.

Chapter 6. Mysticism

What Is Mysticism?

(1) *Meditation*. Although many don't consider meditation to be a strictly mystical practice, mystics from many communities integrate meditation into their normal ritual routine. Lead students through a simple meditation exercise that involves breathing. A number of resources are available on the Internet, such as "Breathing Meditations," www.meditationoasis.com/how-to-meditate/simple-meditations/breathing-meditations.

Kabbalah—The Ten Sefirot

(2) *Infinity*. Discuss *Ein Sof*, the idea that there is no end to God, similar to the notion of infinity. How does this monistic understanding of God compare to personal or theistic understandings, discussed in chapter 2?

Hasidism

(3) *Cain, Abel, and Hasidic Interpretation*. Have students read special topics 6.4 and 6.5. Ask them to tease out the main points of each text, including the logical connection between the biblical narrative of Cain and Abel (see special topic 2.3) and these interpretive traditions.

(4) *A Contemporary Hasidic Interpretation*. Have students watch a rabbinic talk (*dvar Torah*) on Cain and Abel given by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=qvWWBK9ISg&noembed=1. Ask them to compare it to the interpretations in special topics 6.4 and 6.5.

(5) *Contemporary Hasidic Communities*. To introduce students more thoroughly to ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities, show videos of scenes from contemporary Hasidic communities, including *tisches*, weddings, and students studying in *yeshivot* (seminaries). Youtube selections are almost limitless. See also chapter 8.

Chapter 7. Cultures

An American Jew Dreaming of a White Christmas

(1) *Jews in a Christian Country?* Review the anecdote from the beginning of the chapter, "An American Jew Dreaming of a White Christmas." Have students discuss

the challenges involved in celebrating holidays from dual traditions, including whether such a practice sends mixed messages to children. Be sure to raise such questions as:

- Can a Jew celebrate Christmas, even if only tangentially, or does this "dilute" the individual's Jewish identities? In other words, is it important (or possible) for a person to have unadulterated identities?
- What about the notion of "cross-fertilization" discussed in this chapter? Is the practice of observing both Hanukkah and Christmas the contemporary version of a new Jewish ritual?

From Jewish American Culture to Worldwide Jewish Cultures

(2) *Tribe vs. Diaspora*. If you haven't already done so, watch *The Tribe* (18 min.) and *Diaspora* (26 min.) (chapter 1, activity 4). Ask students to compare and contrast the films' theses. Lead a discussion about what "Jewish culture" means based on these two films.

(3) *Jewish "Norms" Regarding Gender and Sexuality*. Have students review the last paragraph of this section in the text: "Please note that the attention to marginalized Jewish subgroups . . ." In terms of the Jewish "norm" in relation to gender and sexuality, the words of Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz are telling:

Given that most of the world is completely ignorant of Jewish cultural markers such as *Ashkenazi* or *Sephardi*, stereotypes about Jews are by default usually about Ashkenazim. . . . From the perspective of Ashkenazim, gender inflects these images so that Mizrahi men are seen either as macho brutes or emasculated, practically women, while *actual Mizrahi women* are seen as primitive and irrational, sexually overactive, or completely repressed and oppressed dwellers in harems. As anthropologist Joëlle Bahloul notes, "Scholars continue to view the Sephardic world as 'archaic' and non-progressive, in large part because of its treatment of women and the extensive sexual discrimination found in it." This concern for women does not include attending to the reality of North African women's lives, their "yearning for modernity," or their significant role in bringing the modern world into their community.

Ask students what they think about the ideas expressed in this passage.

Culture: A Working Definition—Culture and Religion

(4) *Culture and Religion*. Have students reread the section “Culture and Religion.” They may also benefit from reading pp. 51 and 53–67 in Paul Tillich’s *Theology of Culture* (ed. Robert C. Kimball [New York: Oxford University Press, 1959]). Ask them to discuss the argument that the United States is a Christian culture.

Culture: A Working Definition—Complications: Categories and Contexts

(5) *December 25*. Have students research the history of December 25 as Christmas Day. Scholars contend that this date’s importance pre-dated Jesus’s birth, and may have been linked to the celebration of another deity or a change in seasons. (Likewise, the contemporary symbol of a white-bearded old man wearing a red and white suit is not found throughout the world’s Christian communities; rather, Santa—in his American form—is an *American* Christmas symbol.)

The way Hanukkah has become increasingly commercialized over the course of the twentieth century—in addition to its becoming a much more important holiday for Jewish Americans than it ever was historically—is arguably a reflection of an integrationist phenomenon that both echoes and tries to compete with the major Christian holiday of Christmas.

(6) *Stars and Swastikas*. Have students read the part of the section titled “Two Complications” that focuses on different meanings of a six-pointed star and the swastika (also Notes, chapter 7, “Second, framing cultural practices”). Ask them to discuss the meanings given to these symbols today and the phenomenon of such meanings changing over place and time.

The Many Other Jewish Communities

(7) *Many Other Jews*. This chapter explores a number of lesser-known Jewish communities, but it only touches the surface regarding these groups. Encourage students to examine the following subcommunities in greater detail by assigning them groups to research and write a summary about. Some information about these groups is provided in the notes to chapter 7. Be sure to have students look at the heterogeneity of Jews within each of these subcommunities. (In the chapter 7 notes I offer a synopsis regarding the numbers of these communities

who immigrated to the State of Israel in the 1950s, which is relevant to issues raised in chapters 1 and 10).

MUSLIM MAJORITY COUNTRIES

- Algerian Jews
- Lebanese Jews
- Libyan Jews
- Syrian Jews
- Tunisian Jews

CHRISTIAN MAJORITY COUNTRIES

- Australian Jews
- Mexican Jews
- Jews in the Philippines
- South African Jews
- Jews in South Korea

As part of this activity, students can watch one or more films about specific Jewish subcommunities mentioned. An exhaustive list of films can be found at the National Center for Jewish Film’s (NCJF) website, www.jewishfilm.org/Catalogue/filmsaz.htm. Consider, e.g., the following films (some of which, however, are not available via NCJF):

- African American Jews—Little White Lie (2014)
- Chinese Jews—Minyan in Kaifeng (2002)
- Ethiopian Jews—400 Miles to Freedom (2012), Live and Become (2005), Zrubavel (2009)
- Indian Jews—Synagogueinte Naatil (In the Land of Synagogue) (2011)
- Iraqi Jews—Iraq N-Roll (2011)

Afterward, have students discuss what it might mean to be part of such a small Jewish subcommunity.

(8) *Ugandan Jews*. For a unique situation in which a group became Jewish relatively recently, have students look into the Ugandan Jewish community and answer questions like those posed in activity 7.

By way of background: The founder of the contemporary incarnation of this community, Semei Kakungulu, perhaps in reaction to British colonialist Christian missionaries, converted most of his Abayudaya community to Judaism at the beginning of the twentieth century. They number about two thousand today. See Be’chol Lashon, “Who Are the Abyudaya Jews of Uganda,” <http://bechollashon.org/projects/abayudaya/abayudaya.php>; Stuart Z. Charmé, “Newly Found Jews and the Politics of Recognition,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 2 (June 2012): 387–410; Scott Simon and Joc-

elyn Frank, “Celebrating Passover with Ugandan Jews,” National Public Radio, April 19, 2008, www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=89785604.

Chapter 8. Movements

From Movement to Nonmovement

(1) *Terms*. Discuss the terms *movement*, *denomination*, and *sect*. Is precision important when using these words?

Meanings of “Religious Identity”

(2) *What Is “Religion”?* Lead a discussion on the term *religion*. What does it mean? Address the terms *religious* and *secular* as well. Refer to the studies cited in the early section of Notes, chapter 8, on the practical implications and ambiguity of these terms among Jewish Israelis.

Ancient Movements

(3) *The Ambiguity of History*. What do we know about the sects described in the section “Ancient Movements”? Does this knowledge change our understanding of movements today?

Ancient Movements—Hasmonean Heterogeneity

(4) *Hanukkah and History*. Have students read common descriptions of the Jewish holiday Hanukkah, in addition to the section titled “Hasmonean Heterogeneity” and the articles cited in notes for chapter 8 (“Scholars of modern Jewish groups” and “According to dominant Jewish narratives today”). Should knowing this information change anything about a Jew’s observance of this holiday? If needed, refer to “Hanukkah 101,” www.myjewishlearning.com/article/hanukkah-101.

The (Jewish) Enlightenment

(5) *Modern Orthodoxy and Inter-marriage*. Moses Mendelssohn, commonly referred to as the father of Modern Orthodoxy, had six children, four of whom converted to Christianity (see Notes, chapter 8, “In the German Jewish community” and “In the mid-nineteenth century”). Is this reflective of the problems of Modern Orthodoxy and other more liberal movements in Judaism, or was this simply an exception to the rule?

Reform Judaism

(6) *Overlap between Early American Reform Judaism and Christianity*. Review some of the changes the Reform movement was instituting in Western Europe and the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Have students discuss whether any of these practices were “too radical,” compared to normative Jewish practices until then. If so, what would be the line separating Reform Judaism and, for instance, Christianity? (Refer to Notes, chapter 8, “There was a range of opinions” and “Meanwhile, new camps within the movement,” among other places.)

(7) *Changes to Reform Judaism*. Have students read the “Pittsburgh Platform,” the Reform movement’s most famous statement of principles (available at www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/pittsburgh_program.html). Does this document contain any principles that were clearly different from the normative Orthodox principles of the time (c. 1888)? Does it contain principles that today’s Reform Jews no longer agree with?

(8) *The Treifa Banquet*. Have students discuss this event, in particular how the “truth” about it differs from the facts. (See special topic 8.2 and Notes, chapter 8, “Like Reform Judaism.”) In terms of whether this event ultimately played an important role, or any role at all, in the emergence of a new denomination—Conservative Judaism—does it matter?

Orthodox (as in Not Reform) Judaism

(9) *Doctrine vs. Practice*. In the early twentieth century, it was not uncommon for American Jews to identify as Orthodox but not keep specific components of halakhah, such as the laws regarding Shabbat (because many of these new immigrants to America had to work on the Jewish Sabbath). Ask students what it means to identify with a movement while not practicing what the movement stands for. What does it mean for an individual to say, “The synagogue I *don’t* go to is Orthodox”?

Mixed Seating in the Movements— Special Topic 8.3

(10) *Mixed Seating*. During the twentieth century in the United States, the issue of “mixed seating” became one of the core “litmus tests” regarding Jewish denominational affiliation. Ask students to analyze the reasons behind this phenomenon and how a synagogue’s orientation to

this ritual became meaningful with regard to denominational affiliation.

Jewish Movements in the United States: Size and Key Beliefs—Special Topic 8.4

(11) *Differences between Movements.* Have students discuss the major differences between Jewish movements in the United States, referring to special topic 8.4.

(12) *Field Trips to Synagogues.* Have students attend synagogues in your area. In larger cities, make sure they attend a range of synagogues (e.g., Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative), including, if possible, those affiliated with Reconstructionist, Humanistic, and Renewal Judaism. Follow up these site visits by asking students to analyze their experience. That is, they should not simply sit back and look at the synagogue itself (i.e., sit in the building's main sanctuary with no one there); rather, they should attend a practiced holiday or prayer service, such as Shabbat. If students attend the celebration of a Jewish holiday, have them describe the specifics of the event: Who was there? What rituals were performed? Who led each ritual? Were the leaders wearing formal or informal clothing? What was the perceived gender of the service leader? What did the students think about the rituals? Were they welcomed despite being “outsiders”? Have them describe the surroundings/symbols in the building where the event took place and discuss how these reflect the ethos of the community. Students' analyses should be scholarly and relate to the topics covered in lectures and course readings. Suggest that students think of themselves as *ethnographers*, scholars doing field work in the Jewish community in order to better understand this group.

You might have the students read the following article before their site visits: Horace Minor, “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema,” *American Anthropological Association* 58, no. 3 (June 1956):503-507.

Chapter 9. Genocides

What Is Genocide?

(1) *Defining Genocide.* Review the United Nations definition of genocide with the students (see Notes, chapter 9, “The term *genocide*,” and related chapter text). Then have them discuss whether the genocide of Jews—or of any particular group—can or should be exceptionalized. Integrate some of the opinions voiced in the section titled “Is the Shoah a One-of-a-Kind Genocide?”

The Jewish Genocide

(2) *Testimonials.* If your students live in a region where this is possible, have them interview Shoah survivors about their experiences. (One would clearly need to determine if students are up to this task in terms of sensitivities and maturity.) One can also find interviews with survivors online, e.g., USC Shoah Foundation (<http://sfi.usc.edu/>; go to “Watch” at the bottom of the webpage) or Yad Vashem (www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/multimedia.asp).

Is the Shoah Relevant for All Jews?

(3) *Jewish Relationships with the Shoah Experience.* Have students interview one or more individuals who identify as Jewish about their relationship to the Shoah (or lack thereof). Do interviewees with no direct connection to the Shoah nevertheless relate to that event? In what ways? How is their relationship to the Shoah the same or different from that of those *with* a familial connection to it?

The Nazis' Definition of a “Jew”

(4) *Comparative Legal Prejudice.* Have students compare twentieth-century German laws discriminating against Jews to American laws discriminating against African Americans. Be sure that they address the United States' antimiscegenation laws, which were legal in some states through 1967 (and not implemented in all fifty states, in terms of state law, until 2000).

See fig. 9.1 and relevant notes (specifically chapter 9, “Within a few years, Germany's legal definitions,” “Initially, the Nazis defined two types of Jews,” and “Jews were gradually prohibited”), as well as the following articles: Judy Scales-Trent, “Racial Purity Laws in the United States and Nazi Germany: The Targeting Process,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 23, no. 2 (May 2001): 259-307; “States Prohibiting Mixed Marriages,” *U.S. News & World Report*, March 28, 2013, www.usnews.com/news/blogs/press-past/2013/03/28/as-the-supreme-court-weighs-gay-marriage-a-look-at-its-last-major-marriage-ruling.

(5) *What Did a German Jew Look Like?* Review the George Mosse quote: “The *German Anthropological Review* found [the similarity between Jewish Germans and non-Jewish Germans] so disturbing that they suppressed the data and fudged, simply reporting that the Jewish population had fewer blonds than the German population. . . . An estimated 11 percent of German Jews were

‘pure blonds’ and 42 percent black-haired, while (Christian) Germans divided into 31.8 percent blondes and 14.05 percent black-haired. Most striking, however, was the finding that the largest number of both Christians and Jews fit into a ‘mixed type’ category, neither pure blond nor pure black-haired—47 percent of Jews and 54.1 percent of Christians.” Juxtapose these figures with the German legal definitions of a Jew (see activity 4, immediately above) and the question of whether such a thing as a Jewish “race” exists. (Also refer to activities in Introduction regarding social identity categories such as race.)

Cultural and Spiritual Genocide

(6) *Defining “Cultural” and “Spiritual” Genocide.* Ask students to weigh in on Raphael Lemkin’s definition of “cultural genocide” (i.e., the systematic attempt to destroy the cultural heritage of a group, embodied in “language, the traditions, the monuments, archives, libraries, churches . . . the shrines of the soul of a nation”). Do they agree with the use of this term in a *New York Times* op-ed about the adoption of a black child by white parents (see Notes, chapter 9, “The term *cultural genocide*”? Or with Sami Shalom Chetrit, Ella Shohat, and Sammy Smooha regarding the displacement of Mizrahi culture (“A second type of cultural genocide,” “Shohat calls this trend,” and “While Chetrit, Shohat, and Smooha”)? What about the argument that intermarriage is a form of “spiritual genocide” (“Jews such as those affiliated” and “Similarly, some in the ultra-Orthodox community”)?

Antisemitic Stereotypes

(7) *Antisemitic Stereotypes.* Review the three common stereotypes explored in the section “Antisemitic Stereotypes.” Discuss students’ understandings of these statements, whether they were taught such things growing up, and whether or not they agree with them. As needed, bring into the discussion stereotypes regarding other groups and compare them in terms of “truth” and “fact.” (This is clearly a sensitive topic for all groups. Be mindful of your word choice and ensure the classroom maintains a respectful level of discourse.)

Parsing Antisemitism—Native Americans and Discrimination

(8) *Defining Prejudice.* Have students discuss the National Congress of American Indians campaign regarding the Washington Redskins mascot (and see fig.

9.5). Was it effective in raising awareness about discrimination? Was it problematic in terms of presenting other offensive racial and ethnic stereotypes?

Parsing Antisemitism—Antisemitism and Jewish Comedians

(9) *Is This Antisemitism?* Show Youtube clips of Sasha Baron Cohen, Jerry Seinfeld, and Sarah Silverman making jokes at the expense of the Jewish community. (Suggested searches include Sacha Baron Cohen or Borat + “Throw the Jew Down the Well”; Seinfeld + anti-Semite or Uncle Leo; Sarah Silverman + the Holocaust or anti-Jewish.) Discuss whether the identities of the individuals delivering such jokes (whether aimed at Jews or another group altogether) matter.

Two Ways that Jews Deal with Antisemitism—Holocaust Education

(10) *What Is Antisemitism?* Show Yoav Shamir’s 2009 film *Defamation: Anti-Semitism, The Movie* (2009), either in its entirety or as clips (available at <https://archive.org/details/Defamation>). Use this footage to stimulate a deeper conversation about the meaning of antisemitism and the role Jews play in maintaining its existence, if any.

(11) *Holocaust Education.* Have students reread the statement of the unnamed guard in *Defamation: Anti-Semitism, The Movie* (quote in chapter text linked to note, “The question, however”). Ask them to consider his comments in light of the profound role the Shoah continues to play in shaping Jewish identities and what this reflects in terms of Jewish communal memory.

(12) *Teaching Youth about the Holocaust.* Have students discuss what age it is appropriate to begin teaching children about something so horrific as the Shoah. Remind them that in 2014 the Israeli government began requiring students in kindergarten to learn about the Shoah (see chapter 9 note, “This was not always the case”). Ask them also to discuss programs such as “March of the Living” (see chapter 9 note, “Jews (and non-Jews) often say”). Do they agree with the criticisms leveled at these educational programs?

Chapter 10. Powers

David or Goliath?

(1) *David and Goliath.* Discuss the archetypes of David and Goliath. You might want to have students read 1 Sam-

uel 17 for the original text describing these two individuals. Be sure to remind them that, in terms of dominant Jewish narratives, David, as a future king of the Israelites, is understood to be a direct ancestor of contemporary Jews.

What Is Power?

(2) *What Is Power?* Engage students in a discussion of the varied understandings of the term *power*. In addition to the text found in this section, give them the following passages to read. Be sure to tease out the idea that control is only one manifestation of power.

Scholar Hannah Arendt notes that power is intrinsically linked to strength, force, authority, and violence:

Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is “in power” we actually refer to his being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. The moment the group, from which the power originated to begin with (*potestas in populo*, without a people or group there is no power), disappears, “his power” also vanishes. In current usage, when we speak of a “powerful man” or a “powerful personality,” we already use the word “power” metaphorically; what we refer to without metaphor is “strength.”

Foucault contends that people create knowledge, thus linking knowledge to power. In his own words:

In a science like medicine, for example, up to the end of the eighteenth century one has a certain type of discourse whose gradual transformation, within a period of twenty-five or thirty years, broke not only with the “true” propositions which it had hitherto been possible to formulate, but also, more profoundly, with the ways of speaking and seeing. . . . The important thing here is not that such changes can be rapid and extensive, or rather it is that this extent and rapidity are only the sign of something else: a modification of rules in the formation of statements which are accepted as scientifically true. . . . It is a question of what governs statements, and the way in which they govern each other so as to constitute a set of propositions which are scientifically acceptable, and hence being capable of being verified or falsified by scientific procedures. In short, there is a problem of the régime, the politics of the scientific statement.

Foucault on “truth” and power:

The important thing . . . is that truth isn’t outside power, or lacking in power: contrary to a myth whose history and functions would repay further study, truth isn’t the

reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power.

Regarding “truth” and dominant narratives, as Foucault explains: “In analyzing discourses themselves, one sees the loosening of the embrace, apparently so tight, of words and things, and the emergence of a group of rules proper to discursive practices.”

As Hannah Arendt explains: “The source of authority . . . is always a source external and superior to its own power.”

One way to understand different kinds of power is as follows:

Exploitative power: power upon; literal use of physical force or threat to use such force with apparent intent to do so if necessary.

Manipulative power: power over; use of promises or threats involving the interests, desires, needs or other wants of the other person(s) or group, but short of the use of force as such; often indirect or implied.

Competitive power: power against; contesting to win against another of relatively equal power by superior application of one’s own power or deflection or diminution of the other’s power.

Nutritive or nutrient power: power for; use of one’s own power for the empowerment of another or the development of the other’s power.

Collaborative or coalescent or coalitional power: power with; pooling power together to increase the likelihood of mutually desired ends.

In many of these explanations, power seems to be given more than it is taken.

Israeli Jews: Zionisms from Theodor Herzl to the Jewish State—Herzl and the Rise of Jewish Nationalism

(3) *Herzl, “Truth” and “Fact.”* Have students read the chapter text related to Herzl’s life, as well as some of the sources found in the accompanying notes. Determine some of the “truth” vs. facts surrounding Theodor Herzl’s life. In particular, examine the fact that the first Israeli educational curricula fabricated parts of Herzl’s life, claiming that as a young boy he had prophetic visions of the creation of a Jewish State, and most bio-

graphical narratives of Herzl leave out the fact that in the 1890s, before he declared allegiance to Zionism, one of his solutions to Jewish survival was the mass conversion of Jews to Christianity. Ask whether these aspects of Herzl's life "taint" dominant Zionist narratives about Herzl in any way.

Israeli Jews: Zionisms from Theodor Herzl to the Jewish State—Zionisms

(4) "*Freedom Fighters*" or "*Terrorists*"? Two of the Irgun's most infamous operations were the 1946 bombing of the British administrative offices in Jerusalem, housed in the King David Hotel, which killed more than ninety people, and the massacre of Deir Yassin in April 1948, during what Jews commonly call the War of Independence, in which more than one hundred Palestinian Arabs were murdered. Two former leaders of the Irgun eventually became prime ministers of the State of Israel, Menachem Begin (1977–1983) and Yitzhak Shamir (1983–1984, 1986–1992).

In light of these events, have students consider the difference between a "freedom fighter" and a "terrorist." Does it change matters that two of the Irgun's members went on to become Israeli prime ministers?

Israeli Jews: Independence and Shaping the Jewish State—Pre-Independence and the Palestinian Arab "Other"

(5) *Will the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Go On Forever?* As far back as 1919, Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, presciently stated:

Everybody sees the problem in the relations between the Jews and the Arabs. But not everybody sees that there's no solution to it. There is no solution. . . . The conflict between the interests of the Jews and the interests of the Arabs in Palestine cannot be resolved by sophisms. I don't know any Arabs who would agree to Palestine being ours—even if we learn Arabic . . . and I have no need to learn Arabic. On the other hand, I don't see why "Mustafa" should learn Hebrew. . . . There's a national question here. We want the country to be ours. The Arabs want the country to be theirs.

Have students discuss their take on the conflict between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. Is it intractable? If so, is it the only contemporary conflict that falls into this category?

Israeli Jews: The Creation of New Jewish Identities—A New Legal Jewish Identity: The Law of Return

(6) *The Complexity of the "Law of Return."* Have students use Notes, chapter 10, "A little more than two years" (the following two notes—"Not until March 1970" and "Since 1950, among the Israeli Supreme Court's"—may also be useful) and Andrew M. Sacks's August 11, 2009, *Jerusalem Post* article "To Hell with Logic" (see below) to analyze Israel's "Law of Return." Discuss the perspective that Jews needed their own country in 1948 and whether this need exists today. What does it mean that a Jew who has lived her entire life outside the State of Israel has the legal ability to become a citizen of the Jewish State, whereas Palestinians who lived in either Israel or Palestine until 1947–1949 or 1967 largely do not?

Because "To Hell with Logic" is no longer available on the internet, it appears here in its entirety. Although certain Israeli government positions in the article have changed since it first appeared in 2009, much of the "convoluted" logic is still found in 2015 Israeli laws related to the "Law of Return":

Let me ask for your help in following the logic behind the laws and policies by which conversions are accepted, or not, by the State of Israel.

If you are converted by a recognized Masorti/Conservative (or Reform) rabbi outside of Israel—you are entitled to Israeli citizenship under the Law of Return.

If you are converted by an Orthodox rabbi in the US who is a member of the leading Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), you will not be recognized—unless the conversion is performed by the limited list selected by Israel's Chief Rabbinate.

If you are converted by Orthodox rabbis who have been ordained by Hovevei Torah (the new Modern Orthodox rabbinical school), you will be given the run-around and, until matters change, not be accepted.

If you are converted by Reconstructionist rabbis, Renewal rabbis, or rabbis who graduated from the Boston Hebrew College (who have not joined one of the major rabbinical associations), you will be in for a fight to achieve recognition.

If you are converted by a Masorti rabbi in Israel, and you have a *Mispar Zehut* (an Israeli ID number), then the State will register you as Jewish. If you convert but don't have an ID number, you will not be registered.

However, if you do not have an Israeli ID number you can study Judaism in Israel, appear before a *Beit Din* [rabbinical court] abroad, and return to Israel with your hair wet from immersion in the Mikveh—Israeli law will then recognize your right to citizenship (although the Reform and the Masorti Movements rarely utilize this option).

If you are an Israeli couple you may adopt a non-Jewish

baby from abroad. That child may be converted abroad, with the agreement of both adoptive parents, and registered as Jewish upon arrival in Israel. Such a conversion may be performed under Masorti or Reform auspices.

But the law won't allow a Jewish couple to adopt a non-Jewish infant in Israel.

Now let us add to all of this that even if a convert qualifies for aliya under Israeli law, his/her file may be sent to the Interior Ministry for "investigation." This essentially means that approval of the aliya will be held up until either hell freezes over or a lawyer intervenes.

If a convert from abroad applies for aliya with all of the necessary papers, from here in Israel, s/he may be denied the right to work or to receive health coverage while this eternal "investigation" is underway.

But if you have a paternal great-grandfather who is Jewish, and your non-Jewish parents make aliya (allowed since your father has a single Jewish grandparent), and you are under the age of eighteen—you are welcome to become a citizen. By the way, if you have an older sibling who just turned eighteen, s/he may not move to Israel and obtain citizenship.

So there you have it. Is there logic to all of this? Yes there is. But it is convoluted at best. So I invite you to take a stab at explaining it.

Israeli Jews: The Creation of New Jewish Identities—A New National Distinction: Israeli Jew ≠ Israeli (Palestinian) Arab

(7) *Prejudice against Palestinian Citizens of Israel (i.e., "Arab Israelis")*. After reading the section titled "A New National Distinction: Israeli Jew ≠ Israeli (Palestinian) Arab," have students discuss what information they think it is okay to require on an individual's legal identification card—physical appearance? gender? age? religion? ethnicity? Why or why not?

Israeli Jews: The Creation of New Jewish Identities—A New Jewish Distinction: "Arab Jewish Israeli" – Arab = Jewish Israeli

(8) *Prejudice against Non-Ashkenazi Jews in Israel*. Have students read this section. Do the data reflect intra-Jewish oppression and Ashkenazi hegemony?

(9) *"Blacks" and "Whites" among Jews in Israel*. The following excerpts are from *Black Over White*, a 2007 Israeli documentary film (dir. Tomer Heymann) that explores intra-Jewish discrimination and identity politics. After going through these passages (or, if possible, watching the film), discuss what Idan Raichel seems to understand and not understand in terms of intra-Jewish race relations in Israel.

In the film, a Jewish Israeli band called the Idan Raichel Project travels to Ethiopia, where two of the members, Wassa Wogderas and Cabra Casay, were born. For example, acknowledging the hegemony that is active in Israeli identity formation, the band leader, Raichel, describes what happened when Wogderas and Casay, both black Ethiopian Jewish Israelis, first immigrated to the Jewish State:

Immigrants, new immigrants. Immigrating through the Jewish Agency [the primary Israeli government department dealing with immigration]. So the Jewish Agency decided that names would be Hebraized from [Wassa] to Avi. They might have gone all the way and called him Avreimaleh. Avreimaleh Wassermann. . . . Cabra Casay. Let's find you a Hebrew name. Karmit. Karmit Casay. Karmit Kassinovitch. Show some respect for Cabra Casay.

Part of Raichel's intention with his band is to raise awareness about the politics of identity, but even he—a seemingly open-minded, liberal Jewish Israeli artist of Eastern European descent—reflects a particular ignorance regarding "white privilege," or in this case, "Ashkenazi privilege." In one important scene, he and Casay have the following discussion:

IDAN RAICHEL (IR): It's heartwarming that ten years after the second great immigration of Ethiopians, you see that the [Idan Raichel] Project has its place. And you see an audience of Ashkenazis in their fifties, who come and dance . . . with Avi [Wogderas] in the concerts.

CABRA CASAY (CC): But you don't know the reason, why they dance. The only reason is that it's the Idan Raichel Project. It's not Avi Wogderas in concert. Reality check, Raichel. Other people wouldn't come to see me and Avi on stage. No way. Who would buy a ticket? No way. They're exposing themselves to this music unconsciously. They're coming to see the Idan Raichel Project. They wouldn't come to see me or Avi in concert. Get a grip! No way! It depends on what you'd do!

IR: That's not true!

CC: The Israeli audience is still not ready for a dark singer.

IR: So you're actually saying that until today you didn't succeed on your own because you're Ethiopian?

CC: No, no way. I was successful on my own, not because I'm Ethiopian but because I am who I am. I fought and I brought myself to this point. But I don't believe that if I were to leave you now and cut an album . . . No way! No one would notice me. Maybe at first I'd have all the journalists running after me for some scoop, a cover piece. But after a while there's no way . . . No one will buy tickets. The audience isn't ready for this. I will even sing in Hebrew.

IR: Cabra, what you're saying is horrible.

CC: Because it's reality, Raichel.

IR: It's horrible if you live with a feeling that . . . It's horrible. You feel like a loser.

CK: I'm a loser? I come and fight for my rights, and say I'm fucking Israeli and not an Ethiopian, and I deserve what everyone has. You're calling me a loser? I'm realistic about what's going on in our country! It's not being a loser. Why am I here? Why? I could have given up and gone to live with my parents in the south [of Israel], find a job in some factory. What the hell? Why am I here? Why?

Casay implies that her and Raichel's lives in Israel are largely a function of their identities as an Ethiopian woman and Ashkenazi man, respectively. Regardless of the facts on the ground, it is her "truth," and it is the "truth" of many other marginalized Jewish Israelis today. Simply put, some Jewish Israeli subidentities are dominant, and others are subordinated.

Israeli Jews: The Creation of New Jewish Identities—The Forgotten Refugees? Special Topic 10.3

(10) *The Forgotten Refugees?* Have students read special topic 10.3 and watch *The Forgotten Refugees* (www.youtube.com/watch?v=KH8RL2XRr48) and, if possible, *They Were Promised the Sea* (Kathy Wazana, 2014; email promisedthesea2012@gmail.com for information on how to purchase this film). Then lead a discussion on the "truths" vs. facts regarding those Jews who immigrated to Israel from countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Israeli Jews: From David to Goliath and Back Again—Masada, Strength, and Masculinity

(11) *Jews Criticizing Shoah Survivors*. Some Jews in Israel (and pre-state Israel) criticized Shoah survivors as being part of those Jews who went "like lambs to the slaughter." In the 2010 film *The Debt* (dir. John Madden), a remake of the 2007 Israeli film *Ha-Hov* (dir. Assaf Bernstein), a similar argument is voiced by Dietrich Vogel, a Nazi surgeon who performed experiments on Jews during the Shoah, some 20–25 years earlier, who says the following to one of his Jewish captors, David:

Why did you think it was so easy to exterminate your people? Your weakness. I saw it. Every day I saw it. Every one of them thinking only of how to avoid being flogged or kicked or killed. Everyone thinking only of themselves. Why do you think it only took four soldiers to lead a

thousand people to the gas chambers? Because not one out of thousands had the courage to resist. Not one would sacrifice himself! Not even when we took their children away! So I knew then that you people had no right to live! You had no right . . .

Though these particular comments are made by a former Nazi to a Jew, discuss how Jews could say similar things to other Jews, especially in the immediate aftermath of the Jewish genocide.

American Jews: The United States and Israel—Power, Perception, and Self-promotion

(12) *Power and Self-Promotion*. Watch Yoav Shamir's film *Defamation: Anti-Semitism, The Movie* (available at <http://archive.org/details/Defamation>), in particular the scene with Anti-Defamation League leader Abraham Foxman and Shamir (or read the Abraham Foxman quote found in the text). Ask students how they feel about Foxman's seeming manipulation of "fact" and "truth" to support his political agenda, which from his perspective is clearly aimed at helping Jews stay secure and safe.

Twenty-First-Century Zionism: From Zionisms to Zionism

(13) *Jews and the Jewish State*. Have students interview one or more individuals who identify as Jewish about their relationship to the State of Israel. It does not matter whether students have a direct familial connection to Israel or have ever traveled there; indeed, a main point of this activity is to explore how Jews can have relationships to a place that they have never personally experienced.

(14) *What Does Zionism Mean?* Have students reread this chapter's understandings of the term *Zionism*, listing out the various forms of Zionism and individuals connected with them. Given that the State of Israel was founded in 1949, has one of these forms of Zionism "won" over all of the others? What does Zionism mean today?

(15) *Zionism and Jewish Nationalism*. Is Zionism equivalent to Jewish nationalism? If so, should this form of nationalism be exceptionalized, insofar as it has a distinct name, differentiating it from other forms of nationalism? For example, in 2014 the director of the Israeli organization Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR), Rabbi Arik Ascherman, challenged the current monolithic understanding of the term *Zionist*. In explaining the actions that RHR takes—protecting Palestinian homes from

being demolished by the Israeli Defense Forces, for example, or protecting Palestinian-owned olive trees from being destroyed by either the IDF or Jewish Israeli “settlers”—Ascherman says:

I am a Zionist . . . we see what we’re doing [at RHR] is the true Zionism today. . . . I believe that, in terms of our survival, it is in our self-interest not only to be physically strong but to be morally strong and to live up to our highest Jewish values. There are many, many strands of Zionism—some I identify with; others I find racist and morally repugnant. The common denominator between all the different strands of Zionism is that it’s the liberation movement of the Jewish people, starting with the proposition that the solution to 2,000 years of Jewish oppression (that took place because we had been expelled from our homeland and didn’t have much control over our own destiny) is to return to our homeland. Beyond that common denominator, you have Zionism like my Zionism, which says: I can’t ask for myself anything that I am not prepared to give to others. And you have others which make Zionism into a movement for expelling and oppressing, and taking everything for ourselves. It really just depends which kind of Zionism you are talking about.

Chapter 11. Borders

Border Characteristics

(1) *Borders and Social Identities.* In the first activity in the Introduction, students were asked to write down five words to describe themselves. Either return to this list or have students draw up a new list of five of their social identities (it can be the same as the first one).

Have students form small groups with one or two others who share a particular social identity. Have each group delineate what—if any—borders there are to this community (e.g., what are the general written or unwritten codes for this identity?). In other words, who should be counted as “in” and who should not? What might render someone’s status suspect or would play a role in their being marginalized?

Conclusion: Who Is a Jew and Who Is Not?

(2) *Samaritans, African Hebrew Israelites, and Karaites.* Have students watch Youtube videos about the Samaritans, African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem, and Karaites. (Suggested searches include Samaritans + Jews in Israel, West Bank, or Disappearing; African Hebrew Israelites of Jerusalem; Karaites + Israel or USA.) Ask them to

identify which ritual observances, if any, are similar to normative Jewish practices and which are not.

(3) *Messianic Jews and non-Messianic Jews.* Have students go to the websites for the following Messianic Jewish groups and evaluate the similarities and differences between them and non-Messianic Jews:

- Chosen People Ministries (www.chosenpeople.com).
- The International Alliance of Messianic Congregations and Synagogues (www.iamcs.org).
- Jews for Jesus (www.jewsforjesus.org).
- Messianic Jewish Alliance of America (www.mjaa.org).
- Union of Messianic Jewish Congregations (www.umjc.org).

(4) *Messianic Jews: Ethnographies.* If possible, have students interview leaders or members of a local Messianic Jewish congregation, asking about how they identify in relation to the normative Jewish community. (Clearly, students must be up to this task in terms of engaging with the appropriate sensitivities.) See description under chapter 8, activity 12, for further details.

(5) *Evaluation.* After reading the chapter, have students evaluate whether they think each of these groups should be studied as a Jewish communal subgroup or as a non-Jewish communal subgroup. Ask them to explain the arguments behind their decisions.

Chapter 12. Futures

Jewish Futures?

(1) *Continuity.* Discuss with students the communal anxiety that minority communities often exhibit in regard to the “continuity” of their group. Does this concern have merit? Are there any non-Jewish minorities in the class who feel this reflects their communal narrative? Do Jewish students in the class identify with this communal concern?

Assumptions Regarding Inter-marriage—Defining a Jew in Order to Count Jews

(2) *How Do You Count Jews?* Ask students to summarize the multiple ways in which one should be considered (i.e., be counted as) a Jew or not (whether civilly, culturally, ethnically, nationalistically, racially, religiously, etc.). Then have them decide which ways of defining a Jew should be used when counting how many Jews there are.

(3) *Intermarriage and Continuity*. Organize students into small groups. Have one group interview three to five Jews over the age of 51, another group interview Jews between 40 and 50, a third group interview Jews between 25 and 39, and a fourth group interview Jews under 24. Have students decide on three questions everyone will be asked (e.g., What is your opinion about Jews marrying non-Jews? Are you worried about the Jewish community disappearing due to intermarriage? What do you think are the best ways to ensure “continuity” of the Jewish community?). After each group has shared its results with the class, have students discuss the findings. See if there are any noticeable trends across the groups.

New Jewish Organizations and the “Unaffiliated”

(4) *Younger Jews Defining Their Jewish Identities*. Have students look at the website of the “New Jewish Film-making Project,” <http://njfp.wordpress.com/njfp-films/>. These short films, created by Jewish teenagers in the San Francisco Bay Area, roughly between 2002 and 2010, reflect a wide range of ways that younger Jews perform their Jewish identities. After watching a sample of these short films, have students identify common themes as related to Jewish identity construction.