

## **World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module**

Teacher Name: Patrick Meegan      Humanities Discipline: World History Date: November 13, 2015

World Religion: Judaism      Teaching Module Title: The Origins of Judaism and the Jewish People

### **\*\*\*Teaching Module Goals:**

1. Introduce students to the history of Jews in the United States
2. Examine the ways that U.S. culture, politics, and society has shaped Jewish American life and how, in turn, Jews contributed to American culture

### **\*\*\*Assigned Readings and/or Websites:**

Bowker, *World Religions*, "Judaism" chapter.

Diner, Hasia R. *A New promised Land: A History of Jews in America*

### **\*\*\*Study Questions and/or Discussions Prompts for Students:**

1. What was the European background of the first Jews in America? What are *Sephardim*?
2. As more Jews immigrated into America, what were some particular challenges they faced in maintaining their *Jewishness*?
3. How did American Jews respond and adjust, acculturate and assimilate to American culture at-large?
4. What contributions did Jews make to American culture?
5. How did U.S. law and politics affect Jewish Americans? How did they respond to these larger forces?

### **\*\*\*Written Assignments and/or other Assessment Instruments:**

Come to class with typed response to these questions. We will discuss the answers together in preparation for a quiz, which I will give during the class after this one.

### **Important points for instructor to stress in classroom discussion:**

1. Jewish "otherness" in early American society was accommodated by the diversity of religion and language among the many immigrants.
2. Although rabbis were not initially available to lead Jewish worship, Jewish communities organized themselves to provide education, help for the poor, kosher food to fellow Jews from an early point.

3. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Reform Judaism was established.
4. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, millions of Eastern European Jews immigrated to the United States due to the pogroms in Europe.
5. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the movement of white Americans from ethnic urban neighborhoods to the suburbs significantly altered Jewish communities and resulted in further assimilation and intermarriage.