

LIST II HILARY TERM. AVAILABLE TO ALL JS STUDENTS AND TO SS NMS STUDENTS

HIU34572. Christians and Jews in the Middle Ages (Ruth Karras)



The Jews lived within medieval Christian Europe as separate communities under their own law, but there was also quite considerable economic, social, and even theological exchange between Christians and Jews. This module approaches intercommunal relations from a variety of perspectives. One has to do with everyday life, as Christian wet nurses cared for Jewish children, Jewish merchants sold wine to Christian customers, rabbis advised court intellectual circles on Biblical interpretation, and periodic bursts of ritualized violence punctuated the liturgical year. The second deals with polemic: both groups wrote vehement attacks on each other and their beliefs and practices, but these attacks had different effects on the two groups because Christians dominated the society. A third discusses the use of the Jews as a symbol for Christians: the Old Testament as prefiguration of the New, the Jews as part of salvation history. The fourth deals with moments of extraordinary tension: the Rhineland massacres during the First Crusade, accusations of ritual murder and host desecration, condemnations and burnings of Jewish holy books, and the expulsion of the Jews from various western European countries culminating with Spain in 1492.