

## World Religions in Greater Indianapolis Teaching Module

Instructor: Joanna Wos Art Appreciation ARTH110

World Religion: Judaism

Module 2: Judaism in American Life

GOALS: To reflect on Jewish history in the United States in the specific examples of the biography and artistic work of one of the great American Abstract Expressionist painters, Mark Rothko.

### ASSIGNED READINGS AND VIEWINGS:

Diner, H.R. (2003). *A new promised land: A history of Jews in America*. Oxford University Press, New York. Pp. 41-47.

Baal-Teshuva, J. (2009). *Rothko*. Taschen.

Schama, S. (2007). *Power of Art. Rothko*. Video. Disc 3. BBC.

National Gallery of Art. *In the Tower: Mark Rothko*. Video. Narrated by Harry Cooper.

<http://bcove.me/56dvzig6>

Phillips Collection. slides of collection. Washington, D.C.

<http://www.phillipscollection.org/collection/browse-the-collection?id=1664>

<http://www.phillipscollection.org/collection/browse-the-collection?id=1666>

<http://www.phillipscollection.org/collection/browse-the-collection?id=1665>

Freudenheim, T.L. (November 9, 2006). Was Judaism a color on Rothko's palette? *Jewish Journal*.

[http://www.jewishjournal.com/arts/article/was\\_judaism\\_a\\_color\\_on\\_rothkos\\_palette\\_20061110/](http://www.jewishjournal.com/arts/article/was_judaism_a_color_on_rothkos_palette_20061110/)

Gert-Zand, R. (July 1, 2013). The Jewish Side of Rothko, Mondrian and Pollack. *The Times of Israel*.

[www.timesofisrael.com/the-jewish-sides-of-rothko-mondrian-and-pollock/](http://www.timesofisrael.com/the-jewish-sides-of-rothko-mondrian-and-pollock/)

### STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Where did Mark Rothko spend his early life?
2. When did he come to the United States and did this coincide with any Jewish migration trends and the experiences of other Jewish migrants?

3. How did Mark Rothko's background impact the events surrounding his commission for the Seagram murals?
4. Do you think Mark Rothko's classic color field paintings reflect his Jewish background? Why or why not?

ASSIGNMENT:

Write a one page narrative, incorporating the answers to the study questions, discussing how Mark Rothko's biography reflects the history of the Jews in the United States.

INSTRUCTOR RESOURCES:

Breslin, E.B. (1993). *Mark Rothko: A biography*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago & London.

Cohen-Solal, A. (2013). *Mark Rothko: Toward the light in the chapel*. Yale University Press. New Haven and London.

Golding, J. (2000). *Paths to the absolute: Mondrian, Malevich, Kandinsky, Pollock, Newman, Rothko, and Still*. Princeton University Press. Princeton, New Jersey.

Julius, A. *Idolizing Pictures: Idolatry, Iconoclasm and Jewish Art*. Thames & Hudson. New York, New York.

Kitaj, R.B. (1989). *First diasporist manifesto*. Thames & Hudson. New York, New York.