Numbering around fifty thousand, Sephardic Jews from the Ottoman Empire who came to the United States during the early twentieth century stood apart from the vast majority of American Jews not only due to their small numbers but also because of their distinctive place of origin, language, culture, and customs. This talk explores the racialization of Ottoman-born Jews in the United States and their efforts to navigate a society profoundly shaped by racial and civilizational hierarchies. What did it mean for Sephardic Jews to be thought of in the same light as America’s internal Other (Blacks) and external Other (Muslims)?

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