



## **Boundaries of Jewish Identity (Samuel and Althea Stroum Book) (Samuel and Althea Stroum Books)**

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## **Boundaries of Jewish Identity (Samuel and Althea Stroum Book) (Samuel and Althea Stroum Books)**

The subject of Jewish identity is one of the most vexed and contested issues of modern religious and ethnic group history. This interdisciplinary collection draws on work in law, anthropology, history, sociology, literature, and popular culture to consider contemporary and historical responses to the question “Who and what is Jewish?”

These essays are focused especially on the issues of who creates the definitions, and how, and in what social and political contexts. The ten leading authorities writing here also look at the forces, ranging from new genetic and reproductive technologies to increasingly multicultural societies, that push against established boundaries. The authors examine how Jews have imagined themselves and how definitions of Jewishness have been established, enforced, challenged, and transformed. Does being a Jew require religious belief, practice, and formal institutional affiliation? Is there a biological or physical aspect of Jewish identity? What is the status of the convert to another religion? How do definitions play out in different geographic and historical settings? What makes *Boundaries of Jewish Identity* distinctive is its attention to the various Jewish “epistemologies” or ways of knowing who counts as a Jew. These essays reveal that possible answers reflect the different social, intellectual, and political locations of those who are asking.

This book speaks to readers concerned with Jewish life and culture and to audiences interested in religious, cultural, and ethnic studies. It provides an excellent opportunity to examine how Jews fit into an increasingly diverse America and an increasingly complicated global society.

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