

**The Religion, History, and Culture of the Jewish People:
An Introduction to Jewish Studies**

Jewish Studies 2801F

Wednesdays, 1:30-4:30pm (Lawson Hall 1217)

Prof. Wobick-Segev, swobicks@uwo.ca

Office: Lawson Hall 2245

Office hours: Thursdays 9:30-11:30am

Course Description:

Jewish Studies is by its nature multidisciplinary. This course is intended to introduce students to the interpretive frameworks necessary for understanding Jewish history, culture, and sacred and literary texts. It is intended to provide a structure, an overview, that will serve as a foundation for further exploration. The course examines the role played by sacred Jewish texts and the different ways in which they have been interpreted in the course of Jewish history; larger interpretive frameworks for understanding Jewish history; and the many forms taken by Jewish culture, including Jewish literature composed in numerous languages, works of philosophy and music.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course students will be able to:

explain the nature of debates regarding the different Jewish sacred texts and commentaries at different points in the history of the Jewish people;

explain the principal questions that have been posed regarding different periods of Jewish history; and

explain in very general terms the ways in which the distinctive characteristics of the Jewish tradition and the historical experiences of the Jewish people have influenced the larger culture of Jews, including works of literature, philosophy, and art produced by Jews.

Grading rubric:

Class participation:	10%
Presentation:	10%
Essay on weekly readings:	25%
Primary Source analysis (due October 15):	25%
Final Essay (due December 3):	30%

The final essay will be an eight to ten page exploration of themes examined in one of the weekly reading assignments.

Required readings:

Are available online via OWL.

****** Over the course of the semester, students will be EXPECTED to attend the occasional lecture and event outside of our regular class time.

All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, use 1" margins, 12-point font.

Assignments handed in late will be penalized 2% per day. Extensions will be granted only in extreme circumstances.

No electronic devices will be allowed during tests and examinations.

Weekly Topics and Readings:

Sept. 10 **Introduction**

Sept. 17: **Archeology, the Bible (*Tanakh*) and the construction of identities**

Readings:

Primary Sources:

1 Kings 15:16-22

Secondary texts:

Finkelstein, "The Great Wall of Tell en-Nasbeh"

Seligman, "The Archeology of Jerusalem"

Sept. 24: **People of the Books: *Mishnaic* and *Talmudic* culture and their impact on the Jewish people**

Readings:

Primary Sources:

Pirke Avot Chapter 1, first three verses; Oven of Akhnai.

Secondary texts:

Rosenblum, "'Why do you refuse to eat pork?'"

Labovitz, "'Even your mother and your mother's mother'"

Oct. 1: **Medieval ethics and philosophy**

Readings:

Primary Sources:

Rambam (Maimonides), *Mishneh Torah*, excerpts.

Yehuda Halevi, *Kuzari*, excerpts.

Secondary texts:

Jason Kalman, "Job the Patient/Maimonides the Physician"

Moshe Sokol, "Maimonides on Freedom of the Will and Moral Responsibility"

Oct. 8: **Jewish Mysticism and *Kabbalah***

Readings:

Primary Sources:

Zohar, excerpts.

Palm Tree of Devorah, chp. 2.

Secondary texts:

Rachel Elior, "Exile and Redemption in Mystical Jewish Thought"

Jonathan Garb, "The Modernization of Kabbalah"

Oct. 15: Jewish modernity**Readings:****Primary Source:**

Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, 291-308.

Secondary texts:

Michael Meyer, "Where does the Modern Period of Jewish History Begin?" in *Judaism* (1975): 329-338.

Katz, *Tradition and Crisis*, 195-236.

Endelmann, "The Englishness of Jewish modernity in England"

PRIMARY SOURCE ESSAY DUE TODAY IN CLASS**Oct. 22: Gender and everyday life****Readings:****Primary Sources:**

Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln (excerpts)

Secondary texts:

Robert Liberles, "On the Threshold of Modernity", 11-40.

Marion A. Kaplan, "Redefining Judaism"

Oct. 29: Judaism and critical study of religion**Readings:****Primary Sources:**

Geiger, "Judaism and its history" 177-186.

Secondary texts:

Batnitzky, *How Judaism became a religion*, 32-51.

Susannah Heschel, *Abraham Geiger and the Jewish Jesus*, 50-75.

Nov. 5: Political theory**Readings:****Primary Sources:**

Mendes-Flohr, 123-128.

Secondary texts:

David Sorkin, "Is American Jewry Exceptional?"

Tony Michels, "Exporting Yiddish Socialism: New York's Role in the Russian Jewish Workers' Movement" in *Jewish Social Studies* 16 (2009): 1-26.

Nov. 12: Antisemitism**Readings:****Primary Sources:**

Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, excerpts

Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, excerpts

Secondary texts:

David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 1-6, 361-386.

Chad Alan Goldberg, "The Jews, the Revolution, and the Old Regime in French Anti-Semitism and Durkheim's Sociology"

Nov. 19: Zionism and Israel Studies**Readings:****Primary Sources:**

Jacqueline Shohet Kahanoff, "Israel: Ambivalent Levantine" and "To Remember Alexandria" in *Mongrels or Marvels: The Levantine Writings of Jacqueline Shohet Kahanoff* edited by Deborah A. Starr and Sasson Somekh (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 193-212, 213-231.

Secondary texts:

Alexandra Nocke, "Israel and the Emergence of Mediterranean Identity"

Ella Shohat, "Rupture and Return"

Nov. 26: The Shoah and Memory**Readings:****Primary Sources:**

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (excerpts)

Secondary texts:

Saul Friedlander, "Trauma, Transference and 'Working through' in Writing the History of the 'Shoah'"

James Young, "Towards a received history of the Holocaust"

Dec. 3: Messianism and Religious Revival

Readings:

Primary Source:

Alkalai, 103-107.

Secondary texts:

Dov Schwartz, *Religious-Zionism: History and Ideology*, 27-33.

Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism and Jewish Religious radicalism*, 10-39;

Chaim Waxman, "Messianism, Zionism and the State of Israel"

FINAL ESSAY DUE IN CLASS TODAY

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Prerequisites and Antirequisites:

Unless you have either the requisites for this course, as described in the Academic Calendar description of the course, or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites. The Academic Calendar description of each course also indicates which classes are considered antirequisites, i.e., to cover such similar material that students are not permitted to receive academic credit for both courses.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic Offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitute a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks is necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will do so for you, and they will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

Medical Issues:

The University recognizes that a student's ability to meet his/her academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by medical illness. Please go to https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/medical_accommodations_link_for_OOR.pdf to read about the

University's policy on medical accommodation. This site provides links the necessary forms. In the event of illness, you should contact Academic Counselling as soon as possible. The Academic Counsellors will determine, in consultation with the student, whether or not accommodation should be requested. They will subsequently contact the instructors in the relevant courses about the accommodation. Once the instructor has made a decision about whether to grant an accommodation, the student should contact his/her instructors to determine a new due date for tests, assignments, and exams.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Please contact the course instructor if you require material in an alternate format or if you require any other arrangements to make this course more accessible to you. You may also wish to contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Rebecca Dashford, Undergraduate Program Advisor, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84962 or rdashfo@uwo.ca