



RELIGIOUS STUDIES 2286F: INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM
Fall 2013

Professor: Dr. C. Halberstam

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Office: FB 002A

Office Hours: Wed 9:30-11:30

Class Time and Location:

Wednesdays 12:30-3:30

DL012

Prerequisites/Antirequisites:

There are no prerequisites or antirequisites with this course.

Unless you have either the requisites for this 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.

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to Judaism through the complex of practices, laws, and rituals that make up its liturgical year. By exploring the festivals and observances that comprise a single Jewish year, we will, on the one hand, be delving into the more experiential dimensions of the tradition, pursuing its conceptions of memory, the body, food, suffering, love. On the other hand, we will also be attentive to the other avenues of analysis since each festival and observance is conditioned by its textual sources and commentaries, its changes throughout history, its contesting voices, and the theologies and philosophies to which it has given rise. Emphasis will be placed on gaining a sense of the **diversity of Judaisms, post past and present.**

Course Objective:

By the end of the course, the successful student will have gained critical awareness, from the perspective of Religious Studies, of Judaism as a lived religion.

Course Materials:

- 1) Jewish Study Bible (available in UWO bookstore)
- 2) Shulevitz, *The Sabbath World* (available in UWO bookstore)
- 3) Kosofsky, *The Book of Customs: A Complete Handbook for the Jewish Year* [Please get Kindle edition. If you don't have a kindle (or an ipad or android tablet with free kindle app), you can easily read kindle books on your PC. See me to discuss.]
- 4) JPS *Commentary on the Haggadah* (available in UWO bookstore)
- 5) Coursepack (available in UWO bookstore; articles also posted online on OWL)

Course Format:

Lecture + Discussion

Goals

I see the classroom as your lab to experiment with **active** learning practices. During our class sessions, I will give you the opportunity to summarize, to explain, to interpret, to apply, to express and to compare. In other words, you will be asked to (1) lead discussions (2) participate in discussions (3) present on material you select yourself (4) write short sentences or paragraphs and (5) ask questions. I don't expect everyone to do all of those activities every week, but you can aim to do at least one of them each week (with the exception of some off-weeks; we all have those!).

Practice

This course is **not** exclusively a passive lecture course—you will be required to interact in a variety of academic and creative ways. I will lecture for a large portion most classes, but you will be required to come to class prepared and ready to respond to questions and participate in discussion. There are no wrong answers or bad contributions as long as you are respectful of others' opinions and willing to be challenged. You will also be required to prepare and deliver one collaborative presentation during the course of the term.

Methods of Evaluation:

Participation/Professionalism: 5%

- Participation – Participation marks are lost via non-medical absences or being unprepared on a day you are “on call.”
- Professionalism – Professionalism marks are lost by failing to have an appropriate, *professional* demeanour during class meetings or one-on-one meetings with the instructor--see below.

Quizzes: 20%

- 3 short-answer quizzes over the course of the term; based on lectures and readings.
- *If there is a valid medical or other reason a quiz cannot be taken when administered, documentation must be provided to the appropriate Faculty Dean's Office. Students who receive medical or other accommodation will have their other quizzes re-weighted to make up 20% of the course grade. Students who do not receive a medical or other accommodation and miss a quiz will receive a 0 as a quiz mark. The Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness can be found at: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf. The required Student Medical Certificate can be found at: [http://www.kings.uwo.ca/pt5/assets/File/SMC Revised March 2011.pdf](http://www.kings.uwo.ca/pt5/assets/File/SMC_Revised_March_2011.pdf)*

Essay Presentation: 15%

- One week before your essay is due, you will present your research collaboratively and enact the Jewish ritual you researched. This project is both academic and creative.
- *If there is a valid medical or other reason why an assigned presentation cannot be delivered, documentation will need to be provided to the appropriate Faculty Dean's office. If accommodation is given, students will be able to turn in a written précis of their presentation for a mark; if accommodation is not received, students will receive a 0 as their presentation grade. See policy above.*

Essay: 25%

- Approximate length: 10 pages, double spaced
- Topic: research paper on one life-cycle event in the Jewish religion.
- You are allowed—and even encouraged—to write your essay on the same topic as your in-class presentation.
- Due at 4 different times throughout the semester—you will be required to sign up for your essay topic in the first week of class. For every day that your essay is late, you lose 3 percentage points. Get it in on time!
- **Submission Guidelines**
 - Essays must be submitted on the specified date unless otherwise authorized. Essays will be submitted to Turnitin.com on OWL.
 - Essays received after a deadline will be penalized 3 percentage points per day.
- *If there is a valid medical or other reason the essay cannot be turned in on time, documentation must be provided to the appropriate Faculty Dean's Office. Students who receive medical or other accommodation will get extended time to finish the essay; students will be marked "Incomplete" until an essay is turned in and graded. See policy above.*

Final Exam: 35%

- Length: 2 hours.
- Based on lectures and readings—readings only from Quiz 4 and onward; lectures from entire course.
- *If there is a valid medical or other reason final exam cannot be taken when administered, documentation must be provided to the appropriate Faculty Dean's Office. Students who receive medical or other accommodation will take a make-up exam. Students who do not receive a medical or other accommodation and miss the final exam will receive a 0 as a final exam mark. See policy above.*

*Finally: What Do I Mean by "Professionalism"?

We all have different modes and personas based on the situations we're in: one mode with friends, another with family, another with our hairdresser, another with our employers, and so on. My understanding of university education is that we're in a *professional* relationship with one another, which means:

- You are an adult and responsible for the consequences of your own actions.

- You are expected to conduct yourselves with some degree of comfortable formality in the classroom and in meetings and correspondence with me.
- We are all responsible for contributing towards a comfortable and dynamic classroom environment.

Let's look at each of these items separately:

- *You are an adult and responsible for the consequences of your own actions.*

This means that:

- I will not take **attendance**, but I will give you the option of signing in to class so that there's 'objective proof' you were there.
- There will be **NO extensions or make-up work** unless you have a valid medical, family or other kind of emergency verified by the Academic Counsellor and/or if you let me know well in advance about conflicts with other classes, extracurricular activities, etc.
- You accept that **you earn your grades** and do not expect me to raise them for any reason other than a genuine error (for example: I missed a question on an exam; two pages of your essay were stuck together; my math was wrong in calculating percentages). At the same time, I will be happy to *explain* to you, in office hours or in a meeting, why you earned the grade you did.
- *You are expected to conduct yourselves with some degree of comfortable formality in the classroom and in meetings and correspondence with me.*

This means that:

- Your **attitude** should reflect the fact that we are in a professional setting and not a social one. Going to class ought to be like going to a meeting at your office; texting, surfing the web, IMing, emailing, joking around with friends, etc. is not considered professional behaviour, and is likely to get you reprimanded by your boss. Please treat the classroom with the same degree of professionalism. *I often notice these things going on, but don't always call them out. Calling them out is a choice I make based on the cost/benefit of doing so at that particular time. However, you may find yourself losing professionalism marks for engaging in such behaviours.*
- **Netiquette** is important. Emails to me should always start "Dear Dr. Halberstam" and end with your signature (= your name, not your dancing emoticon or animated gif). Don't try to contact me on facebook or my personal email accounts unless I have specifically directed you there! You can use the messaging system on WebCT, or my professional email: chaya.halberstam@uwo.ca
- *We are all responsible for contributing towards a comfortable and dynamic classroom environment.*
 - First and foremost: comfortable. A hostile classroom is like a hostile work environment: it makes you dread having to be there. I will *never* intentionally **belittle or offend** anyone in the classroom, and I expect you to hold yourselves to the same standards. Laughing with friends while someone else is talking—even if you're laughing about

something entirely unrelated—can make people feel self-conscious as they suspect you might be laughing at them. Just don't. Be attentive, or stare at the wall. Either one will work!

Dynamic. I don't think teaching = a one-woman show. What's the point? Why don't I just post my lectures, let you read them at home and come in and take the exams? The main advantage classroom teaching has over on-line learning is the formation of a group dynamic. I truly believe that two people are far more creative and innovative than one, 3 more than 2, etc. I would like to foster an environment in which we can all build off one another's ideas. That means **active engagement** with what's going on, rather than passive absorption. See "Class Format" for further details.

Schedule of Classes

Wk	Date	Topic	Reading <i>-most required readings will be discussed in class—be prepared!</i> <i>-Kosofsky will not be discussed in class but will give you background on the holiday/rituals and will be tested on exams & quizzes.</i>	Notes
1	Sept 11	Introduction: What is Judaism? Introduction to Ritual	- C. Bell, selection from "Ritual Symbols, Syntax, and Praxis"	
2	Sept 18	No Class: Erev Sukkot	<i>Start reading for next week—there's a lot!</i>	
3	Sept 25	Topic: Creation, Covenant, and Shabbat (1)	<i>Creation</i> - Genesis 1-3; Exodus 19-20, 23; Deuteronomy 1-11 - Fishbane, "Genesis 1:1-2:4a/The Creation" [coursepack] <i>Covenant</i> - Levinson, "The Sinai Covenant: The Argument of Revelation" [coursepack]	

			<p><i>Shabbat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exodus 16:1-30; 20:8-11; 31:12-17; 35:1-3; Leviticus 23:1-3; Numbers 15:32-36, 28:1,9-10; Isaiah 58:11-14; Jeremiah 17:21-27; Nehemiah 10:32; 13:15-22 - Mishnah Shabbat, Chapters 1-7 [coursepack] <i>optional</i> - Goldenberg, "Law and Spirit in Talmudic Religion" [coursepack] 	
4	Oct 2	<p>Topic: Creation, Covenant, and Shabbat (2)</p> <p>Modernity (Lecture)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shulevitz, <i>The Sabbath World: Glimpses of a Different Order of Time</i> <i>read introduction and choose one other chapter</i> 	<p>Student Presentations: Birth Rituals</p> <p>Quiz #1</p>
5	Oct 9	<p>Topic: Pilgrimage: Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot</p> <p><i>Pesach</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exodus 1-15; Song of Songs - Kosofky, 101-149 - JPS Haggadah, pp. 3-17; p. 64 (starting in the middle of the page with the words "the pair of songs")-p. 68 {refers to two songs printed on pp. 130-135}; pp. 74-77 	
6	Oct 16	<p>Topic: Pilgrimage: Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot</p> <p><i>Shavuot</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exodus 23:16, 34:22; Deuteronomy 16: 9-12; Numbers 28: 26; Leviticus 23: 15-22; Book of Ruth - Excerpts from Zohar [coursepack] - Kosofsky, 163-170 	<p>Student Presentations: Coming of Age Rituals</p> <p>Quiz #2</p>

7	Oct 23	<p>Topic: Pilgrimage: Sukkot, Shavuot, Pesach</p> <p><i>Sukkot</i></p> <p><i>Film Presentation: Ushpizin</i></p>	<p>- Judah Aryeh Leib Alter, "Sukkot," [coursepack]</p> <p>- Kosofsky 273-295</p> <p>- Blu Greenberg, "Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah," <i>optional</i> [coursepack]</p>	
8	Oct 30	<p>Topic: High Holy Days</p> <p><i>Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur</i></p>	<p>- I Samuel 1-2:10</p> <p>- Kosofsky, pp. 205-272</p> <p>- N. Aschkenasy, "The Power of Prayer: Hannah's Tale" <i>optional</i> [coursepack]</p> <p>- Leviticus 16</p> <p>- Maimonides, "Laws Concerning Repentance" [coursepack]</p> <p>- Soloveitchik, "Acquittal and Purification" <i>optional</i> [coursepack]</p>	<p>Student Presentations: Marriage Rituals</p> <p>Quiz #3</p>
9	Nov 6	<p>Topic: Rabbinic Festivals:</p> <p><i>Hanukkah & Purim</i></p>	<p>- Hanukkah: Postbiblical writings [coursepack]</p> <p>- Kosofsky 305-11; 355-359</p> <p>- Nathan Englander, "Reb Kringle" <i>optional</i> [coursepack]</p> <p>- Book of Esther</p> <p>- Victor Turner, "Carnival, Ritual, and play in Rio de Janeiro" [coursepack]</p>	
10	Nov 13	<p>Topic: Rabbinic Festivals: <i>Fast Days</i></p>	<p>- Book of Lamentations</p>	<p>Student Presentations: Death</p>

			- Kosofsky 175-177, 185-201	Rituals & Ideas of the Afterlife Quiz #4
11	Nov 20	Topic: RENEWAL and the CREATION of RITUAL <i>Yom Ha'atzmaut & Yom Ha'Shoah</i>	- Mayer, "National Symbols in Jewish Israel: Representation and Collective Memory" [coursepack] - Genesis 22 - Wiesel: "The Sacrifice of Isaac: A Survivor's Story" [coursepack]	
12	Nov 27	Topic: Old Holidays Made New <i>Rosh Chodesh & Tu B'Shvat</i>	- Agus, "This month is For You: Observing Rosh Hodesh as a Women's Holiday" [coursepack] - Shachter-Shalomi, excerpts from <i>Paradigm Shift optional</i> [coursepack] - Waskow, "Growing Tu B'Shvat" [coursepack] - Tu B'shevat Haggadah [OWL]	
13	Dec 4	Conclusions; Review for Final Exam	No Reading	

Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness:

(http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental health distress should refer to Mental Health@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth>

for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

University Students Council provides many valuable support services for students (including the health insurance plan) <http://westernusc.ca/services/>
Information about Counselling and Student Development Services at King's is available at <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/>
for emotional/mental health assistance see specifically: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/student-services/personal-counselling/>
The web site for Academic Services at King's University College is <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-deans-office>

Unless otherwise noted by your Professor, the following policy is in effect:

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices:

You are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations.

Use of Laptops in the Classroom

“King's University College at The University of Western Ontario acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of laptop computers can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of laptops by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using laptops for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct. See http://www.kings.uwo.ca/pt5/assets/File/code_of_conduct_2003.pdf. Inappropriate use of laptops during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.”

Statement on Academic Offences:

King's is committed to Academic Integrity.

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

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING ARE SERIOUS SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

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 for such checking 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>).

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

*The line between paraphrasing and plagiarism may often be hard to recognize. Even if you change every third or fourth word of a sentence in a book or on a website, **it is still considered plagiarism.** Even if you cite the source, if you use an exact quotation without the use of quotation marks **it is still considered plagiarism.** If in doubt, **ask!!***



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Mailbox re Submission of Late Essays/Assignments ONLY

Only late essays/assignments not handed in at class may be dropped off in the green mailbox, located on the main floor of The (south) Annex. Essays dropped into the mailbox will be picked-up twice per day: once in the morning (9:30 a.m.) and in the afternoon (4:00 p.m.). All essays dropped off after 4:00 p.m. on a Friday will be date-stamped the following Monday.

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(http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

Student Medical Certificate (SMC): <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/medicalform.pdf>

Tests/Examinations

Students are responsible for seeking accommodation with appropriate documentation, prior to writing tests/examinations, if they are of the view that their performance may be affected by extenuating circumstances.

Faculty Office Hours: Faculty office hours can be found on King's homepage under the menu heading Academics and are also posted on the bulletin board across from the Faculty Secretaries' Office on The 2nd floor of Dante Lenardon Hall.

Support Services

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for emotional/mental health assistance see specifically: <http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/campus-services/student-support-services/personal-counselling/>

The web site for Academic Services at King's University College is:

<http://www.kings.uwo.ca/current-students/courses-enrolment/program-and-course-planning/academic-advising/>