

1-2013

RLST 221.01: Judaism

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Office hours:
Tu Th 11:30am-1:00pm
& by appointment

RLST 221: Judaism

Spring 2013 Tu Th 9:40 – 11:00 am LA 342

Course Description:

This course introduces students to Judaism as a religion and to the history and traditions of Jewish people from ancient times to the present. We first ask, “What is Judaism?” And so we begin our course by questioning whether it is even possible to identify “Judaism,” given the vast historical expanse and cultural variety of our subject. We then start in the classical period, with the sacred texts, social movements, and core ideas that shaped Judaism in its formative age. From there, we set out to explore key developments in Judaism and Jewish history in the Middle Ages and especially modernity. We end the semester with a focus on important issues in contemporary Jewish life. Students will interact with classical Jewish texts including the Bible, the Talmud, and the Zohar, and will engage concepts and resources that shape Jewish life, thought, and identity today.

Prerequisites: None. No prior knowledge of Judaism, the Bible, or religion is expected.

Textbooks: The following textbooks are available at the UM Bookstore:

- Philip S. Alexander, *Textual Sources for the Study of Judaism* (University of Chicago, 1984)
- Michael Brenner, *A Short History of the Jews* (Princeton, 2010)
- Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History* (2nd edition. Oxford, 1995)
- Amos Oz and Fania Oz-Salzberger, *Jews and Words* (Yale, 2012)
- Michael L. Satlow, *Creating Judaism* (Columbia University, 2006)

e-reserve: additional *e-reserve* readings noted in the syllabus can be accessed through the Mansfield Library website (<http://eres.lib.umt.edu/eres/>) using the password “RLST221”

Course Requirements:

1. **Attendance and participation:** Regular attendance is required for this course. Preparation for and participation in class meetings is expected and essential.
2. **Readings:** Plan to complete all readings before the class on which they are assigned. Bring the assigned readings to class with you.
3. **Quizzes:** 2 quizzes will be given over the course of the semester, on material assigned and discussed in class.
4. A **midterm** and **final exam** will be given on assigned readings and class discussions.
5. An **essay** of **5-7 pages** will be due at the end of the semester, on an assigned topic.

Grading:

- 1 Attendance, preparation, and participation: 15%
2. Two quizzes: 15%
3. Midterm exam: 25%
4. Paper (5-7 pages): 20 %
5. Final exam: 25%.

Course Policies:

- 1) There will be no make-up exams or extensions unless the student has made arrangements at least a week ahead of time. Except in the case of a documented emergency, late assignments will result in a decrease of one letter grade per day.
- 2) Attendance: Students are allowed two cuts with no penalties or questions asked. Each additional cut will reduce the attendance and participation grade by 10% (that is, 1.5% of your final grade). However, *more than 7 cuts will result in failure for the course*. Early departures from the classroom will be counted as absences. If you must miss a class meeting, it is then your responsibility to obtain from a classmate any class notes and other assignment and scheduling information discussed during your absence.
- 3) This is a course about religion as an academic subject in cultural and historical context. This is not a class that teaches religion or religious doctrine from a religious and/or devotional perspective. In this class, we will be examining religious texts and traditions in an academic and secular setting, and all topics are open to questioning, examination, and interpretation. An interest in exploring new ideas and methods are essential. This class is not a forum for expressions of personal theology.
- 4) Plagiarism – the presentation of others’ work as your own – is an offense punishable by course failure and/or expulsion. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and all references to ideas from books, articles, or other sources must be cited correctly. If you do not know how to properly reference your work, or you are in doubt whether or not you should cite material, refer to the University guidelines, or make an appointment to see the instructor to discuss the problem. Anyone found guilty of plagiarism, cheating, forgery, falsification or any other form of academic dishonesty will fail this course and the incident will be reported to the Dean.

Course Schedule:

*Note: Our schedule may change as our course develops. Regular attendance will ensure that you are informed of any changes.

I. Introductions and Definitions

Tuesday 1/29

Introductions

Thursday 1/31

Definitions: Judaism, Religion

Satlow, 1-21

(and read the first pages of *Jews and Words*)

II. Judaism Today: A Snapshot

Tuesday 2/5

Judaism in America and Israel

Satlow, 22-68

III. The Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel

Thursday 2/7, Tuesday 2/12

Brenner, 1-29

Bible (use any translation and bring it to class):

Genesis 1-3; Job 38:1-38 (creation)

Genesis 12:1-9; 18:1-15; 21:1-7; 22:1-19; 25:7-34; 27:1-28:22; 29:31-30:24; 32:22-32; 35:1-29 (Ancestors)

Exodus 1, 3:1-15; 14-15 (Exodus)

Genesis 17; Exodus 19-20; Deuteronomy 6: 4-25; 26:5-9 (Covenant)

2 Samuel 7; Psalm 132 (Jerusalem, David)

Leviticus 1; 11-12; 19; Num 28-30 (Priests, Temple, Holiness, Purity)

Jeremiah 1, 7; Micah 3:9-12 (Prophecy)

2 Kings 17:5-23; 22:1-23:3; 24:1-25:12; Psalm 137; Jeremiah 29:1-14; 37:1-14 (Exile)

Isaiah 40:1-5; 44:24-28; 45:1-7; Ezra 1, 3; Nehemiah 8:1-8 (Return)

IV. The Second Temple Period

Thursday 2/14

Satlow, 96-114

Brenner, 31-53

Tuesday 2/19

Dead Sea Scrolls: Community Rule (*e-reserve*)

Philo: Judaism's first philosopher (*e-reserve*)

V. The Rabbis

Thursday 2/21

The Rabbinic Movement

Satlow, 115-39

Brenner, 54-67

Tuesday 2/26 ***Quiz 1**

Rabbinic Concepts

Satlow, 140-63

Textual Sources, 78-83

Thursday 2/28

The Mitzvoth

Satlow, 164-86

Textual Sources, 83-95

Tuesday 3/5

Rabbinic Literature: Midrash and Talmud

Textual Sources, 57-68

A Page of Talmud (*e-reserve*)

VI. Judaism under Christendom and Islam: Philosophers, Poets, and Mystics

Thursday 3/7

The Geonim

Satlow, 187-208

Brenner, 69-83

Tuesday 3/12

Philosophy

Satlow, 209-28

Brenner 84-93

Textual Sources, 105-16

Thursday 3/14

Jewish Life in the Middle Ages

Brenner, 95-135

Selected Medieval Historical and Legal Documents (*e-reserve*)

Tuesday 3/19

Kabbalah

Satlow, 229-49

Brenner 137-49

Textual Sources, 116-32

Thursday 3/21 ***Midterm Exam***

VII. Jews and Judaism in the Modern World

Tuesday 3/26

Judaism Meets Modernity

Satlow, 250-87

Brenner, 151-82

Textual Sources, 132-36, 143-46

Thursday 3/28

Enlightenment, Emancipation

Brenner, 182-200

Mendes-Flohr, I: "Harbingers of Political and Economic Change" (docs. 8, 9, 10); II: "Harbingers of Cultural and Ideological Change" (docs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6); III: "The Process of Political Emancipation," (docs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Tuesday 4/2, Thursday 4/4: Spring Break

Tuesday 4/9

Reform, Orthodox

Brenner, 200-07;

Mendes-Flohr, IV: "Emerging Patterns of Religious Adjustment" (docs. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13)

Textual Sources, 136-43, 146-50

[Thursday 4/11] ***Quiz 2: Judaism and Modernity**

Film: TBA

Brenner, 209-53

Tuesday 4/16

Zionism: Formative Ideas and Movements

Mendes-Flohr, X: "Zionism" (docs. 1-22)

Textual Sources, 155-64

Brenner, 253-71, 273-85; 306-17

Thursday 4/18

Shoah

Mendes-Flohr, VII: "Political and Racial Anti-Semitism," (selections); XI: "The Holocaust," (selections)

Saul Friedlander, *The Holocaust*, 412-44 (e-reserve)

Brenner, 319-47

Tuesday 4/23

Israel

Brenner, 349-64, 377-87

Mendes-Flohr, X: "Zionism" (docs. 22-31)

Textual Sources, 164-71

HaAretz

VIII. Contemporary Issues

Thursday 4/25

Jews and Judaism in America

Brenner, 209-221, 223-53; 364-77.

Kaplan, "The Evolution of the Idea of God in Jewish Religion (*e-reserve*)

The Forward (selections)

Tuesday 4/30

The Status of Women

Jews and Words, 57-105

Nadel, Heschel, "The Feminist Confrontation with Judaism" (*e-reserve*)

Reform Responsa: Ordination of Women (*e-reserve*)

Thursday 5/2

Same-Sex Relations

Leviticus 18

Rappaport, "Judaism and Homosexuality: An Authentic Orthodox View"

Reform Responsa: Judaism and Homosexuality (*e-reserve*)

Conservative Responsa: Same Gender Officiation and Marriage (*e-reserve*)

[Tuesday 5/7]

Film: "Trembling Before G-d"

Jews and Words, 105-46

Thursday 5/9

***Paper Due**

Jewish Identity: Religious and Secular

Jews and Words, 147-204

Final Exam: Monday, May 13, 8:00 – 10:00 am