

JEWISH CULTURAL HISTORY
Hebrew/Jewish/Religious Studies 377
Spring 2009

Instructor: Richard Benton

Time: T, Th 1:00-2:15 PM

Office Hours: T 11:45-12:45; Th 2:20-3:20;
or by appointment

Office: Van Hise 1340

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Final: Sunday, May 10, 2:45-4:45

Course Description

The goal of this course is to provide a historically-oriented introduction to Judaism. Through lectures, readings, and discussion in class students will gain an understanding of how Judaism came into being and how it developed into many “Judaisms” over time. Special emphasis will be put on the development of Judaism in contact with other cultures.

• This class has three basic goals:

- (1) To learn the basic history of Judaism from its origins to the medieval period (c. 1000 C.E.) in the context of neighboring communities
- (2) To identify and explore some of the major religious and social transformations experienced by Jewish communities during this period.
- (3) To examine and interpret primary sources related to our topic.

Textbooks

Required textbooks:

- David Biale, ed., *Cultures of the Jews, Vol.1: Mediterranean Origins* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002).
- Lawrence H. Schiffman, *Texts and Traditions: A Source Reader for the Study of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*, (Hoboken: Ktav Publishing House, 1998).
- A Bible (any academically serious English translation, such as the New Revised Standard Version or the Jewish Publication Society *Tanakh*). If you do not own one, there are many copies available in the libraries and on-line.
- Other readings may be found on the Learn @ UW site.

Recommended textbook:

- Martin S. Jaffee, *Early Judaism: Religious Worlds of the First Judaic Millennium* (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2006).

Assignments and Grades

- Exams (40%)

There are **two exams**, a midterm (20%) on **March 12th** and a final (20%) on **May 10th**. Exams are not cumulative. The exams include identification and essay questions. You must come to the exam the day it is given. Exceptions can be made in the case of an emergency with proper documentation (note from a doctor, Dean's office, etc.).

- Movie Reaction Paper (10%)

Students will be asked to answer a few questions about the movie watched in class. The paper is due **April 28th**. Its length should be *no more* than 2 pages. A late paper will be reduced by one letter grade for every day it is late.

- Research Paper/Book Review (20%)

Students will write a paper on one of the following:

- (1) *Academic Book Review* – Students may write a review of an academic book on a topic related to the course. Books must be approved by the TAs. (8 pp.)
- (2) *Literary Book Review* – Students may write a literary review of a novel or work of travel literature that is prominently concerned with Jewish culture. Books must be approved by the TAs. (10 pp.)
- (3) *Research Paper* – Students may write a research paper on a narrow topic related to a period, community or cultural aspect of Jewish history. Topics must be approved by the TAs. (8 pp.)

Requirements for the papers will be distributed in discussion sections.

- (1) Students need to select their book or topic and have it *approved by* (not *submitted to*) their TA by **February 24th** (10 points).
- (2) The paper is due in lecture on **April 21st** (90 points).

- Discussion & Participation (25%)

Active participation in a discussion section is required. Your TAs will provide additional guidelines. Each student must bring the required reading for the class period to class. Students are expected to read the textbook readings before the lecture under which it is indicated. For each lecture you will be required to *write down* two questions total for each day's reading(s). (The questions should come from separate readings, if possible.) You will be called on to participate in class discussion, including presenting your questions. You will be required to turn in your questions on occasion, unannounced, which will constitute 10% of your discussion grade.

- Lecture Series Report (5%)

You must attend one of the following lectures:

- “A Reading from H.G. Adler's ‘The Journey’ ”
Peter Filkins
Tuesday, *February 10th* - 4 pm -
Pyle Center (702 Langdon)
- “Art and Politics”
Professor Renata Stih and Doctor
Frieder Schnock
Thursday, *February 19th* - 4 pm
– Pyle Center (702 Langdon)

- **“The Palestinian Refugees as a Jewish Question: The Lost Voice of Simon Rawidowicz”**
Professor David Myers
Thursday, *March 26th* – 4 pm – Pyle Center (702 Langdon)
 - **Stanford J. Ettlinger Lecture “Israel's First Sixty Years: Achievements and Challenges”**
Dr. Robert O. Freedman
Wednesday, *April 1st*–7 pm– Memorial Union (800 Langdon)
 - **Kutler Lectures (you only need to go to one of these)**
Professor David Hollinger
“Jews, Multiculturalism, and American Ethnoracial and Religious History”
- Monday, *April 13th* - 4 pm - Pyle Center (702 Langdon)
and
“American Jewish History in a Post-Jewish Domain”
Tuesday, *April 14th* - 4 pm - Pyle Center (702 Langdon)
 - **Paul J. Schrag Lecture “In Rivers North of the Future: Paul Celan's Poetry and Thought.”**
Professor Amir Eshel
Thursday, *April 23rd* – 7 pm – Pyle Center
 - **“Ancient Synagogues in the Land of Israel”**
Professor Jodi Magness
Tuesday, *April 28th* – 7:30 pm - Pyle Center (702 Langdon)

All students of this class must write a one-page summary of the lecture you attend, which will count for 5% of your grade. The summary *must* include the date of the lecture, the name of the lecture and lecturer, the main point the lecturer was making, and how he or she made his or her point. It *may* include to what extent you were convinced by the presentation, as long as your opinion is explained. This write-up is **due to your TA no more than one week after the lecture you choose takes place.**

Grading Summary and Scale

	Total Points	Grade Scale	
Midterm	20	94-100	A
Final	20	87-93	AB
Movie Reaction Paper	10	80-86	B
Research Paper/Book Review	20	73-79	BC
Discussion	25	66-72	C
Lecture Paper	5	60-65	D
Total	100	0-59	F

Excused absences for religious holidays must be arranged *in advance* with the professor. The professor will be sensitive to students’ religious preferences, and will, if at all possible, accommodate student requests for an excused absence.

Paper Protocol

1. Times New Roman or Arial font
2. 1" margin on all four sides
3. Double-spaced; no spacing between paragraphs
4. Turn in hard copy, *not email*, unless explicitly allowed by TA
5. Half-grade lower for every day it is late (A → AB, AB → B, etc.)

Academic Integrity and Etiquette

Integrity: The following are examples of violations of standards for academic honesty and are subject to academic sanctions: cheating on exams, submitting collaborative and/or others' work as one's own, falsifying course work, stealing examinations or course materials, submitting work previously submitted in another course (unless specifically approved by the instructor), falsifying documents or signing an instructor's or administrator's name to any document or form, or aiding another student in any of these actions. Cheating on exams or assignments will be dealt with under University of Wisconsin System Administrative code, chapter 14. For more information see <http://www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html>.

Remember:

- If it is not your idea, you must give credit by citing the original work. If you reword someone else's idea, it is not your idea. NOT CITING OTHERS' IDEAS IS PLAGIARISM! For ancient texts, name of work (Genesis, Qohelet, etc.) and chapter, verse/line is enough. For class texts, last name and page number suffices. You can find information on how to cite sources in general here: <http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QuotingSources.html>
- Internet sources are not your ideas. Hence, you must cite them. If you cut and pasted, you must cite. NOT CITING INTERNET SOURCES IS PLAGIARISM! Also, some internet sources are bad and/or inaccurate, so be judicious in using them. Do not use "Wikipedia" except as a starting point for research.

Etiquette: Attendance for the lectures is very important, since there is no single source in the library (or the internet) for the material covered in the lectures. Attendance will not be taken directly, but the ability to complete the course assignments will indirectly reflect your attendance. Timeliness helps provide a positive learning experience for the whole class. Class will begin and end on time. Out of respect for your classmates, please also refrain from any other behavior that might be distracting. Students whose behavior in class is disruptive can expect a significant reduction in their final grade.

Class Schedule

The following is a schedule of topics for each lecture of the semester. This schedule may change as the semester progresses.

- January 20 Introduction – What? Why? How?
Biale, xv-xxxi, 3-7

Unit I – Ancient Israel

- January 22 Creation & Cosmos
Biale 9-12; Genesis 1-11
- January 27 Patriarchs in Context
Biale 48-58; Genesis 25-35
- January 29 Moses & Exodus
Biale 12-24; Exodus 1-16
- February 3 Law & Establishment in Land
Biale 24-41; Exodus 17, 19-24; Schiffman, 39-47
- February 5 Monarchy in History & Tradition
Biale 41-48, 63-75; I Samuel 8, 16-19; 1 Kings 1-3; 2 Kings 23
- February 10 Temple: Ritual Space
Biale 58-63; Exodus 25-28; I Kings 5-9
- February 12 Prophecy
Schiffman, *Text to Tradition* 28-31 [on Learn @ UW]; 1 Kings 18; Isaiah 6; Hosea 1-3; Ezekiel 1-3, 37
- February 17 Exile
Seltzer 32-43; 2 Kings 20, 24-25; Jeremiah 20-22; Psalm 137

Unit II – Second Temple Judaism

- February 19 Persian Yehud; Second Temple; Bible
Schiffman, *Text to Tradition*, 33-59 [on learn @ UW]; Ezra 1-10; Schiffman, 80-85, 89-92
- February 24 Hellenistic Palestine; **Paper Topic Due**
Biale 77-94; I Maccabees 1-4 [on Learn @ UW]; Schiffman, 160-63
- February 26 Hellenistic Diaspora: Alexandria, Babylonia, (Elephantine)
Biale 117-132; Schiffman, 73-76, 125-29, 199-203

- March 3 Hellenistic Literature: Bible
Biale 102-117; Ecclesiastes/Qohelet; Daniel 7-8
- March 5 Hellenistic Literature: Non-Biblical
Biale 94-102; Schiffman, 203-230
- March 10 Roman Period: Hasmoneans to Roman-Jewish War
Biale 135-149; Schiffman, 442-69
- March 12 **MIDTERM EXAM**
- March 17 & 19 **SPRING BREAK**

Unit III – Rabbinic Judaism

- March 24 Jewish Sects: Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes/Qumran, Christianity (pt. 1)
Biale 149-157; Schiffman, 266-75, 354-367
- March 26 Christianity (pt. 2); Roman Period: 70-313 CE
Biale 181-193; Schiffman, 407-427, 487-94
- March 31 State of Rabbinic Judaism: Cosmos & Community
Biale 162-179; Schiffman, 522-31
- April 2 Rabbinic Literature: Mishnah
Schiffman, 531-47
- April 7 313-622 CE: Jews in Byzantine Empires
Biale 193-221; Schiffman, 571-85
- April 9 *Passover: No Class*
- April 14 Jewish Life in Babylonia; Rabbinic Literature: Talmud, Midrash
Biale 223-232; Schiffman, 596-610, 627-38, 638-56

Unit IV – Medieval Judaism

- April 16 Judaism under Islam
Biale 267-281
- April 21 *Movie; Paper Due*
- April 23 Judaism in Sepharad: Social Organization
Biale 282-302

- April 28 Judaism in Sepharad: Philosophy; **Movie Reaction Paper Due**
Seltzer, 373-408
- April 30 Judaism in Medieval Ashkenaz
Seltzer, 350-64
- May 5 Mysticism, Kabbalah, Zohar
Sherwin TBA; Schiffman, 735-48
- May 7 Course Conclusion
Biale 303-306
- ***Final Exam*** – **Sunday, May 10, 2:45-4:45**