Introduction to Judaism
Fall 2015
Jewish Studies 211
Religious Studies 211

Instructor:
Professor Jordan D. Rosenblum
Office: 1404 Sterling Hall
Office Hours: Monday/Tuesday 10:00-11:00 am; and by appointment
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Course Hours:
Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:45 pm

Prerequisite(s):
This course assumes no prior knowledge of Hebrew and/or Judaism.

Course Description:
This course surveys the major practices, beliefs, and traditions of Judaism. Throughout, we will ask: what is Judaism? In an attempt to answer this deceptively simple question, students will examine how Jewish communities across history have shaped their practices and beliefs within their own specific historical circumstances. Further, students will explore how Jewish self-identity, textual traditions, and religious practices combine to define “Judaism.” Students will interact with primary sources, including (but not limited to) the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, and the Zohar.

Course Goals:
Through guided reading in the classroom and at home, students will learn how to read historical documents, in general. Students will further develop these analytical skills through several writing assignments, both in class and take home. Finally, students will understand the historical development and the literature of rabbinic Judaism.

Classroom Etiquette:
In both class and discussion sections, students are expected to arrive on time and should not engage in private conversations. Students wishing to use laptops must: (1) sit in the first three rows of class; and (2) refrain from using them for anything besides taking class notes. There is a one-strike policy for using laptops for anything else. Should any instructor observe you playing on the internet, etc., you will no longer be allowed to use your laptop in class for the remainder of the semester. There is no reason for a student to be talking or sending texts on a cellular phone during class time. This is distracting to both professor and students. Students whose behavior in class is disruptive can expect a significant reduction in their final grade.
Requirements and Grading:
(1) Regular class attendance of lectures and careful preparation of assigned texts are essential aspects of this course. Readings are to be completed for the class day upon which they appear on the syllabus. Please bring the assigned texts to both class and discussion section each week. In grading papers and tests, we will be particularly concerned that you are learning the material and concepts that are taught in class sessions. Prior learning of Jewish sources is not a substitute for doing the work required by this course.

(2) Attendance and participation in sections: 10%. Active involvement in discussion sections is highly important. Your teaching assistant will provide an additional syllabus with standards and guidelines.

(3) Regular Pop Quizzes: 10%. Throughout the semester, students should expect to receive occasional in-class pop quizzes. These short quizzes will assess students’ knowledge of course readings. If a student is absent when a pop quiz is given, then the grade for that quiz will be a 0. At the end of the semester, the lowest quiz grade will be dropped, and the remaining grades will be averaged and will count towards 10% of each student’s overall grade.

   (a) Students have the opportunity to replace up to two (2) pop quizzes by attending a CJS lecture (information available online at: http://jewishstudies.wisc.edu/lectures/) and writing a one page response paper. Each response paper will replace one quiz grade. The structure of the response paper is as follows: one paragraph summarizing the content and thesis of the lecture and one paragraph of your own critical assessment of the lecture. Each paper must be submitted to your teaching assistant within one week of the lecture. Late papers will not be accepted.

(4) Two papers: 15% each; 30% total. Two short papers, each not more than three typed, double-spaced pages, will be assigned during the semester. They are due at the beginning of class on October 5 and November 25.

(5) Midterm: 20%. There will be one midterm, given in-class on October 26. It may address any of the readings and class discussions up to that point.

(6) Take-Home Exam: 30%. The take-home exam, due by 7:05 PM on December 19, will be cumulative and will address issues covered in the readings and class discussions.

(7) You may sign up for honors credit, which can be a very productive way of exploring your own interests in relation to the topics of the course. If you do so, it is your responsibility to talk with the professor to arrange your honors work in the first two weeks of the semester.

**Students are expected to bring relevant texts to every class**
**Honor Code:**
Students are expected to follow the University of Wisconsin-Madison Academic Honor Code. If students have any questions about this policy, please speak with your teaching assistant or the instructor. More information on plagiarism can be found at: http://www.wisc.edu/writing/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

**Extension Policy:**
Extensions on papers and exams **will not be granted.** For each 24-hour period that a paper or exam is late, the student’s grade will be reduced by one full letter grade.

**Required Books:**
(2) Jeffrey Rubenstein, *Rabbinic Stories (RS)*
(3) Electronic Reserve: Learn@UW (*R*)

**All books are available for purchase at the University Bookstore**

**Class Schedule:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 2</td>
<td>Introduction; Studying Religion and Defining Judaism</td>
<td><em>CJ</em>, 1-21</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 7</td>
<td><strong>No Class: Labor Day</strong></td>
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<td>September 9</td>
<td>Contemporary Judaism: Overview</td>
<td><em>CJ</em>, 22-68</td>
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<td>September 14</td>
<td><strong>No Class: Rosh Hashanah</strong></td>
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<td>September 16</td>
<td>Jewish Identity in the United States</td>
<td><em>Leavy, Sandy Koufax</em>, 167-194 (<em>R</em>); Tuchman and Levine, ““Safe Treyf,”” 1-23 (<em>R</em>)</td>
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<td>September 21</td>
<td>Creating Judaism</td>
<td><em>CJ</em>, 69-95; Numbers 5:11-31 (<em>R</em>)</td>
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<td><em>Paper One topics distributed</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 23</td>
<td><strong>No Class: Yom Kippur</strong></td>
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<td>September 28</td>
<td>The Hebrew Bible: A Brief Survey</td>
<td>*Genesis 1-3; Exodus 2:1-4:18; 7; 19-23; Deuteronomy 4-6; 12; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1; Proverbs 8 (<em>R</em>)</td>
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<td>September 30</td>
<td>The Second Temple Period</td>
<td><em>CJ</em>, 96-114; Community Rule (<em>R</em>)</td>
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October 5  The Rabbis  
Reading: *CJ*, 115-139  
** Paper One due in class **

October 7  Text Workshop: Midrash  

October 12  Text Workshop: Talmud  
Reading: *RS*, 80-84, 114-118, 128-135

October 14  Rabbinic Concepts: God and Creation  
Reading: *CJ*, 140-163

October 19  Rabbinic Concepts: Torah, Revelation, Israel, and Redemption  
Reading: *RS*, 104-113, 163-166, 169-175, 215-217, 229-248

October 21  Mitzvot: Overview and Kashrut  
Reading: *CJ*, 164-186; Reread Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14 (*R*); “Jewish Dietary Laws” (*R*)

October 26  **MIDTERM** (in class)

October 28  Mitzvot: Sacred Time and Prayer  
Reading: Mishnah Shabbat 7 (*R*); Mishnah Pesahim 10 (*R*); Mishnah Sukkah 1-2 (*R*); Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1 (*R*); Mishnah Yoma 8:9 (*R*); Mishnah Berakhot (*R*)

November 2  Mitzvot: Lifecycle  
Reading: Marcus, “Bar Mitzvah, Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation,” 82-123 (*R*); Selections (*R*)

November 4  Geonim  
Reading: *CJ*, 187-208  
*Paper Two topics distributed*

November 9  Maimonides  
Reading: *CJ*, 209-228; Selections from Maimonides (*R*)

November 11  Mysticism  
Reading: *CJ*, 229-249; Selections from Zohar (*R*)

November 16  The Dawn of Modernity  
Reading: *CJ*, 250-287
November 18  The Rise of Jewish Denominationalism  
Reading: Reform Responsum on Cosmetic surgery (R);  
Conservative Responsum on Same Sex Marriage and Divorce (R);  
Orthodox Responsum on Writing “G-d” (R)

November 23  **NO CLASS: Work on Paper Two**

November 25  **NO CLASS: Work on Paper Two**  
** Paper Two Due By End of Class **

November 30  Jewish Denominationalism: Women and Gender  
Reading: Charmé, “The Political Transformation of Gender Traditions at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, 5-34 (R)

December 2  The Holocaust  
Reading: Friedländer, “The Holocaust,” 412-444 (R)

December 7  Israel  
Reading: The Jewish Political Tradition, 295-309, 424-440, 501-509 (R)

December 9  Jews and UW-Madison  
Reading: Pollack, “Jewish Problems: Eastern and Western Jewish Identities in Conflict At the University of Wisconsin, 1919-1941,” 161-180 (R)

December 14  Conclusions and Review  
Reading: CJ, 287-296

December 19  **TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE**  
7:05 PM