

## Course Outline

Course: Introduction to Judaism – JS217/RS210

Location: TBD

Time: Tuesday 2:30-5:20pm

Office Hours: Tuesday (by Appointment)

## Course Description:

What is Judaism? The task of this course is to provide students with a survey of Judaism from its origins to the present. The course will not limit itself to only thinking of Judaism simply as a religious doctrine with its texts, laws, rituals, and holidays. Included within our study of Judaism will *also* be materials give us an idea of how Judaism has been challenged by (or challenged) its historical context; either adapting to it, rejecting it, or assimilating into it. To this end, we will read primary and secondary texts that span the Written Torah, the Oral Rabbinical tradition, Jewish Philosophy, Kabbala (Jewish Mysticism), Hasidism, the Enlightenment, the Holocaust, and the creation of the Jewish State; as well as concepts such as Creation, Revelation, and Redemption, Chosenness, Kashrut, etc. We will do this while taking account of many expulsions and migrations of the Diaspora, as well as cultures around the world that have effected the shape Judaism. This will give us a sense of Judaism's dynamic nature; its past, present, and possible futures.

## Grading:

Students will be given **two take-home assignments** in the middle and end of the course. Each assignment will be worth 25%. Students will also be asked to keep a **weekly journal** that corresponds to the topics learned, themes discussed in class, or reflections one has in readings in class each week. The thing I am looking to gauge is what has been learned and what questions and responses / reactions the class and its content has fostered. This journal will account for 20% of the grade. In addition, students will be required to write one **ten to fifteen page essay** at the end of the term. The essay will be worth 30% of the final grade. The topics to be covered in each of the assignments will be based on the material covered in the first and second half of the course. Possible topics will be provided; although students are at liberty to choose other topics not provided by the instructor.

## NOTE ON AVOIDANCE OF ACADEMIC OFFENSES:

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid

committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm>

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4,

<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm>

**Appeals:** A student may appeal the finding and/or penalty in a decision made under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than regarding a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline if a ground for an appeal can be established. Read Policy 72 - Student Appeals, <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm>

**Academic Integrity website (Arts):**

[http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic\\_responsibility.html](http://arts.uwaterloo.ca/arts/ugrad/academic_responsibility.html)

**Academic Integrity Office (UW):** <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:**

**Note for students with disabilities:** The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.

**Cross-listed course:**

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

**Texts for the Course:**

- a) **Judaism: Norton Anthology of World Religions, ed. David Biale (J)\***
- b) **A Short History of the Jews by Michael Brenner (SHJ)\***
- c) **Introducing Judaism by Eliezer Segal (IJ)\***

\* Abbreviations for the texts to be read in the schedule

**Class Schedule/Readings:**

**Class 1 – Introduction to Class – What is Judaism? What is the difference between Judaism and Jewishness? What is the Oral and Written Tradition and the Commandments? How is Judaism a practice, or a way of life? A high-level historical and religious overview of the course content.**

**Class 2 –The Torah / Bible. First Temple Judaism. Introduction and Survey of the T’NACH; Reading the Torah / Bible: IJ (1-20); J (59-154); SHJ (1-17)**

**Class 3 – Second Temple Judaism Diaspora, Roman Palestine, and Babylonia: Origins of the Rabbinic Tradition (Jewish Law; Mishna and Talmud): SHJ (19-67); J (193-282); IJ 21-59**

**Class 4 – Second Temple Judaism, continued (same readings as week 3; discussion of the texts completed)**

**Class 5 – Jews in the Christian and Islamic World: Medieval Jewish Commentary and Philosophy: SHJ (69-135); IJ (60-85); J (285-273) - Assignment #1**

**Class 6 – Medieval Kabbalah and Messianism: IJ (86-105); J (420-464); SHJ (137-149) –**

**Class 7 – Pre-Modern Eastern Europe: Hassidim, Eastern-European Haskalah: (J) 465-490; SHJ (151-165)**

**Class 8 – Enlightenment, Emancipation and Modern Judaism in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Europe: SHJ (167-207); IJ (106-133); J (493-558)**

**Class 9 – Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Jewish Thought – Coming to America: SJH (223-253); J (564-604) - Assignment #2**

**Class 10 – The Interwar Years in Europe and Zionism: SJH (255-317); J (663-719)**

**Class 11 – The Holocaust (Shoah): J (631-662); SJH (319-387); Supplementary Readings**

**Class 12 – Final Lecture – Judaism, in the Present Moment and its Future; Modern Antisemitism and its Implications in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Final Essay and Journals are Due One Week After this Final Lecture**