Jews and Jewishness Winter 2025

JS 209 / RS 209

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Class Schedule

Course	Meet Days	Meet Time	Location	Instructor(s)
JS 209 / RS 209 081 [LEC]	Online			M. Feuer *mmfeuer@uwaterloo.ca (mailto:mm…*

schedule data automatically refreshed daily

Instructor & TA (Teaching Assistant) Information

Use the LEARN Course Discussions forum to communicate with your instructor and classmates. Discussion topics can be accessed in LEARN by clicking **Connect** and then **Discussions** on the course navigation bar.

For questions of a personal nature, please email your instructor or your TA:

Instructor: Menachem Feuer
mmfeuer@uwaterloo.ca (mailto:mmfeuer@uwaterloo.ca)

The Jewish Studies Department can be reached at js-online@uwaterloo.ca (mailto:js-online@uwaterloo.ca) .

Course Description

> *Calendar Description for JS 209 / RS 209:*
>
> This course examines the central elements that make up contemporary Jewish identity/identities, traditional and otherwise, with particular focus on the North American Jewish experience and the nature of Jewish modernity. It explores historical, literary, religious, and social issues that have contributed to the formation of these identities.
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> JS 209: View requirements for JS 209 (https://acal.fast.uwaterloo.ca/course/1251/JS/209)
>
> RS 209: View requirements for RS 209 (https://acal.fast.uwaterloo.ca/course/1251/RS/209)

What You Will Learn

The Jewish people are amongst the smallest nations in the world and they certainly have been for a long time. We hear about Jews in relation to Israel, the Holocaust, New York, Hollywood, the business world, and many other things. But who are they? What do they do? And what does it mean for a person to be Jewish? These are legitimate questions that this course looks to address, discuss, and answer.

This course offers a multi-disciplinary, online, and interactive meditation. Ten learning modules expose students to the key elements that make up contemporary Jewish identities — traditional and otherwise — with particular focus on the North American Jewish experience and the nature of Jewish modernity.

Subjects are approached historically, sociologically, anthropologically, and from a religious studies perspective. As a whole, the course aims to demystify Jews and Judaism by exploring the complexity and variety of Jewish experiences.

Learning Outcomes

No explicit learning outcomes defined for this course.

How You Will Learn

In each module, you will be guided through a series of "tasks", questions, excerpts from scholarly writings, primary sources (images, texts, websites, movie clips, etc.), and, sometimes, graded assignments or quizzes.

The modules require you to analyze what you see and read, and to think about how the various aspects of Jews or Judaism you encounter are inter-connected.

In each module, you will be prompted to answer a set of sophisticated questions. The goal of these questions is to prompt you to make connections with broad themes that preoccupy the course as a whole, and draw out further implications that grow out of your thinking.

The overall goal of this type of learning is to immerse and actively engage you in addressing, understanding, and analyzing course topics from a perspective that is grounded in everyday life and perception, on the one hand, and in an academic perspective, on the other. By following the lead of the modules and working with other students, you will partake in both.

Key Terms that Appear Throughout the Modules

Goals

The pedagogical aims for the given modules vary. Instructors have designed each respective module activity with these goals in mind. And the instructors expect you to realize these goals. These will be stated at the outset of each module.

Point of Departure

Each week will begin with a compelling "Point of Departure", through which you will gain insight into the more complex tensions, forces, and ideas that preoccupy the module.

Reading

Scholarly readings provide you with a better picture of the module's theme. These readings might be excerpts from books or articles, from long-ago scholarly works, or full essays from scholarly journals from a variety of disciplines (sociology, philosophy, history, theology, etc.). We have tried to keep the reading to no more than 40pgs/wk. Readings have been provided in the course as PDF's.

"Consider" and "Questions"

There are a number of questions in each module. Questions under "Consider" are there for reflection. Questions under "Questions" are designed for you to take time to record your answers.

Responses

Each week you will either submit a 1-pg (250 word) **Response Assignment** to the selected topic or issue in the module, or take a **Response Quiz**. Clear directions will be provided and you will see, from the Course Schedule, when a Response Assignment is scheduled or a Response Quiz is scheduled. There will be a total of four quizzes and six assignments. For details on grading, check the Grade Breakdown below.

Tentative Course Schedule

Please see the Course Schedule in LEARN for complete details.

Texts / Materials

Note: Any prices provided in course outlines are best estimates based on recent online prices and do not include shipping or taxes. Prices may vary between retailers.

Title / Name	Notes / Comments	Required	Price (CAD)
Biale, David. Eros and the Jews from Biblical Israel to Contemporary America. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.		Yes	
Scheindlin, Raymond P. A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood. Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2000.		Yes	

To order your textbooks, please visit:

Eros and the Jews from Biblical Israel to Contemporary America - Digital Version (https://uwaterloo-store.vitalsource.com/products/eros-and-the-jews-david-biale-v9780520920064)

A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood - Digital Version (https://www.amazon.ca/Short-History-Jewish-People-Legendary-ebook/dp/B0D4QQWMKK/ref=tmm_kin_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&dib_tag=se&dib=eyJ2IjoiMSJ9.cpfjTM-27tcr7bfX5fqCvUkfberDTeH_ZoKYP68FzRB085FnbMJCXdeUmikP5PMIUhwsbcM34WHBlS3hmEeRTwqrMo5aEHtc1ne6MBAJb10t6IHOJFU8zOXRSkeTzMIIcyzenkw0tlkAY5RgO_IS LnLmmx-mHU8hu2jvYbHWmy9dYPRWVGC7sBFkPngHy0aeB8xBgmFIQujtJwTWtb2eRdn7ErowzV55TUWl9Zh9bYH3rtBpRqF61qXTi30xl2s50h5n6E2RkcMdpkyAq87GQ5am9Hrfffe-bq-EgO2iCM3k5WNCPemnnCRFYmAWJEBAW4JJkeZ7qsQk9ARcQlhTYWOPg.sx9nOtjLHEGC7xk3w8vnfC3ma6plFrY7QwZjaGlRdKw&qid=1733943663&sr=8-1)

For assistance, please email wstore@uwaterloo.ca (mailto:wstore@uwaterloo.ca) .

Readings

Readings are available on module pages in PDF format and also from the **Readings and Websites** page in LEARN.

Student Assessment

Component	Value
Introduce Yourself	Ungraded
Response Quizzes (5% each X 4)	20%

Component	Value
Response Assignments (5% each x 6)	30%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Examination Proctored Exam — 2.5 hours	30%

Assignment Screening

No assignment screening will be used in this course.

Course and Department Policies

This course *requires* regular access to the Waterloo LEARN course site. Your instructor will use this site for communicating important information concerning course matters, returning graded assignments, etc. A reliable internet connection and regular checking of the course site (at least twice a week) is therefore *mandatory*.

Late Policy for Response Assignments

Late submission will be penalized at the rate of 10% per day late. This policy will apply without exception unless a documented excuse of sufficient weight (e.g., a medical emergency) is provided to the instructor.

Late Policy for Midterm Take Home Exam

Late submissions will not be accepted unless students, with a valid excuse, have made prior arrangements with the instructor.

Accommodating religious and spiritual observances

[Applies only to students taking undergraduate courses]

The University of Waterloo has a duty to accommodate religious, spiritual, and other creed-based beliefs and practices (https://ugradcalendar.uwaterloo.ca/page/Acad-Regs-Accommodations) under the Ontario Human Rights Commission (2015) *Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed* (https://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-creed) . Students may seek accommodations for missed course components on religious, spiritual, or other creed grounds. In such cases the students should please consult the instructor within two weeks of the announcement of the due date for which the accommodation is being sought. Students also may request accommodations for temporary absences from classes or other course-related activities to engage in prayer or other daily spiritual practices. Instructors are expected to make reasonable arrangements to respectfully accommodate such requests. The University of Waterloo has a number of multi-faith spaces (https://uwaterloo.ca/multi-faith-spirituality-resource-team/multi-faith-spaces-campus) that students can use for faith-based practices.

Declaring absences

[Applies only to students taking undergraduate courses]

Please see the Academic Regulations (https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-calendar/undergraduate-studies/catalog#/policy/SkiPsB9Vp?bc=true&bcCurrent=Assessments%3A%20Academic%20Considerations%20and%20Accommodations&bcGroup=Academic%20Regulations&bcItemType=policies) section of the Undergraduate Calendar for more details. Regardless of the process used to declare an absence, it is the student's responsibility to contact their instructor so that the instructor can determine how to accommodate the missed work.

Absences due to religious, creed, and spiritual observances

Beginning Fall 2024, students can submit a Religious Observance Self-Declaration Form in Quest. This form allows the student to register dates of potential conflicts with coursework. Students are expected to record their absence within two weeks of announcement of the due date or scheduled examination date for which academic accommodation is being sought. Submission through Quest will notify your instructors of your absence.

Absences due to verified illness

For absences due to illness that are not pandemic-related, students need to obtain a Verification of Illness or Extenuating Circumstances Process (https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/undergraduate/student-support/accommodations-illness-or-extenuating-circumstances#submit-other) . Submission through the Absence Verification System (https://vif.uwaterloo.ca/) , once registered, will notify your instructors of your absence. Students should not submit their VIF or any other medical documentation to your instructors, teaching assistants, or other course personnel. To request and arrange accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor within 48 hours of the date of any missed course component, or as soon as the student is able to given their health condition.

Absences due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., bereavement)

For absences due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., bereavement, serious family illness), students submit a request for absence due to extenuating circumstances (https://uwaterloo.ca/arts/undergraduate/student-support/accommodations-illness-or-extenuating-circumstances#submit-other) to the Absence Verification System (https://vif.uwaterloo.ca/) for processing. Students use the form to submit supporting documentation, which will be considered in a comparable manner to a VIF. Official documentation is necessary before any action can be taken. Examples are plane/train/bus tickets, court documents, police reports, death certificates/obituaries/letters from funeral directors. To request and arrange accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor within 48 hours of the date of any missed course component, or as soon as the student is able to given their circumstances.

Self-declared absences due to COVID-related illness

Students can [self-declare (https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-absence-undergraduate-students)](https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-absence-undergraduate-students) an absence on Quest due to COVID-related illness or a requirement to self-isolate. A self-declared COVID absence covers up to 10 days and no documentation is required. No in-person course activity is permitted during the period of a self-declared COVID absence. Participation in on-line components is permitted but should not be required if the student notifies the instructor that they are too ill to participate in the online work. Submitting the self-declaration through Quest will notify your instructors of your absence. It is the student's responsibility to contact their instructors within the first 48 hours after submitting their COVID-related absence, or as soon as they are well enough, to discuss arrangements for missed course components.

Self-declared short-term absences for any reason

Students can [self-declare (https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-absence-undergraduate-students)](https://uwaterloo.ca/quest/help/students/how-do-i/self-declare-absence-undergraduate-students) one short-term absence per term on Quest for any reason. A short-term absence covers two calendar days, and <u>no documentation is required</u>. The student has only one self-declared short-term absence per term and this absence can only be used during the formal lecture period. Self-declared absences cannot be applied to Laboratory (LAB), Clinic (CLN), or Studio (STU) course components. Submitting the self-declaration through Quest will notify your instructors of your absence. It is the student's responsibility to contact their instructors within the first 24 hours after submitting their self-declaration to discuss accommodations for missed course components.

Recording lecture

Use of recording devices during lectures is only allowed with explicit permission of the instructor of the course. If allowed, video recordings may only include images of the instructor and not fellow classmates. Posting of videos or links to the video to any website, including but not limited to social media sites such as: Facebook, Twitter, etc., is strictly prohibited.

University Policy

Academic integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity (https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) for more information.]

Grievance: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of their university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4 (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for their actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity (https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/) for more information.] 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 instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71). For typical penalties, check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/guidelines/guidelines-assessment-penalties).

Appeals: A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-70) (other than a petition) or Policy 71, Student Discipline (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes they have a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72, Student Appeals (https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-72).

Note for students with disabilities: AccessAbility Services (https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, 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 AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course.

It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit alternate assignment.