

Course Purpose:

A. To acquaint students with the religion of Judaism, its historical development, the social and cultural elements of the faith, its historical context from its biblical foundation to modern times. We will study topics such as: What is Judaism?, Who is a Jew?, Concepts of God, Israelite religion, sacred writings, Jewish holidays, the afterlife, modern expressions of Judaism, and more.

B. Provide students the opportunity to write about a variety of topics throughout the course.

C. Students will be able to identify and discuss core concepts of Judaism, ideas of God and Israel's history after taking this class.

At the end of the course you should be able to:

Identify and explain major sweeps of Jewish history and central concepts in Judaism

Discuss some major contributions of Judaism to western and world civilization

Speak with confidence about the central tenants of Judaism - God, Afterlife, Torah, Bible, theology, Commandments, general history.

How and Why of the Course:

The course will be taught using primary and secondary readings, in-class discussions and visual presentations pertaining to Jewish history and Judaism. We will look at some ideas of the past (historiography) that affected Jews – therefore, we will investigate historical events in ancient Israel, the Near East, Europe and contemporary America. We will cover topics in the Hebrew Bible. We begin with the period of the patriarchs, the formation of the Israelites, biblical concepts, the transition to Judaism – all of this is set in a historical and cultural context. We finish with modern Judaism and some contemporary issues. **Judaism consists of a variety of religious values, concepts, and rituals: it is an expression of the Israelite and Jewish cultures, both ancient and modern; therefore, it has been and is dynamic. The purpose of this course is to illustrate, through the study of the history of Judaism, the problem of describing, analyzing, and interpreting Judaism. Included here is the phenomenon of religion in politics, society, and culture. Religion is a factor to explain what people do together in politics, society, and culture — and not something that is only private and personal.**

This course satisfies the University General Education requirement for the Global Perspective Knowledge Exploration area and the Writing Intensive requirement in General Education.

Prerequisites: a student must complete the university Writing Foundation requirement. No other prerequisites are required for this course.

Cross-Cutting Capacities involved in this course:

1. Effective Communication is promoted through a variety of writing exercises and oral discussions.
2. Critical Thinking is developed through text analysis and various interpretations.
3. Social Awareness in this course is elevated by examining core concepts as they developed over time within the tradition of Judaism. Students are exposed to social and cultural norms of Jews and Judaism that have historical and contemporary relevance for modern problems, matters of difference in the workplace and society, and religious literacy.

Course Text Books: please bring to class each time.

1. Wylen, *Settings of Silver: Intro. to Judaism*, 2nd 2000 edition;
2. Jack Miles, Editor, *Judaism: Norton Anthology of World Religions*, (2015)
3. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *Radical Then, Radical Now: On Being Jewish* (2000).
4. Articles posted on Moodle and handouts in class.

Course Requirements/Grading:

A. Class Participation (25% of grade): based on attendance and student input during class. *We will discuss reading assignments in class. See expectations and how points are assessed, below. (0, 2 or 5 points per on-campus meeting).*

B. Various Written Assignments include: in-class written assignments based on readings, written responses based on take-home assignments, in-class exercise with a written component, and personal observations/journal entries. **(35% of grade)**. "In-class reading" assignments cannot be made up if you are absent without valid documented waiver. In all, the assignments will demand about 25 pages of written work throughout this course. Each of these is graded on a 20 point scale. "In class assignment on readings" consists of hand writing a response to a question or issue related to the reading assigned for that class - see syllabus for readings assigned. "In-class reading quiz" is a short T/F, multiple choice, short answer quiz based on the readings assigned for that day in which the quiz is given. "Take home assignments" are given out in the form of a question/problem that the student answers based on the readings assigned.

Writing assignments involve a variety of tasks, including text evaluation and review; "mini" research tasks that include student evaluation and presentation in writing; interpretation of primary and secondary texts; and placing concepts in historical context and, where possible, in the contemporary world. All of these assignments are meant to enhance critical thinking through the assessment of materials (texts, discussions, secondary sources, lectures) in writing.

Evaluation of student writing includes style, organization, content and grammar. For the "in-class reading assignments" students are asked to write about an assigned text portion. In this category students demonstrate recall of the material and demonstrate an ability to summarize materials in an effective way. Assessment is based on how well the student read the material and is able to summarize his or her thoughts in a short response. The take-home assignments are assessed on how well a student focuses on assigned material and responds to the assignment prompt. Here, attention is paid to style and content of the written assignment. In 1-1.5 pages students demonstrate their ability to write effectively in a short response essay. Students may have to gather a small amount of data, make comparisons from among a few sources, and present ideas effectively in writing using proper grammar and style. Comments will be made and returned to the students in order to improve writing style and content where it is needed for future assignments.

C. Longer Essay: a student may write on a topic of interest OR on one of several questions provided (more details given out by mid semester). This completed essay is turned in for an **ungraded** initial evaluation of style and grammar (not necessarily content). This draft is returned with comments. After revisions the student returns the essay for final grading. This is a 4 page essay. **(20% of grade)**, based on 50 points. See the schedule below for due dates. Complete instructions will be provided during the semester.

D. Final Exam (20% of grade, 60 points). Exam includes short answers, essays, multiple-choice questions, T/F. **ONLINE.**

Extra credit: These are the only extra-credit options for the course. **To qualify**, you must not have missed more than 2 class sessions, and you must have turned in ALL assignments posted in the syllabus. You may choose one of the following:

1). Visit the Holocaust Memorial Center in W. Bloomfield and write a two page reaction to your visit, and write a one page evaluation of one exhibit or display with the following in mind: How does it represent "Judaism", or, what symbols or concepts does it contain. **Submit by 4/11/16.** (15 points added to "assignments"). (<http://www.holocaustcenter.org>), check for hours and open times before you go. (It is not open afternoon on Friday and not at all on Saturday).

-OR- 2) Synagogue visit: Visit a synagogue service on Friday evening or Saturday morning. In Troy there is Shir Tikvah, which is very welcoming; it is the closest synagogue to OU. You may also attend another synagogue of

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your choice; if so, you should contact that synagogue and introduce yourself. Respond to an assignment prompt – ask me for the assignment if you plan to go. It consists of a written reaction in about 2 pages, due by 4/11/16. Possible are 15 points added to "assignments". Saturday morning services are generally longer. **CCongregation Shir Tikvah**, 3900 Northfield Pkwy, Troy, MI 48084, between Coolidge and Crooks, north of Big Beaver - see (www.shirtikvah.org) for the times of services. You may wear casual clothes, but please be modest; this is a Reform congregation, so men/women sit together, and head coverings are optional – but they are available at the synagogue. Other synagogues are also viable options, but if you attend an Orthodox service, men and women will most likely sit separately. See me for other details.

Session:		SUBJECTS	ASSIGNMENTS / READING
1/6	W	Course syllabus, books, introduction to the course, expectations, writing intensive expectations, goals of the course and getting acquainted. Why bother with General Education Classes?	Look ahead, and read assignments ahead of time for the next class.
1/11	M	Historical overview, Definitions, Setting the stage	Wylen , Chapter 1; Moodle : "Historical Overview and Maps"
1/13	W	What is Judaism?	Sacks , Prologue, Part I: 1-2; Biale : pp., 45-56 & 206-207 - "Torah on One Foot." In-class reading quiz.
1/18	M	MLK Day - No Class	
1/20	W	History #1 - Abraham to Solomon Moses; Written and Oral Torahs	Wylen , Chapters 2 – 3; Sacks , Part II: 5-6; Biale , pp., 59-67. In-class on reading assignment
1/25	M	Exodus and Passover; Israelites and the Community	Wylen , Chapter 10; Biale , pp., 80-88. Sacks , Part III: 9-10. In-class on reading assignment
1/27	W	Community, David and Kings	Moodle : "Israelites" article; David Article; Wylen , Chapter 4; Sacks , Part II: 7-8. Take home assignment, due 2/1
2/1	M	Psalms and Prophets	Biale , pp., 99-104; 107-113, up to "40: 1-26"; 115 (start "Jeremiah") -117 up to "Ezekiel". In-class reading quiz.
2/3	W	Sin & Atonement; <i>History of the Jews</i> video portion	Wylen , Chapter 9; Take home assignment, due 2/8
2/8	M	History #2 - Solomon to the Babylonian Destruction, Exile	Moodle : history overview; See timeline in Biale , pp., 64-65.
2/10	W	Class discussion on Wylen , Chapter 5; The Return from Exile, Second Temple & Monotheism (discussion of the article on monotheism)	Wylen , Chapter 5; Moodle : Monotheism article & Biale , pp., 121-126. In-class reading assignment on Monotheism article.
2/15	M	Creation and the Bible Longer essay handout and overview - submit your own topic for approval by 3/7	Moodle : Creation Document and Commentary. Read and bring to class ; Biale , pp., 72-76, up to "12:1-3" & pp., 214-215; 220 - start "Genesis Rabbah" - pp., 223. In-class reading assignment on the Genesis commentary - how creation is presented in the Bible.
2/17	W	NO on-campus class : Creation & Attributes of God; Human beings and creation	Moodle : Sherwin, "What do you Mean?"; Sacks , Part I: 3-4. Go to Moodle for assignment, due 2/29

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2/29	M	Life and Death issues	Moodle: (2) abortion texts - read and bring to class. Moodle: statements of abortion Republican and Democratic platforms. In-class assignment on reading for today.
3/2	W	Euthanasia, other issues, mourning rites	Moodle: article on Euthanasia; Biale , 244-245 Take home assignment, due 3/7
3/7	M	History #3 - Greeks and Romans (Hellenism)	Wylen , Chapters 12; Biale , pp., 232-233; Sacks , Part III: 11. In-class reading quiz.
3/9	W	...continues, and synagogues, Destruction of Jerusalem, Judaism without the Temple	Biale , pp., 237, from "synagogue" to page 242. Wylen , Chapters 13; Biale , pp., 185-190; 211-212. Take home assignment due 3/14
3/14	M	Jewish Law - The Talmud	Wylen , Chapter 14; Biale , pp. 193-204 up to "Babylonian Talmud." Moodle: "Human Body in Judaism" - Sherwin.
3/16	W	Talmudic text analysis - bring to class	Sacks , Part III: 12; Moodle: Talmud text = print and bring to class. In-class reading quiz on M&W readings
3/21	M	What is Judaism? Who is a Jew?	Sacks , Part I: 3-4; Moodle: "To Be a Jew" by Heschel; Moodle: "Brother Daniel Case" - bring to class. * <u>REFERENCE</u> : Pew Poll on Jewish identity
3/23	W	Afterlife in Judaism	Wylen , Chapter 7; Moodle: "World to Come" by Sherwin. In-class on reading. Take home assignment, due 3/28
3/28	M	Prayer	Wylen , Chapter 6; Moodle: prayer examples - print, read and bring to class. In-class on reading on prayer and its purpose in Judaism
3/30	W	Sabbath; <i>History of the Jews</i> video portion LONGER ESSAY FULL DRAFT DUE 3/30 (refer to handout given out earlier)	Wylen , Chapter 8; Moodle: "On the Sabbath" (Heschel); Biale , pp., 285-298.
4/4	M	History #4 Middle Ages	Wylen , Chapters 15 & 18 - in class reading quiz on Middle Ages
4/6	W	Modern Era and Modern Judaism(s) LONGER essay comments returned	Wylen , Chapter 19-20; Biale , pp., 515-519 & 559-563. In-class reading assignment on Enlightenment and Judaism
4/11	M	Holocaust; Israel; discussion on Sacks' reading, final exam discussion/handout	Wylen , Chapter 21; Biale , pp., 631-637 up to "Primo Levi"; Sacks , Part IV: 13-14
4/13	W	Israel and Zionism, <i>History of the Jews</i> video portion LONGER ESSAY revisions due (final paper).	Wylen , Chapter 22-23; Biale , pp., 663-top 668; Sacks , Part IV: 15. In-class reading quiz.
4/18	M	NO CLASS on campus (reading day)	Wylen , Chapter 24.

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4/20	W	Final Exam online Moodle (not in class on campus)	Exam will be open online (Moodle) from Wednesday at 7am until Wednesday at 9pm. It will be open for a maximum of 3 hours once you begin within this timeframe
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Your grade is calculated in this manner: A given number of points are assigned each assignment. The total of your achieved points for each assignment is calculated for each category, A, B, C, and D. (above). Each category represents a percentage of the total grade (or 100% possible) - example: "Class Participation" is 25% of the whole, etc. Each category is calculated as a weighted percentage of 100%. If you achieved all possible points in the "Various Assignments" category, you would earn 100% of 35% of the total grade for that category. Each weighted category is then extended and calculated as a portion of the 100% possible; added together, this result provides a percentage of 100%. This final percentage then is calculated against the highest possible grade (or 100%) of the O.U. grading system - or 4.0. Students' grades are calculated on an Excel spreadsheet and are available for student review. The OU grading system is available here:

http://catalog.oakland.edu/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=483#Grading_System

Additional Resources:

MOODLE: Check online for the syllabus, glossary of terms, special readings, maps, presentations from class, and a link to the Religious Studies resources, etc.

Kresge Library: The OU library has recently updated its Jewish Studies library; consider it for your research needs.

Some internet sites: Jewish holidays, practices: www.aish.com, www.myjewishlearning.com

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Always cite sources that you use in any academic work. Do not copy someone else's work (that means a fellow student's or an author's work). For whichever assignment you are caught cheating you will fail that assignment, and you may be subject to penalties from the university: Academic Misconduct: Cheating, plagiarism or any other form of academic misconduct will be reported to the Academic Conduct Committee of the University Senate for review and may result in failure for the course, university probation, suspension from the university, expulsion or other penalties. The "Academic Conduct" section of the catalog explains your due process rights and responsibilities. See me if you have questions or doubts.

Students with Disabilities: students who require any special arrangements due to disabilities should contact me so that we may resolve the issue with in-classroom alterations, or so that we may take advantage of university offerings. If you have a letter from the Disability Office, please present it to me at the beginning of the semester.

The Classroom: Turn off cell phones, no texting, and please stay off Internet during class times. If you have to make a call, please dismiss yourself from the class quietly. Yes, instructors know when you are texting in class. Texting and surfing in class will result in 0 points for "participation" score for the class session. **Laptops should be shut down, closed, and put away** - if you have a legitimate reason to type notes in class on a device, please see me with that rationale.

Suggestions for Success:

- Read the materials before class. I suggest that you form questions as you read, and bring them to class for discussion. Take notes, highlight important points, think of how the reading will fit into the class topic for that week.
- Take notes during the lectures. Essays on exams may come solely from the lectures or handouts from class.

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- Show up and participate. I assess after each class if you were engaged, participated and paid attention, and then I apply a score for each class.
- Writing: any writing that you do should be done well, should be clear and follow all proper grammar and style. Be serious about your work. If you have trouble with writing, please see me for help or see the university writing lab. Style and grammar will make up part of your grade. You can use APA or MLA formats in your submitted writings.
- Spend about 2-4 hours outside of the course on reading, research and writing per week.
- All work should be handed in on time - any late assignments should be pre- approved before you hand them in. See the late assignment notice below.

Late Assignments: *unless approved beforehand*, all assignments must be handed in on the due dates published in the syllabus. For any assignment handed in late, a 2 point reduction per day will be deducted. No assignment will be accepted after five days past the original due date and a 0 will be entered for that assignment. Example, if you earned 20 points on an assignment, and it was handed in three days late; 6 points would be deducted (2 x 3 days), which would result in 14 points.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES: Attendance is required. I consider you to be in attendance if you come to class on time, stay for the full meeting, and participate in class discussion and activities. I consider you absent if you arrive after 20 minutes late, leave early, sleep or generally appear to sleep during class or fail to participate. If you miss more than two classes, the following rules apply, unless you are seriously ill and can document your absence. This course adheres to the OU Excused Absence Policy for OU events and activities:

http://www2.oakland.edu/provost/web/reports/OU_Excused_Absence_Policy_Final.pdf.

For absences not covered by the university policy, you are allowed 2 absences without penalty. MW are each (individually) a "class period." This includes absences due to illness, car trouble, or schedule conflict. Participation in any online activities counts as class attendance. For each absence beyond the 2 allowed, the student's final course grade will be lowered by 0.1 points on the 4.0 scale. Students who miss more than three combined weeks of class are not eligible to receive a grade above 0.0. Example: If you miss a total of 2 classes there is no course penalty - that means any M,W session (not a given full week); if you miss two additional classes after these 2, then your final grade will be lowered by .2; meaning, if you earned a 3.6 in the course otherwise, your grade will then be 3.4. If you miss a course meeting, no "participation points" are earned for that class.

If you miss any course material or assignments please contact me regarding the assignment - you must contact me within 24 hours of the class period you missed. After five days of the class in which the assignment was offered, you are not eligible to receive credit for it (unless you arrange with me ahead of time).

Health issues: You should be aware that you can be seen for an illness at the Graham Health Center on campus for a nominal charge if you do not have health insurance, and if medicine is required, there will be a nominal charge for that as well. The Health Emergency Plan is available to any student on request. The only requirement is that you contribute to this program at some later time if/when you are able to do so.

CONTACTING YOU: I will use your OU email for any updates and information about the class. **It is your responsibility to check this email.**

Please pay particular attention to this section

Participation: You are strongly encouraged to contribute to the class discussion by asking questions, discussing the readings, and offering your input. 25% of your grade involves this participation. Just attending class does not satisfy the **full 5 points potential for each class** - I will grade participation in this way:

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0 points - did not attend class for any reason, or, did attend class and texted or spent most time on a PC device clearly not taking notes and said or contributed nothing, or clearly did not read. If you did not download reading for a given class period you may also receive 0 points for participation.

2 points - attended class but said nothing, was distracted or uninvolved, read some but not all according to class participation.

3-5 points - attended class, offered input, was alert, followed the discussion, brought issues to class, asked questions or offered opinions based on the reading or topic.