

Religious Studies 131f A History of Antisemitism

Winter, 2016
T. and Th. 2:00-3:15
HSSB 1174

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“They [the Nazis] invented very little, and they did not invent the portrait of the Jew, which was also taken over lock, stock and barrel from writings going back to the sixteenth century. So even the propaganda, the realm of the imagination and invention even there they were remarkably in the footsteps of those who preceded them, from Martin Luther to the nineteenth century.

They had to become inventive with the ‘Final Solution.’ That was their great invention, and that is what made this intense process different from all others that had preceded that event. In this respect, what transpired when the ‘final solution’ also adopted – or, to be precise, bureaucracy moved into it – that was a turning point in history. Even here I would suggest a logical progression, one that came to fruition in what might be called closure, because from the earliest days, from the fourth century, the sixth century, the missionaries of Christianity had said in effect to the Jews: ‘You may not live among us as Jews.’ The secular rulers who followed them from the late Middle Ages then decided: ‘You may not live among us,’ and the Nazis finally decreed: ‘You may not live.’”

Raul Hilberg in Claude Lanzmann’s film *Shoah* (1985)

Course Description

This course in the past has sought to survey the entire history of what became known in the nineteenth century as “anti-Semitism.” That survey began in the classical world in the fourth century B.C.E. and then moved to the world of late antiquity through the Middle Ages, and then into the Renaissance and the Enlightenment and finally, into the modern world. The sheer length of its history spanning 2400 years led Robert Wistrich to call it “the longest hatred.” Antisemitism shares some qualities or characteristics with other forms of intolerance, discrimination, and hatred, but its length suggests that it is a unique phenomenon. Many scholars have sought to characterize three historical forms of antisemitism: during the ancient period, “antisemitism” was primarily social or cultural; during the medieval period, “antisemitism” was primarily theological; during the modern period, antisemitism has been primarily racial and political.

Raul Hilberg (1926-2007), whose massive study of the Holocaust, *The Destruction of European Jewry* (1961), marks the beginning of Holocaust Studies, who Claude Lanzmann interviewed for his documentary, noted the long history of anti-Semitism and also its many changes across history. The Nazis’ contribution, Hilberg judged was not in their specific ideas of the Jews (which they inherited from the past) but in modernizing the machinery of death, bureaucratizing the murder of millions. Léon Poliakov, one of

the great European historians of anti-Semitism, wrote in the introduction to his *Harvest of Hate: The Nazi Program for the Destruction of the Jews of Europe* (first published in French in 1951) that antisemitism is “intrinsic to our entire Western civilization, an aberrant and pathological phenomenon that lay at the very center of the 1939-45 catastrophe.” This slim volume is one of the first scholarly studies of the Holocaust and anticipated the research of many scholars like Hilberg in later decades. But, this statement also suggests that antisemitism has been a central element of western civilization. There are very few places and nations that have not been the sites for antisemitism. There are cases, like Japan, where Antisemitism is present but there are no Jews or where there is only an infinitesimally small Jewish community.

We will pursue our study of antisemitism from two perspectives. First, we will argue that there is a common element that runs through the history of this hatred, throughout all the forms of antisemitism. That common element is the symbolic place of the Jews as “other” in the symbolic worldviews of non-Jews. Here we will lay out is then a symbolic structure of orientation which will help us to understand the particular relationships between Jews and non-Jews from the ancient world to the present. Second, we will focus our study from the late Middle Ages and the Protestant Reformation, when this hatred of Jews, was transformed from a theological anti-Judaism in the Christian Middle Ages and in the first centuries of Islam to the modern world when it has become racial anti-Semitism, and finally to the contemporary world when racial antisemitism combines racial hatred with radical theologies.

Required Texts:

A course reader which is available at SB Printers in the University Center. In addition, I will distribute several other texts to be used either in class or to be prepared at home as part of the weekly and unit reading assignments. You will also note that there are several reading assignments which are to be accessed via the internet.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance in lecture is required. If you are unable to attend lecture because of an emergency, illness, or family matters, you should notify the instructor immediately via e-mail. Completion of all reading assignments according to the lecture schedule.
2. A mid-term examination on 4 February. The mid-term exam will be worth 30 percent or 30 points of the final course grade.

3. You must attend two of the four outside class presentations described below. At the class session immediately following the presentations, each student will turn in a single page comment on three important ideas, elements, or interpretations from each presentation. The comments must be word-processed. No late assignments will be accepted and both assignments must be completed to meet this course requirement. There is no exception to the requirement to turn in the comments in the class immediately following the film or presentation. There are no substitutes for this requirement. This element of the course will constitute 10 percent or 10 points of the final course grade. Those students who attend all four events and complete four comments will be given five additional extra-credit points on the final course grade.
4. A comprehensive final examination on Tuesday, 15 March at 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. The final examination will be worth 60 percent of the final course grade.

Required Outside Class Presentations: **You must attend both of these events and turn in two of the summary sheets.**

Wednesday, 13 January – Aubrey Glazer (independent scholar) on “Religion after Religion: Unbinding the Binding – Isaac, Jesus Christ and Joan of Arc through Zen” at 3:00 to 5:00 in HSSB 3041. This event is sponsored by Religious Studies and Jewish Studies. This is a small venue and I will need to know how many of you will plan to attend this event.

Tuesday, 26 January – Professor Shaul Bassi (Ca’ Foscari University in Venice) on “Shylock in Venice” at 8:00 in Corwin Pavilion. This event is sponsored by the Herman P. and Sophia Taubman Foundation Endowed Jewish Studies Symposium.

Wednesday, 23 February – David Makovsky and Ghaith al-Omari (Washington Institute for Near East Policy in Washington, D.C.) on “Jerusalem in Israeli and Palestinian Diplomacy” at 5:00 p.m. in Campbell Hall.

Lecture Topics and Reading Assignments:

January 5-7 – Introduction: Interpreting Antisemitism.

1. Why should we study Antisemitism?
2. Distinguishing between anti-Judaism and Antisemitism.
3. Some theories used to account for Antisemitism.
4. Symbolic Reversals and Antisemitism.
5. Jean-Paul Sartre’s *Reflections on the Jewish Question*.

Reading Assignment: Goldhagen (1) and “The Singular Prejudice” (to be distributed), Marcus (2), and Sartre (3).

January 12-14 – Anti-Judaism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment.

1. Medieval Theological Anti-Judaism.
2. Luther, the Reformation and the Jews.
3. Johann Andreas Eisenmenger’s *Entdecktes Judenthum* (*Judaism Exposed*, 1710).
4. The English Deists, Voltaire, and Rousseau on the Jews and Judaism.

Reading Assignment: Nirenberg (4), Voltaire’s *Philosophical Dictionary* (to be distributed), and Eisenmenger’s *Entdecktes Judenthum* (to be distributed).

* Wednesday, 13 January – Aubrey Glazer (independent scholar) on “Religion after Religion: Unbinding the Binding – Isaac, Jesus Christ and Joan of Arc through Zen” at 3:00 to 5:00 in HSSB 3041.

* Please note that we will not have class on Tuesday, 19 January.

January 21- February 1 – Modern Racial Antisemitism.

1. “Race is everything.”
2. Karl Marx and the critique of the Jewish Emancipation movement.
3. Anti-Semitic parties and politics from 1850 to 1900.
4. The Dreyfus Affair.
5. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

Reading Assignment: Carroll (20), Mosse, “The Beginning” from *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (1978), Stoecker, *Our Demands on Modern Jewry* (1878; to be distributed), Marr, *The Victory of Jewry over Germandom* (1879; to be distributed), Istóczy’s *Jews, the Iron Ring Around our Necks* (1878; to be distributed), Zola, *J’accuse* (13 January 1898) and *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (ca. 1902; to be distributed).

* Thursday, 4 February, Mid-Term Examination.

February 9-18 – From the First World War to the Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann.

1. The Burden of World War I.
2. The Weimar Republic and the shock of the new.

3. The symbolic worldview of the Nazis.
4. "Eliminationist Antisemitism" and the Shoah.
5. The trial of Adolph Eichmann and the banality of evil.

Reading Assignment: Confino (5), Arendt (6), Gouri (7), Yablonka (8), Marrus (9), Stangneth (10).

February 23-March 8 – Post-Holocaust Eliminationist Anti-Semitism.

1. The fantasy of Jewish power.
2. Holocaust Denial.
3. Anti-Semitism in the Arab and Muslim worlds.
4. Rising anti-Semitism in Europe.
5. Israel and Anti-Zionism.

Reading Assignment: Yakira (11), Lipstadt (12), the David Irving vs Deborah Lipstadt libel trial transcript at <http://www.holocaustdenialontrial.org>, David Hirsh, "Anti-Zionism and Antisemitism: Cosmopolitan Reflections" (www.research.gold.ac.uk/2061/1/Hirsh_Yale_paper.pdf), Julius (13), Porat (14), Wistrich (15 and 16), Manfred Gerstenfeld, *The Abuse of Holocaust Memory* (chapters 5 and 5, access at – www.jcpa.org/book/the-abuse-of-holocaust-memory-distortions-and-responses/), Marcus (17), Bernard Lewis "Muslim Anti-Semitism (June, 1998) which was originally published in the *Middle East Quarterly* at <http://www.meforum.org/article/396>, Kressel (18) and Tibi (19)

March 10 – Summary and Conclusions: The Return of Annihilation.

Using the Internet to Study Anti-Semitism: There are many important websites for the study of anti-Semitism. Below you will find several which are particularly good and which you are encouraged to explore. Also, if you find a website which you think is interesting and important to our study, please send it to me via e-mail so that I can share it with the class.

Stephen Roth Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism and Racism:
<http://www.tau.ac.il/Anti-Semitism/>

H-Anti-Semitism Discussion Network: <http://www.h-net.org/~antis/>

Anti-Semitism Today: <http://antisemitismtoday.com/>

Institute for Jewish Policy Research: <http://ddickerson.igc.org/antisemitism.html>

European Institute for the Study of Contemporary Anti-Semitism:
<http://www.eisca.eu/index.php?id=15>

Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy: <http://www.isgap.org>

Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs: <http://www.jcpa.org/index.htm>

American Jewish Committee: <http://www.ajc.org/>

Center for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence: <http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~wwwir/research/cstp/>

International Institute for Counter-Terrorism:
<http://www.ict.org.il/aecommerce/c1410/8385.php>

The Middle East Media Research Institute: <http://www.memri.org/index.html> and
<http://www.memri.org/antisemitism.html>

The Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-Semitism:
<http://sicsa.huji.ac.il/>

Yad VaShem: The Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority:
<http://www.yadvashem.org/>

Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith: <http://www.adl.org/default.htm>

Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism at Indiana University:
<http://www.indiana.edu/~iscaweb/>

Jewish History Internet Source Book:
<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/jewishsb.html>

Fathom: www.fathomjournal.org