

SYLLABUS

HIST-B 315 Issues in Modern European History/
JSTU-J 304 Social & Historical Topics in Jewish Studies #31428 (3 cr.)
MW 2:30-3:45; BH217

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Fall semester 2015
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EUROPEAN ANTI-SEMITISM FROM THE ENLIGHTENMENT TO THE HOLOCAUST

Irrational and often lethal hostility to Jews has a history of over 2000 years. Jew-hatred made its first appearance in the ancient world, later intensifying in waves in Christian Europe and, to a lesser extent, in Islamic countries. A range of antisemitic myths became deeply embedded in Western culture. Racial and genocidal antisemitism rose with 19th century nationalism and culminated in the attempt by Nazi Germany to destroy every member of the Jewish “race.”

What are the historical roots of antisemitism? What social, cultural, and political factors advanced or contained antisemitism? We will examine the most significant antisemitic myths and events in their historical and social contexts until 1933, including the image of Jews as murderers of God, usurers, and conspirators, as well as the blood libel.

We will trace the changes of Jew-hatred from religious forms in the Middle Ages to nationalist and racist forms in modern times.

Students will complete the course with an increased grasp of the irrational motives involved in antisemitism. They will also come to see how antisemitism is similar to and different from other prejudices, as well as understand the multiple sources from which antisemitism derives.

COURSEWORK

The course will emphasize class discussion and include a high proportion of independent work. The goal is to deepen an understanding of antisemitism in its many facets, including some of its contemporary manifestations. Course activities include: (1) Doing the assigned readings before each class session; (2) participating in class discussions; (3) submitting short writing assignments; and (4) writing a short and longer paper (“research project”) and offering a class presentation on a topic of your choice.

Students are encouraged to attend two public lectures on themes related to the subject matter of this course by visiting scholars. Extra credit will be given to students who attend these public lectures and thereafter submit brief papers in response to these presentations.

Your grade will be based on class participation and preparation (25%), short writing assignments (15%), your first (15%) and second (30%) paper and your class presentation (15%). More specific information about the research project is provided at the end of this handout.

COURSE MATERIALS

The following texts are required reading for this course. In addition, you will be given some handouts/resources on CANVAS and also encouraged to locate relevant materials on the Web.

Benbassa, Esther. *The Jews of France: A History from Antiquity to the Present*

Laqueur, Walter. *The Changing Face of Antisemitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day*

Nirenberg, David. *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*

Perry, Marvin and Frederick M. Schweitzer. *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*

Poliakov, Léon. *The history of Anti-Semitism. Suicidal Europe, 1870-1933. Vol. 4*

COURSE SCHEDULE

The (preliminary) schedule is ambitious but intended to raise your interest. We will make adjustments according to your interests and your research projects and presentations. Please discuss these with me as early as possible.

Please do the assignments for each day before the class, so that we can focus on discussing it. Be prepared to summarize the main points of each reading. You will be asked to give your views (very briefly) on the assigned readings in writing.

August 24 M Explanation of course aims, assigned readings, written work, grading.
Your expectations. Your topics of interest.

August 26 W Introduction: Why should we try to understand antisemitism? How
can a closer look into history help us? What is antisemitism?

Required reading:

- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. VII-X (preface) and pp. 21-38 (chapter 2);
- *US State Department Definition of Antisemitism* (document on CANVAS)

August 31 M Historical roots of antisemitism in early Christianity and the Middle
Ages.

Required reading:

- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. 39-70 (chapter 3)

Submit topic proposal for your paper. See paper assignments for details.

September 2 W Jews as enemies in early Christianity, “Judaizers” and the
example of John Chrysostom

Required reading:

- Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, pp. 92-94; 112-117
(selected pages of chapter 3)
- More materials will be provided in class.

September 7 M – Labor Day (no class)

September 9 W Antisemitic myths from the Middle Ages: deicide, blood libel, well-poisoning and the life of real Jews

Required reading:

- Perry and Schweitzer. *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, pp. 5-56 (part I, chapters 1-9);
- Benbassa, *The Jews of France*, pp. 26-33 (first part of chapter 3)

September 14 M Ideas of Enlightenment: equal citizens, nation state and the
emancipation of the Jews

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

Submit prospectus for your paper by September 14. See paper assignments for details.

September 16 W Enlightened thinkers and their view of Jews

Required reading:

- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. 71-76 (first part of chapter 4);
- Perry and Schweitzer. *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, pp. 57-64 (chapter 10);
- Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, pp. 325-360 (chapter

10).

September 21 M The French Revolution

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

September 23 W Jewish Emancipation during the French Revolution

Required reading:

- Benbassa, The Jews of France, pp. 73-85 (chapter 6 and first pages of chapter 7);
- More materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

September 28 M The image of Jews in reaction to the French revolution: Jews as enemies of the nation

Required reading:

- Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition*, pp. 360-386 (chapter 11).

September 30 W France at the end of the 19th century and the Dreyfus affair

Required reading:

- Poliakov, *The history of Anti-Semitism. Suicidal Europe*, pp. 31-58 (first part of chapter 2).

October 5 M The Dreyfus affair

Required reading:

- Benbassa, The Jews of France, pp. 141-145 (selected pages of chapter 10).

October 7 W A mixture of ideological sources in the 19th century: Jew-hatred from Catholicism and Protestantism, from the “right wing” and from

socialists

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

October 12 M The most prominent conspiracy theory until today: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

Required reading:

- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. 95-101 (selected pages from chapter 5);
- Poliakov, *The history of Anti-Semitism. Suicidal Europe*, pp. 59-61 (selected pages from chapter 3).

October 14 W The power of the Protocols despite their proven forgery

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

October 19 M Discussing your research. In-class peer review groups for feedback on papers.

Submit first version of your paper. Bring copies to submit to other members of your peer review group. See paper assignments for details.

October 21 W How to improve your paper?

Bring your written evaluations of the papers by the other members of your peer review group. See paper assignments for details.

October 26 M From religious anti-Judaism to racist and nationalist antisemitism in century Germany: Volkish antisemitism late 19th

Required reading:

- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. 71-106 (chapter 4 and 5);
- Perry and Schweitzer. *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, pp. 104-119 (chapter 14).

October 28 W The image of the Jew in Germany in the late 19th century and early 20th century

Required reading:

- Poliakov, *The history of Anti-Semitism. Suicidal Europe*, pp. 3-30 (chapter 1)

November 2 M Pogroms in the Russian Empire: Odessa, Kiev, and other towns in the territory of modern-day Ukraine and Moldova,
short guest lecture by Anya Quilitzsch

Required reading:

- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. 79-89 (selected pages from chapter 4)
- Perry and Schweitzer. *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, pp. 127-137 (chapter 16);
- Poliakov. *The history of Anti-Semitism. Suicidal Europe*, pp. 83-134
- More materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

November 4 W Pogroms during and after the Bolshevik Revolution,
guest lecture by Anya Quilitzsch

Required reading:

- Poliakov. *The history of Anti-Semitism. Suicidal Europe*, pp. 162-186 (chapter 5)
- More materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

November 9 M Antisemitic myths: Jews as usurers, Freemasons, unpatriotic, backwards, and corrupt, capitalists, communists, conspiring against the world

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

November 11 W The invention of racism and racist antisemitism

Required reading:

- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. 91-95 (selected pages from chapter 5);
- More materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

November 16 M Jewish responses to antisemitism

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

November 18 W Antisemitic caricatures at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century

Required reading: Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

Submit writing assignment by November 20 (500-750 words): Discuss two cartoons provided on CANVAS: Describe each cartoon in a couple of sentences. What was the context of publication? What symbols are used? What antisemitic stereotypes are associated with it? How do the two cartoons compare?

November 23 M – Thanksgiving (*no class*)

November 25 W – Thanksgiving (*no class*)

November 30 M Antisemitic parties and associations: the proud “antisemites”

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

December 2 W Restrictions for Jews in schools and universities: “numerus

clausus”

Required reading:

- Materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

December 7 M Fascist antisemitic movements rising to power

Required reading:

- Perry and Schweitzer. *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, pp. 156-173 (chapters 18-19);
- Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, pp. 107-124 (chapter 6);
- More materials will be provided on CANVAS/ in class.

December 9 W Evaluation

Submit your final research paper on CANVAS AND on paper in class today.

December 14 M – Final examination (optional) 2-4pm.

PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

All students in this course will submit a first and a second version of their paper and present an oral report in class. Guidelines for these assignments are presented below. Please feel free to see me with any questions you might have.

Schedule

(1) **On or before August 31:** The first step is to choose a topic (please see the list of topics below). Please give me **brief proposals** for one or more topics that interest you. Each proposal should explain the topic, why it interests you and how you might approach it. Submit the topic proposal on CANVAS. I urge you to talk with me about the topic and how to proceed. I will respond to your topic in writing.

(2) **By September 14:** Submit **prospectus** for your paper, including a 300-word description of what you plan to do and how you plan to do it and a preliminary biography of the primary and secondary sources you have found. I will comment on your prospectus in writing. Please also make an appointment with me to discuss your paper in progress.

(3) **By October 19:** Submit your **first version of your paper** (5-9 pages, double-spaced) on CANVAS and a printed version in class. It is not a draft but a complete, finished paper. You should prepare five copies: one for you to keep, one for me, and one for each of your three peers in your review group. Therefore, late papers cannot be accepted. Feedback will be discussed in class.

The paper will be evaluated using these criteria:

- Command of the relevant primary materials and secondary literature.
- Soundness and persuasiveness of the argument: does the writer marshal evidence logically and persuasively? Has the author anticipated counter arguments?
- Originality: does this represent the writer's own ideas, building on the work of others?
- Presentation: clarity of expression and ideas (including grammar, punctuation, spelling). Does the presentation facilitate getting the points across or does it get in the way? Would only minimal editing be needed for publication?

A typical paper includes an **abstract** (one paragraph summary), an **introduction** (including a thesis), the **body of the paper** (give meaningful title(s)), a **conclusion**, and a **list of references**. For references and citations please use the Chicago Manual of Style 16th edition (full note).

(4) **September 16 – December 2: Oral presentations.** Every student will be asked to give a brief (7-10 minutes) presentation in class on his or her paper. Your presentation will be evaluated by me and by three of your peers. Your presentation will serve as a basis for class discussion on the topic of your presentation. I am happy to hear a dry run of your talk in advance to provide feedback on both content and manner of presentation. Feel free to make an appointment.

(5) **December 9:** Submit your final paper (10-15 pages, double-spaced) in print and on CANVAS (PDF document). For evaluation criteria and reference style see above. This paper should be a significantly improved and more detailed version compared to your first paper. Take into account the suggestions and comments on your first paper and oral presentation.

Citation

In your written work, you have to give credit where credit is due. If you quote from another writer, or if you paraphrase his or her ideas, points, or arguments, you must give a bibliographic citation or footnote in proper format. (**Please use the provided Chicago Manual of Style.**) This is true even if you're using an online source or something that's included as part of a DVD package. Failure to do so is plagiarism. Any paper that is found to be plagiarized, in part or in whole, will receive an automatic F.

Plagiarism Policy and Academic Integrity

According to I.U.'s *Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*,

"Plagiarism is defined as presenting someone else's work, including the work of other students, as one's own. Any ideas or materials taken from another source for either written or oral use must be fully acknowledged, unless the information is common knowledge."

A student must give credit to the originality of others and acknowledge indebtedness whenever:

1. Directly quoting another person's actual words, whether oral or written;
2. Using another person's ideas, opinions, or theories;
3. Paraphrasing the words, ideas, opinion, or theories, whether oral or written;
4. Borrowing facts, statistics, or illustrative material; or
5. Offering materials assembled or collected by others in the form of projects or collections without acknowledgment.”

If you are unsure about the expectations for completing an assignment or taking a test or exam, be sure to seek clarification beforehand. All suspected violations of the *Code* will be handled according to University policies. Sanctions for academic misconduct may include a failing grade on the assignment, reduction in your final course grade, a failing grade in the course, among other possibilities, and must include a report to the Dean of Students, who may impose additional disciplinary sanctions.

TOPICS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS AND REPORTS

Note: The topic headings listed below are broadly defined and will need to be more narrowly focused and refined for your papers. We will discuss how you might best go about doing that well before the due date for submission.

Instructions: Choose one of the following. See me, if you wish, if you have any questions about your selection or need help in pursuing it. You will be asked to submit a working title for your paper and a brief outline of it no later than **August 31**.

Pogroms in [choose a country/place and time period]

Pogroms in literary works (choose a piece by writers such as Elie Wiesel or Sholem Aleichem, or a play/musical such as “Fiddler on the Roof”)

Spinoza: antisemitism against him and his own bias against Jews

Voltaire's views of Jews

Montesquieu's views of Jews

Fichte's view of Jews

German Volkish antisemitism

Jews in France at the end of the 18th century (on the way to Emancipation)

Jews in France after the Revolution

Marx and antisemitism

Proudhon's views of Jews

The Dreyfus affair

Antisemitism in a Western European country (please choose one and a time period)

Antisemitism in a Central or Eastern European country (please choose one and a time period)

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion: The myth of a Jewish world conspiracy

Antisemitism in universities and student groups

Blood libels (choose an example: a certain case, image, or literary work from the 18th to the early 20th century)

Literary antisemitism (please choose one work or author or compare two)

Antisemitic cartoons (case study on a series of cartoons or a cartoonist)

Jewish responses to anti-Jewish prejudices (e.g. Zalkind Hourwitz)

Jewish responses to anti-Jewish violence (e.g. self-defense against pogroms)

Jewish responses to antisemitism: emerging Zionist movements (choose one Zionist leader or association)

Some other topic of your choice (be sure to clear topic with me before pursuing it).