

JEWISH CIVILIZATION — FALL 2015

J ST 010.003 [UP] & J ST 010.001 [WD] — Meets GH & IL requirements

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Office Hours: Tuesdays: 10:00-noon; Thursdays 4:00-5:00 AND *by appointment*.

As this is an online course, most of our contacts will be by email and through ANGEL. I will attempt to respond to your messages as soon as possible. During weekdays I usually will be able to respond within 24 hours. In general, I will not be able to respond as quickly during the weekend.

If you wish to meet in person outside of office hours, contact me in advance to schedule an appointment. Prior to an office hour visit, you may wish to confirm my availability.

Office: 413-A Weaver Building

ALL TIMES IN THIS SYLLABUS ARE IN ***EASTERN TIME*** (Standard or Daylight, as appropriate to State College, PA). ***All course deadlines are in Eastern Time.***

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Jews have existed as a people for at least 3,200 years. During that time they have lived in many places throughout the world, in communities large and small. During most but not all of those years, Jews have lived in states governed by non-Jews. Jewish identity and sense of cohesiveness have persisted (for the most part) despite minority status, migrations, and repeated changes to Jewish culture, religion, social institutions, and ways of making a living. Jews have become an integral part of many different societies; yet often have maintained a degree of separateness from those among whom they have lived.

This course will present a broad overview of Jewish history and culture, and will use the notion of ***identity*** as a window through which to view those processes. We will trace continuity and change in Jewish identity from ancient to modern times and across different regions, and will see that Jewish identity has varied tremendously over time and place. We will explore diverse Jewish experiences and how they have shaped a variety of Jewish identities. In addition, we will consider the many ways that identities mold everyday social interactions, affecting lives for both better and worse.

Not long ago the Dalai Lama (the leader of a people exiled from their homeland during the 20th century) invited Jewish scholars to suggest ways to preserve Tibetan identity. He saw the

persistence of Jewish identity across time, space, and historical conditions as uniquely instructive. In a sense, we will be asking whether that is, indeed, the case and, if so, why. Understanding the factors that shape Jewish identities, can help us understand other identities, as well.

This course attempts to convey Jewish history and culture as presented in the writings of contemporary scholars. The course will ask students to transcend some of the attitudes and understandings about Jews and Judaism that are widespread (for example, those that are based on stereotypes, faith, and on personal identity and values). Students will be expected to consider Jews and Judaism dispassionately, on the basis of evidence that is derived from research.

The course's goals are as follows, that students will learn to:

- ***Describe and summarize the scope of Jewish history and culture***
- ***Explain the most salient social and cultural processes that have shaped Jewish history and changes in the everyday lives of the Jews***
- ***Synthesize and communicate this information and these understandings in writing***

A fundamental aim of the course is to facilitate critical thinking; that is, to encourage students to focus, refine, and develop priorities in their academic writing that are based upon systematic, evidence-based, and rational analyses, and to gain a healthy skepticism toward perspectives that demand complete agreement. My hope is that students will leave each of my courses a bit more "hard-nosed" about any narrative, history, conclusion, or perspective and that, based on such an attitude, they will develop a clearer sense of their own goals, how to achieve them, and how to convey them to others.

REQUIRED READINGS

The following five types of readings will be required: 1) textbooks; 2) online lessons; 3) additional readings accessed in several different ways; 4) online maps; & 5) online thematic pages.

Required Textbooks (available at the University Bookstore at University Park and through the Internet):

1. Konner, Melvin. 2003. *Unsettled: An anthropology of the Jews*. New York: Viking Compass. ISBN 0 14 21.9632 0 [**DO NOT PURCHASE THIS VOLUME. IT WILL BE AVAILABLE THROUGH ELECTRONIC RESERVES AS A SERIES OF PDF FILES. Do not distribute these files to anyone else. To do so would be a violation of our agreement with the author, and of academic integrity.**]
2. Scheindlin, Raymond P. 2000. *A short history of the Jewish people: From legendary times to modern statehood*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN13: 9780195139419 [Available in new and used hardcopy and paper versions through a variety of sources. One copy is on reserve in Pattee Library.]

The online lessons also are required. These summarize, frame, and complement the other readings. They synthesize, add-to, and organize each lesson's topic in a manner similar to a classroom lecture. In this, they set the tone for the course and my expectations for students.

Additional required readings are listed for many of the lessons. Some are posted to ANGEL, some are located at other web sites, and some are available through Electronic Reserves at the Penn State library. [Use the course "Resources" tab in ANGEL to go to Electronic Reserves.]

Lesson maps and the Thematic Topics pages (e.g., "Governance") are required, also.

Any changes in the readings will be made available through ANGEL or posted through the PSU library's Electronic Reserve system.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1) *Quizzes.* [450 points; 45% of course grade]. Ten short quizzes are required. Fifteen quizzes will be offered. The ten best scores will be used to determine this part of your course grade. You may choose whether to take 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, or 15 quizzes. No make-up or late quizzes will be available. Except when there are matching items, each quiz will include 15 questions. Most (but not all) questions will be multiple choice and most will include five possible responses. Many of the remaining questions will be true-false. Almost all of the questions will be worth three points each (matching items will be worth two points each). Each quiz will be worth a total of 45 points, or 4.5% of your course grade.

The quizzes will draw from all parts of the lesson within which they are offered. This will include the online lesson, the required readings, the thematic topics pages for a particular lesson (e.g., "Governance"; see the menu on the left-hand side of your screen or look at the top of the lesson page), the boxes within the online lesson pages, the maps (in the online lesson and in other required readings), the timeline (see the menu on the left-hand side of your screen), and the glossary for the particular lesson.

Start each course lesson by reading the online lessons. Consider them equivalent to a classroom lecture in which the instructor outlines the key themes and information to study. ***Take notes of what you read!*** After reading an online lesson, proceed to the additional required readings to supplement your learning.

Pay attention to dates, geography, terms, people, and concepts discussed in the lesson materials. Also pay attention to topics and people discussed with some emphasis in the other required readings. Quiz questions generally (but not always) will be divided into three sections: 1) Dates; 2) Geography; & 3) General Knowledge. For the most part, each quiz will cover material from only one lesson and will focus on your knowledge of the information presented in that specific lesson. Some of the quiz questions, however, assume that you know the information provided in previous lessons.

Read the file titled *Information to Help You Prepare for Quizzes* in the Quiz Folder for further general information.

Most of the quizzes will be available through ANGEL for about a 39-hour, 55-minute period (from 8:00 a.m. Wednesday mornings to 11:55 p.m. ET Thursday evenings). However, the first quiz access periods will be longer than usual in order to accommodate the add/drop period, and other access periods will be adjusted to accommodate Jewish and university holidays and schedules. ***SEE THE COURSE SCHEDULE AT THE END OF THIS SYLLABUS for specific dates and times, and NOTE THEM IN YOUR PERSONAL CALENDAR*** (the non-standard periods have been underlined and are in gray-shaded cells). Access periods are in Eastern Time.

You may not take a quiz before or after its access period. However, you may take it at any time within that period.

Once you begin the quiz, you will have 25 minutes within which to complete it. After 25 minutes, your quiz will be locked. **ANSWER EACH QUESTION *BEFORE* PROCEEDING TO THE NEXT. ONCE YOU MOVE TO THE NEXT QUESTION, YOU WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO GO BACK. DO NOT CLICK ON THE SUBMIT BUTTON UNTIL YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE ENTIRE QUIZ.**

2) *Online Discussions.* [200 points; 20% of course grade]. Participation in five discussion threads will be required. Fifteen discussion topics will be offered (one for each course lesson). You may select any five (or more) of these in which to participate. Your five best scores will be used to determine your course grade.

Participation consists of TWO components: 1) a COMMENT on the discussion question for a particular lesson and 2) a RESPONSE to another student's comment on the same question. Each Comment-and-Response, together, will be worth 40 points, or 4% of your course grade. You MUST post BOTH a Comment AND a Response TO THE SAME QUESTION (within the same lesson) to receive ANY credit for that discussion forum. Comments with no accompanying Response, and Responses with no accompanying Comment will receive NO points.

Each Comment and Response must be submitted PRIOR TO ITS RESPECTIVE DEADLINE to receive credit.

Discussion Comments should be about 200 words. Your Responses should be about 100-words long. However, there is no maximum or minimum length to either.

Each Comment and each Response will be graded ONLY as ***high pass, pass, or unsatisfactory.*** **These are the only three "grade-points" that will be used.** Comments will be graded independently of Responses.

- **Comments** graded ***high pass*** will be awarded 25 points, ***pass*** 20 points, and ***unsatisfactory*** 14 points. No intermediate scores will be assigned.

- **Responses** graded *high pass* will be awarded 15 points, *pass* 12 points, and *unsatisfactory* 8 points. No intermediate scores will be assigned.

The discussion questions will ask you to apply the themes and concepts from a specific lesson to more general social processes.

The “High Pass” grade is intended for comments and responses that are considerably better than average. They say something original or insightful, are accurate, and the argument is presented clearly and logically. “High Pass” Comments will use examples to illustrate their point(s). The arguments in “High Pass” Comments will be based on evidence rather than feelings. And, they will address the assigned question directly.

Responses will be evaluated based on the substance of their response to the selected Comment. That is, does the Response engage intellectually with the Comment, does it do more than merely repeat the Comment’s points, and does it apply logic and evidence to support its argument? *Writing that one agrees or disagrees with another student’s Comment will NOT contribute positively to one’s score.* The best Responses will point out, with specificity, the fallacies or illogic of the Comments to which they are responding. They will engage directly with the substance of the other student’s remarks.

That said, the Comments and Responses will be quite short. The instructions call for Comments of about 200 words and Responses of about 100. Therefore, it will be difficult to go into a great deal of detail. ***The grade of “Pass” will be applied to any acceptable Response, and will be the grade of most postings.*** Only those postings that are outstanding in some way will receive a “High Pass” and only those that are significantly flawed will receive an “Unsatisfactory.”

Read the *Instructions* file in the Discussion Forums Folder for further information.

Most weeks your Comments on a discussion question will be due Thursdays at 11:55 p.m. and your Responses the following Sunday at 11:55 p.m. ET. Discussion forums will open when a lesson begins, generally at 8:00 a.m. Monday morning. Some of the deadlines have been adjusted to accommodate the add/drop period (Lessons 1 & 2), Jewish and university holidays, and the study days for final exams (Lesson 15). ***SEE THE COURSE SCHEDULE AT THE END OF THIS SYLLABUS for specific dates and times, and NOTE THEM IN YOUR PERSONAL CALENDAR*** (the non-standard periods have been underlined and placed in gray-shaded cells). Access periods are in Eastern Time.

3) Papers. [350 points; 35% of course grade]. Two papers will be required: a mid-term and a final. The mid-term paper will be worth 150 points, or 15% of your course grade and the final paper will be worth 200 points (20% of course grade). The mid-term will be due 11:55 p.m. EDT Tuesday October 20th, and the final paper will be due 11:55 p.m. EST Monday December 14th. Papers may be submitted prior to those dates and times. Your course grade will be reduced by .5% (five points) for each weekday that the mid-term paper is late. Final papers will not be accepted after the deadline.

Papers should be concise and about three-to-five-pages long. The *maximum* length of each paper is five pages. Points will be deducted for papers longer than five pages. The papers should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted to the course's "drop box" in ANGEL.

The mid-term paper assignment will cover Lessons 1-7. The final paper assignment will cover the entire course. In the papers, you will be asked to apply the course's central theme of Jewish identity to the course materials. Paper instructions will be distributed roughly two weeks prior to the paper deadlines.

Organize your papers according to standard writing techniques. That is, introduce your topic and themes, discuss them, and describe the conclusions that you have drawn.

Read Dr. Sophia McClennen's *General Evaluation Rubric for Papers* for a further sense of how to write your papers and how they will be graded:

<http://www.personal.psu.edu/users/s/a/sam50/rubric.htm>

The primary considerations in your paper scores will be the quality of your conceptual discussion along with the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information you present. Your discussion should be specific and concrete; it should not over-generalize. *Base your conceptual argument on the research and information covered in this course, not on your beliefs.* Consider the nuances and complex distinctions to be made about your theme or themes. Do not be overly simplistic, and refrain from making unsupported opinions.

Grading Scale

A = 93-100 % [930-1,000 points]	B = 83-86.9 % [830-869 points]	C = 70-75.9 % [700-759 points]
A- = 90-92.9 % [900-929 points]	B- = 80-82.9 % [800-829 points]	D = 60-69.9 % [600-699 points]
B+ = 87-89.9 % [870-899 points]	C+ = 76-79.9 % [760-799 points]	F = 59.9 % & below [0-599 points]

Grading will be implemented through a 1,000-point scoring system. For example, an assignment worth 4.5% of the course grade will be worth 45 points. The above grading scale will be applied to the total points earned in the course (out of the 1,000 points available).

All assignments must be completed on your own.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic Integrity. Penn State defines academic integrity as the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. All students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts (Faculty Senate Policy 49-20).

I encourage students to communicate with and to study with one another. However, students must sit for the quizzes, post comments to discussion forums, and write papers on their own—without the assistance of any other person.

Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting the work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and will be reported to the University's Judicial Affairs office for possible further disciplinary sanction.

Reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be cited. Citation guidance is available at <http://www.libraries.psu.edu/psul/researchguides/citationstyles.html>.

In addition, to distribute the pdf files of *Unsettled* to anyone who is not currently a student in this course would be a violation of academic integrity. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator also shall constitute a violation of academic integrity.

In cases of any violation of academic integrity, procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts will be followed. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: <http://www.la.psu.edu/current-students/student-services/academic-integrity/academic-integrity>.

Disability Access. Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: <http://equity.psu.edu/ods/>. Instructors should be notified as early in the semester as possible regarding the need for reasonable accommodations.

All times in this syllabus are in Eastern Daylight Time. ***All course deadlines are expressed in Eastern Daylight Time.***

Keep up with the readings! If you fall behind, it may be difficult to make up lost time.

Keep up with the assignments! *You are responsible for meeting all course deadlines.*

Take notes on the online lessons and readings as you go along to help prepare for the quizzes and papers.

Read the textbooks and other required readings as well as the online lesson materials. Quiz questions and paper assignments will assume that you have studied them.

Begin to take the quizzes with the first quizzes of the term.

1. This will help you prepare for the later quizzes.
2. It will enable you to replace quizzes in which your scores were low with those in which you scored higher.
3. It will allow you to miss a later quiz or discussion, should an emergency arise.
4. It will help you to prepare for the papers. Studying for the quizzes will provide information you will need in your papers!

The Course Schedule at the end of this syllabus has the official list of all course deadlines (unless I announce a change during the term). You may find the course calendar in ANGEL a useful tool. However, if the ANGEL calendar conflicts with the syllabus, follow the syllabus. Moreover, the ANGEL calendar does not list times of day.

I STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT YOU MAKE A NOTE OF ALL COURSE DEADLINES IN YOUR PERSONAL CALENDAR.

Use the course gradebook to keep track of your progress. However, ignore class averages. Those figures include zeros for students who do not participate in assignment. Instead, pay attention to your individual, personal total points earned.

No assignments other than the final paper will be accepted after the last day of classes (December 11, 2015).

No extra credit will be available. However, the option to take extra quizzes and to participate in extra discussion forums are extra credit opportunities embedded into the course! Take all 15 quizzes and you will be able to drop your six lowest quiz scores! Participate in all 15 discussion forums and your ten lowest scores will be dropped. Final course grades will be based on the total number of points earned in the course, in the required assignments. In rare instances, based solely on my discretion, a course grade may be adjusted upward. *Do not contact me to request a grade adjustment at the end of the semester.* Your course grade will be based on the work you put in DURING the semester plus your final paper.

YOU are responsible for monitoring your progress and meeting course deadlines and access periods. This is an online course, without much (if any) face-to-face interaction with others in it. Sometimes it is easy to “let things slide” in an online setting and to end up with a poor grade as a result. Therefore, read this syllabus—including the course schedule—carefully and be sure to record the course deadlines in your personal calendar. The most effective study strategy will be to contact me with any questions *before* a deadline has passed.

Bring your comments, suggestions, complaints, and requests for help to me immediately. I cannot make changes or help you over hurdles about which I am unaware. Feel free to discuss your papers with me prior to their submission. *I welcome conversations about any topic raised in the course.*

COURSE SCHEDULE

The schedule and reading assignments are subject to change. Unusual discussion deadlines and quiz access periods are underlined, in red, and placed in gray-shaded cells. You are responsible for meeting these deadlines.

LESSON TOPIC & WEEK COVERED	QUIZ PERIODS	DISCUSSION DEADLINES
LESSON 1 <i>The Concept of Identity: Studying “What Makes a Jew Jewish”</i> [August 24-30] <i>Work around add/drop</i>	Wed. Aug. 26 at 8:00 a.m. to Sun. Sept. 6 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Wed. Sept. 2 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Sun. Sept. 6 at 11:55 p.m.</i>
LESSON 2 <i>Ancient Israel: Israelite Emergence in History</i> [August 31-September 6] <i>Work around add/drop & Labor Day</i>	Wed. Sept. 2 at 8:00 a.m. to Sun. Sept. 6 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Thur. Sept. 3 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Tue. Sept. 8 at 11:55 p.m.</i>
LESSON 3 <i>Israelite Kingdoms: Their Rise & Fall; Heights of Self-Rule; Exile, Return & Renewal</i> [September 7-13] <i>Work around Labor Day & Rosh HaShanah</i>	Wed. Sept. 9 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Sept. 10 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Thur. Sept. 10 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Wed. Sept. 16 at 11:55 p.m.</i>
LESSON 4 <i>Sacred Jewish Texts: Their Overview & Construction</i> [September 14-20] <i>Work around Rosh HaShanah</i>	Wed. Sept. 16 at 8:00 a.m. to Fri. Sept. 18 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Thur. Sept. 17 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Sun. Sept. 20 at 11:55 p.m.</i>
LESSON 5 <i>Resistance & Dispersion: The Hasmonean Kingdom, Roman Rule, & Rebellion</i> [September 21-27] <i>Yom Kippur, Sukkot, & al Adha</i>	Wed. Sept. 23 at 8:00 a.m. to Fri. Sept. 25 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Thur. Sept. 24 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Wed. Sept. 30 at 11:55 p.m.</i>
LESSON 6 <i>Competing & Alternative Religious Identities: Political-Ideological Upheaval; the Rise of Christianity, & Then of Islam</i> [September 28-October 4] <i>Work around Sukkot & Shmini Atzeret</i>	Wed. Sept. 30 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Oct. 1 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Thur. Oct. 1 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Wed. Oct. 7 at 11:55 p.m.</i>
LESSON 7 <i>Religious Law, Jewish Courts, & Self-Governance: How Jews Maintained Internal Social Order under the Rule of Others</i> [October 5-11] <i>Shmini Atzeret & Simchat Torah</i>	Wed. Oct. 7 at 8:00 a.m. to Fri. Oct. 9 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Thur. Oct. 8 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Sun. Oct. 11 at 11:55 p.m.</i>
LESSON 8 <i>Jews of Medieval Iberia: Convivencia (Coexistence), Achievement, & Expulsion</i> [October 12-18]	Wed. Oct. 14 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Oct. 15 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due: Thur. Oct. 15 at 11:55 p.m.</i> <i>Response Due: Sun. Oct. 18 at 11:55 p.m.</i>

MID-TERM PAPER DUE TUESDAY OCTOBER 20 AT 11:55 p.m. ET
(Covers Lessons 1-7)

LESSON TOPIC & WEEK COVERED	QUIZ PERIODS	DISCUSSION DEADLINES
LESSON 9 <i>Jews in Medieval Europe: The Consequences of being Socially Situated in an Economic Niche</i> [October 19-25]	Wed. Oct. 21 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Oct. 22 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due:</i> Thur. Oct. 22 at 11:55 p.m. <i>Response Due:</i> Sun. Oct. 25 at 11:55 p.m.
LESSON 10 <i>The Ottoman Empire & the Pale of Settlement: New Horizons, Hopes & Religious Movements</i> [October 26-November 1] <i>Return to Eastern Standard Time (EST)</i>	Wed. Oct. 28 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Oct. 29 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due:</i> Thur. Oct. 29 at 11:55 p.m. <i>Response Due:</i> Sun. Nov. 1 at 11:55 p.m.
LESSON 11 <i>Modernity & The Jews: How the Reformation, Humanism, Colonialism, Citizenship & the Enlightenment Affected Jewish Lives & Communities</i> [November 2-8]	Wed. Nov. 4 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Nov. 5 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due:</i> Thur. Nov. 5 at 11:55 p.m. <i>Response Due:</i> Sun. Nov. 8 at 11:55 p.m.
LESSON 12 <i>The Holocaust: Racial Categories, Anti- Semitism & Policies Of Extermination</i> [November 9-15]	Wed. Nov. 11 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Nov. 12 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due:</i> Thur. Nov. 12 at 11:55 p.m. <i>Response Due:</i> Sun. Nov. 15 at 11:55 p.m.
LESSON 13 <i>Zionism & The State Of Israel: The Hope for Redemption & Rejuvenation through Political Movements</i> [November 16-29] <i>Work around Thanksgiving</i>	Wed. Nov. 18 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Nov. 19 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due:</i> Thur. Nov. 19 at 11:55 p.m. <i>Response Due:</i> <u>Sun. Nov. 29</u> <u>at 11:55 p.m.</u>
LESSON 14 <i>Modern Jewry & Judaism: New Religious Movements & Types of Community; Responses to Individual & Collective Freedoms</i> [November 30-December 6] <i>Work around Hanukah</i>	Wed. Dec. 2 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Dec. 3 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due:</i> Thur. Dec. 3 at 11:55 p.m. <i>Response Due:</i> Sun. Dec. 6 at 11:55 p.m.
LESSON 15 <i>Gender: Overview of the Relations between Jewish Women & Men</i> [December 7-11] <u>SHORT WEEK—STUDY DAYS</u>	Wed. Dec. 9 at 8:00 a.m. to Thur. Dec. 10 at 11:55 p.m.	<i>Comment Due:</i> Thur. Dec. 10 at 11:55 p.m. <i>Response Due:</i> <u>Fri. Dec. 11 at</u> <u>11:55 p.m.</u> <i>(end of term/beginning of study days)</i>

FINAL PAPER DUE MONDAY DECEMBER 14 AT 11:55 p.m. ET
(Covers Lessons 1-15)