

Ellen S. Cannon

Rank: Professor (tenured)

Department: Political Science and Jewish Studies

University: Northeastern Illinois University

Location: Chicago, Illinois

Course Title: American Jewish Politics

Participants: Undergraduates

PSCI 321: American Jewish Politics

College of Arts and Sciences Syllabus

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COURSE INFORMATION

Credit Hours: 3

Course Description: At its broadest level one objective of politics involves the practice of making a community a better, safer, and more tolerant place to live. So, it should be of no surprise that American Jews have devoted themselves to civic engagement and the democratic process. From the Revolutionary War to the early 21st century, the Jewish community has devoted itself to public service, issue advocacy, and involvement in politics and government at every level. While strong support for the safety and security of the State of Israel has been one hallmark of U.S. foreign policy since Israel's founding, it is by no means the only policy area in which American Jews are involved. American Jewry has historically been involved in labor politics, civil rights; advocacy politics for inclusion of minority rights; business; academia; philanthropy; the civil rights movement; feminism; LGBTQ rights; the environment and climate change; and advocacy for education, health, housing, and income inequality. Although the Jewish community is active in both the Democratic and Republican parties, they are not a monolithic group. American Jews represent a wide range of ideologies and perspectives on economic, foreign policy issues. They have helped to shape the country's policy directions and have equally been shaped by the national conversations of and concerns of other ethnic groups and interest groups.

American Jews constitute less than 2% of the American population. The population of world Jewry is less than 12 million globally. Although a small segment of both the American and global population, political participation, leadership, elective office holding, political mobilization, and interest group articulation has proven essential for their security, health, and preservation, and representation of this minority community. Having experienced a history of state sponsored genocide, forced conversion, and forced global expulsion, the effort to sustain Jewish life through political participation, civic engagements, elections, and interest group articulation is often assessed in terms of dangerous stereotypes depicting this community as having “too much power” given their small numbers, or worse yet, leaders of international economic, financial, and political force whose aim is to control global politics.

Such biased accusations are sadly not part of a bygone era but have strongly reemerged as the result of growing contemporary antisemitism and anti-Zionism. This course will examine 3 forms that contemporary antisemitism and anti-Zionism take- Far Left, Far Right, and Islamist or radical Islamism. Although differing in strategies, ideologies, and organization structure these three contemporary forms of hatred toward Jews share common tropes and accusations that aim to demonize, delegitimize, and undermine the Jewish political presence globally as well as terminate the right of the State of Israel to legitimately exist with full rights to self determination accorded to all other nations.

In response to this re-emergence of Jewish hatred this course will examine and analyse the political advocacy effort of American Jewry to combat and contain this growing political cancer that poses a danger not only to Jews but to democracy in general. Particular attention will be paid to Jewish political activism at the federal, state, and local level regarding the growing impact of the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement (BDS) which conducts a highly successful campaign against Israel and the American Jewish political presence and narratives in contemporary American politics. In response to the growing strength of the BDS, American Jewry is presently focused on the passage of anti-BDS legislation at the national and state level. Their interest group activities have succeeded in gaining support from governors, state

legislators, state political allies and coalitions in 26 states as well as increased support from the U.S. Congress. This course will objectively, and empirically examine this Jewish interest group articulation in their fight against the BDS as well as compare Jewish political interest group activities to the strategies, structures, and organization of the BDS movement.

This course will be cross listed in both the Political Science Department and Jewish Studies. This class is available to both undergraduates and graduate students. Introduction to American National Government (PSCI 216) is required for entry into the course. Graduate students will have additional readings to those listed as required texts. Graduate students are required to do a 25-page research paper on American Jewish politics. The topic and detailed proposal will be due on the third week of class. The development of the research paper for this class can be used as the initial step towards a master's thesis in political science. Please note that the city of Chicago has an extensive Judaic scholarly research library in the U.S. The Asher library at Spertus College of Jewish Studies, located downtown, has a very large collection on American Jewish Politics as well as Chicago and Illinois Jewish politics.

COURSE MATERIALS: REQUIRED TEXTS

Jonathan Sarna (ed.) The American Jewish Experience (Holmes and Meirer, New York, 2nd edition, 1997)

Marc Dollinger, Quest for Inclusion: Jews and Liberalism in Modern America, (Princeton University Press, N. J. 2016)

B. Ginsberg, The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State: The Politics of Antisemitism in the United States, (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1999)

Cary Nelson, Dreams Deferred: A Concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Movement to Boycott Israel, (University of Indiana Press, Bloomington, 2016)

Cary Nelson and Gabriel Noah Bahm (eds), The Case Against the Academic Boycotts of Israel (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2014)

David Wayman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, (Pantheon Books, New York, 1984)

Murry Friedman and Albert Chernin (ed.) A Second Exodus: The American Movement to Free Soviet Jews, (Brandeis University Press, 1999)

David Gerber, (ed) Antisemitism in American History, University of Illinois Press, Chicago and Urbana, 1987)

COURSE OBJECTIVES/STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge and understanding of interest group articulation

Conceptual analysis

Improved understanding of Political Science and Jewish Studies as a discipline

Understanding of difference between empirical and ideological studies

Greater understanding of American Jewish presence as well as the longest hate in history- antisemitism

Improved Writing skills

Critical Thinking

Understand the content of research

Improved communication skills

Greater understanding of data collection on the American Jewish community

Future Career Application based on course material

Please examine this matter in the student handbook which can be found on Neiuport under "integrity".

During exams, no laptops or electronic devices will be permitted.

Your final grade will be based on the exact average of the midterm and final examinations. If you receive twelve participation checks ten points will be added to that average raising your final grade by one full letter.

Formulae and configuration of your grade:

Midterm and Final examinations have two parts each worth 50 points.

DDR + 2 essays= 100 points.

Average of Midterm + Final= final grade. (12 participation checks raise your final grade one full letter.

A= 90-100

B=80-89

C=70-79

D=60-69

F=anything below 60

If you are a political science major a grade of C is required to get credit in your major.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Weeks 1 and 2 (January 10-19) Defining the American Jewish Experience. An examination and overview of the broad term relationship of American Jew and America. This relationship is inseparable from the values and ideas embedded in liberal democratic

theory and social contract theory. Included will be an examination of four distinct political roles and voices articulated by American Jewry over the course of their political engagement. These include "petitioners" 1654-1870; "personality" 1870-930; "participant" 1930-1960' and "partner" 1960-present.

Read: Sarna, Introduction xiii-xix; 6-274

Gerber, pp 3-57; 57-70; 79-99; 103-129

Dollinger pp 3-19

Weeks 3-4 (January 24-February 2), "The Politics of Security" (1906-1938)

As the American Jewish community began to evolve and stabilize, the process of Americanization witnessed a period of defensive responses, designed to offset nativism and anti-Semitism. The term "civic protective Program" was employed by community leaders to define the work necessary to ensure Jewish security. Read: Ginsberg, entire

Read: Sarna pp. 185-94; 201-275

Gerber, 233-274; 305-328

Weeks 5-7 (February 7-23) The Politics of War and Death (1939-1945)

In this period there were two themes that at times competed: the goal of creating a Jewish State and thus fulfilling the Zionist vision, and a preoccupation with the issues of the Second World War and the refugees it produced. During this era, the field of Jewish community relations labeled their political responsibilities as "Jewish public relations". The issue of the murder of more than 6.5 million Jews received minimum coverage. The State Department, as your readings

Document was antisemitic. Thus, the issue of annihilation of European Jews, efforts to save them; and future refugee policy took great political skill to reach both the American electorate and policy makers at the federal and state levels of government.

Read, David Wyman, entire book.

Dollinger, pp 19-107

Gerber, 167-274

Midterm: covers all lecture material from January 10-February 23.

Part I of the midterm will be held on February 28. These are short essays referred to as DDR's. Students are to define, discuss and tell the import or significance of the term to the disciplines of political science or Jewish studies. You will choose 10 of the twenty terms I hand out. Each answer is to be in ten full sentences

Part II Long and highly specific essay questions. Students will receive 5 essays and you choose any two of them. All points that you make must be substantiated by objective, factual, and or empirical information.

The midterm will be 50% of your grade.

Week 8- Genocidal Antisemitism and earlier forms of antisemitism prior to WWII. What are the underlying tropes and narratives of historic antisemitism? (tropes and accusations include Deicide; foreign or alien presence; the embodiment of all evil; Satanic; blood libels; dual loyalty; self interested to the point of participating in a global cabal to control global finances and power. Results in sanctions which include expulsion; pogroms; forced conversions; burning at the stake; ghettoization and marginalization.

Read: Kenneth Marcus, "The Definition of Antisemitism" in Charles Asher Small, Global Antisemitism: A crisis of Modernity, Volume 1, Conceptualization , (ISGAP, 2013) pp 99-112)

JEWISH DEFENSE ORGANIZATION TO ASSIST IN COMBATING EARLY FORMS OF ANTISEMITISM

Read: Jerome Chanis, "Who Does What: Jewish Advocacy and Jewish Interests," in Jews in American Politics, L. Maisel and Ira Forman, (eds,.) Latham Maryland: Roman and Littlefield, 2001), pp 100-119

Steven Windmuller, "Defenders of National Jewish Community Relations Agencies," in Jewish Polity and American Civil Society, A. Mittlener, J. Sarna, and R. Licht, (eds) pp. 18-66.

Michael Kotzin, "Local Community Relations and Their NATIONAL Body," in Jewish Polity and American Civil Society; L. Mittlener, J. Sarna, and R. Licht, pp 67-101

Week 9-11 Re-emergence of Hatred Toward Jews in the 21st century- How does it differ from older manifestations ? Three news forms or iterations of Jewish and Zionist hatred:

Far Left antisemitism and anti-Zionism-What are the underlying assumptions of this ideology.? What is its relationship to postmodern progressive thought? How is this ideology threatening the future of democracy as well as Jews and Israel? All students (undergraduates and graduate) are to read the following:

Read: Robert Wistrich, From Ambivalence to Betrayal: The Left, The Jews, and Israel (University of Nebraska Press, 2012)

David Hirsh, "How Raising the issue of antisemitism puts you outside the community of the progressive". Eunice Pollack (ed.) in Anti-Zionism, Antisemitism- Past and Present, (Boston, Academic Studies Press, 2016)

David Hirsh, Contemporary left Antisemitism, Routledge, London), 2018.

Paul Berman, The Flight of the Intellectuals (New York, Melville House, 2011)

Cary Nelson and Gabriel N. Bahm (eds). The Case Against the Academic Boycott of Israel, (Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 2014)

David Patterson, A genealogy of Evil: From Nazism to Islamic Jihad, Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Alvin Rosenfeld, "Progressive Jewish Thought and the New Antisemitism", (American Jewish Committee, August 2006).

ISLAMIST ANTISEMITISM (ALSO CALLED RADICAL ISLAMIST ANTISEMITISM)

Read: Martin Kramer, "The Jihad Against the Jews," Commentary, October 1994) pp. 38-42.

Ely Karmon, "International Terror and Antisemitism-Two Modern Day Curses: Is There a Connection",

<http://www.tare.ac.il/antisemitism/asw2005/karmon/html>.

Matthias Kuntzel: Jihad and Jew Hatred, (New York 2007)

Basaam Tibi, "From Said Qutb to Hamas: The Middle East Conflict and the Islamization of Antisemitism," in Charles Asher Small, Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity, Volume 4, Islamism and the Arab World (ISGAP, 2013)

Jeffrey Herf, "Time for Reset: American Spector and Radical Islam," in The New Republic, 2/4/2011

Jeffrey Herf, "The Totalitarian Present," The American Interest(6/2/14)

Jeffrey Herf, "A Pro- Hamas Left Emerges" The American Interest, 8/26/14

The Hamas Charter

FAR RIGHT ANTISEMITISM:

Read: David Nirenberg, Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. 2013)

Guenther Jikeli, European Muslim Anti-Semitism: Why Young Urban Males they Do Not Like Jews (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 2015)

Hadassah Ben Itto, The Lie that Would Not Die: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, (London and Portland, Vallentine Mitchell, 2015)

David Duke's website: <http://www.davidduke.com>

Weeks 12-14 The BDS and Anti-BDS Campaigns: Propaganda War vs. Legislative Interest Group Articulations

What is the BDS?

What role does rhetoric and propaganda play in their political mobilization?

How does the BDS utilize the antisemitism of the Protocols of Zion? How does it utilize the ideology of the Hamas Charter?

How and Why does the BDS Movement target Higher Education? What specific linguistic uses do they employ to gain support within higher education?

How, When and Why did Jewish political activism respond to the BDS?

What strategies did Jewish political activists use in their response to BDS and how effective was it?

Detail the Initial response to Jewish anti-BDS activism at the Federal level? How does this compare to the overwhelming success Jewish anti-BDS received at the state and local levels? How do you explain this success and the moderate success at the federal level.

Detail the congressional debates that took place regarding anti-BDS legislation.

Detail and explore the role of governors, state legislatures, and state coalitions regarding anti-BDS legislation

Read: Ellen Cannon, "The BDS and anti-BDS Campaigns: Propaganda War vs. Legislative Interest Group Articulation, in Jewish Political Studies Review, Fall, 2019 Volume 30.

Gabriel Noah Brahm, "There is a Culture Clash of Civilizations: An Interview with Bennie Morris", Fathom Review, 2015

Ben Cohen, "Antisemitism and Insurgency Politics, Institute of Jewish Ideas and Ideals, May 3, 2016

Eugene Kontorovich, "How One of the BDS Movements Alleged Victories Become One of the Worst Defeats, Tablet, (June 30, 2016)

Yosi Kuperwasser (Brig.Gen.Res)"Antisemitism and anti-Zionism: Same Idea," Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy, (May 23, 2016)

Cary Nelson Dreams Deferred: A concise Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Movement to Boycott Israel. (Bloomington Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2016)

David Nirenberg, "Anti-Judaism as a Cultural Theory", The Chronicle of Higher Education (January 28,)

Final Examination, Material to be covered includes all reading and class lecture material covered since the midterm.

Part I April 27, DDR's Define, Discuss and Relate 10 of the 20 terms I hand out in regards to political science or Jewish studies for those who are Jewish studies minors.

May 2 Part II Detailed essay portion. You will choose and discuss and analyse 2 out of 5 essays on the topics we have covered since the midterm.

Students cannot miss exams. There is no re-taking of an exam. Please make sure to read the regulations regarding requesting a grade of "I". Grades of incomplete are no longer given upon request but follow clear procedures. It is essential that you show up and do the best you can on your examinations. Only a formal referred excuse can alter this regulation.

Please note, that you cannot earn participation points as an exchange for attendance. The participation extra points will not be applied to students who miss two additional classes after your "free" absence. Your grade will be dropped by one full grade based on the absence policy.

Class Environment: It is expected and required that all students be civil to each other and the professor. Shouting, mocking, name calling, sarcasm toward someone's views, will not be tolerated. All forms of bigotry (racism, sexism, all forms of homophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-ethnicity, anti-religion, or anti-nationality, will not be tolerated. You will be asked to immediately leave the classroom and go directly to the Dean of Student Affairs. NEIU is among the most diverse student bodies in America. We take great pride in inclusion, pluralism, and tolerance.

Academic Integrity Policy: By enrolling in this course, you are bound by the NEIU Student Code of Conduct:

<http://www.neiu.edu/university-life/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-code-conduct>. You will be informed by your

instructor of any additional policy specific to your course regarding plagiarism, class disruptions, etc.

ADA Statement: Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. To request accommodations, students with special needs should make arrangements with the Student Disability Services (SDS) office, located on the main campus in room D104. Contact SDS via 773 442-4595 or <http://www.neiu.edu/university-life/student-disability-services>.

Campus Safety: Web links to Campus Safety: Emergency Procedures and Safety Information can be found on NEIUport on the MyNEIU tab as follows:

<http://homepages.neiu.edu/~neiutemp/EmergencyCampus/> Porcedures/Main