

Antisemitism and the War of Ideas

History 4XXX Seminar - Fall 2016

TR 1:35-2:50 Phillips 329

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Office Hours: M 11:00-1:00, and by appointment

Course Description

This course is a thematic and theoretical reading and research seminar in the history and historiography of antisemitism from its origins to the twenty-first century. Concerning Jews but divorced from their reality, antisemitism, variably defined and much contested by historians and practitioners alike, has had an indelible impact on the lives, worldviews, and politics of Jews and others, shaping thought and deed from antique times to the present. Deeply connected to the processes of modernity, while at the same time presenting a challenge to it, antisemitism is unique in its ideational malleability, adaptive and transnational yet deeply rooted in a long-standing and ever-growing set of cultural images and assumptions. In order to comprehend its power, appeal, and discourse, and not merely reject it, antisemitism must be contextually analyzed both diachronically and synchronically, juxtaposed against other prejudices, and assessed with a wide lens, while being especially mindful of the place of antisemitism in the realm of ideas.

In this upper-level course we will analyze and contextualize the most significant tropes of the antisemitic repertoire, engage with the scholarship and theorization of antisemitism and anti-Judaism, explore the complicated relationship between modern and post-modern antisemitism and the State of Israel, and dissect key antisemitic texts. In so doing, we will situate antisemitism as a key current in a transnational war of ideas, and demonstrate how its contemporary and historical implications render antisemitism far more than a "Jewish problem."

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be expected to be able to do the following. These outcomes will be evaluated through course assessments.

- Define and provide a theoretical assessment of antisemitism and anti-Judaism that demonstrates a fluency and engagement with the scholarly literature on the subject, and assess antisemitic instances from both practical and theoretical perspectives.
- Identify significant individuals, institutions, ideas, texts, events, and movements in the history of antisemitism introduced through course readings and primary research, and

explain their significance to Jewish and other histories in their original and in our own contexts.

- Explain and participate in discussion on the central theoretical issues of antisemitism, including questions of periodization, definition, modernity, post-modernity, continuity, and memory.
- Analyze primary and secondary evidence critically and in light of their original contexts. Students will be able to assess the relationship between different kinds of evidence, read secondary sources historiographically, assess historical interpretations in light of available evidence, and read primary and secondary sources with an awareness of argument, structure, and bias.
- Write and research using the scholarly conventions of the historian using appropriate sources, rhetorical forms, and citations, while distinguishing and building upon primary and secondary evidence through the application of an interpretative lens.

Course Requirements

- Reading Responses (20%): Over the course of the semester students will prepare four short (1-3 page) document analyses (worth 5% each) of a class period's assigned secondary reading(s). Students should provide an critical and argumentative interpretation of the text(s), identifying and explaining the argument, evidence, methodology, and key passages, while situating them within the larger scholarly literature. Reading responses are due at the start of class for which the selected readings are scheduled.
- Term Paper (50%): The central assignment of this course will be the production of a argumentative analytical research or historiographic paper (approx. 20 pages) on a topic of your choosing relevant to the course material, due in class at the last class meeting. All secondary sources must be scholarly in nature.
- Attendance and Participation (30%): As a seminar, this course relies upon your active and engaged participation, both as a means of generating productive discussion and demonstrating your comprehension of the assigned material. Attendance and participation in class discussion are mandatory, and will be recorded daily. Students are permitted absences from class only in university recognized cases, such as documented health concerns and days of religious observance. An excess of two unexcused absences will see a significant deduction from your participation grade. Absent students are required to obtain any missed notes or information from their peers, and to complete any missed assignments. If an absence is anticipated, assignments must be turned in early to avoid late penalties.

Attendance alone does not constitute participation. Remember, you do not have to say something profound in order to participate successfully - questions and comments on your peers' ideas are valid forms of participation as well. There is a significant amount of assigned reading for this course, which you are expected to have completed by the assigned date; you will not be able to participate effectively if you have not completed the assigned texts. Assigned readings must be brought to class on the day they are due. A student who attends class but does not participate is not likely to pass. Students who consistently demonstrate critical/analytical thinking, engagement with course texts, and leadership in classroom discussion are most likely to receive full marks.

Course Policies

- **Course Expectations:** Respectful treatment of all members of the class, at all times, is an absolute expectation. At the same time, by raising an issue in class we open that issue to potential and responsible criticism and debate. It is important to keep in mind that only issues, not individual members of the classroom, may be targets of critique. Students are required to bring to class the assigned texts on the date they are due. The use of laptops, cell phones, or recorders is not permitted in class without documentation from disability services, obtained at the start of the semester. Using your phones in class is disrespectful to your peers and your instructor and will impact negatively on your participation evaluation.
- **Lateness:** Lateness to class is unacceptable, and every two instances of lateness counts as an absence. Late assignments will be penalized half a grade for every 24 hours or portion thereof after the assigned due date. Every day, including weekends, counts towards lateness. You should always submit an assignment by email/Blackboard as early as possible, and then bring a hard copy to class at the earliest opportunity. It is the student's responsibility that a properly formatted and openable copy of an assignment is submitted on time when electronic submission is called for. When in doubt, check - before the due date. It is always better to submit an assignment late than not at all. I am most flexible regarding expected lateness/extensions when approached at least one week before the assignment is due. Late work will not be accepted for any reason following the last day of class. Late reading responses will not be accepted.
- **Contact Policies:** I encourage students to attend my office hours, or schedule individual or group appointments at other times, and I make every effort to be available to you as a resource. Please adhere to these contact policies:
 - I communicate primary by email. I will attempt to reply to all emails within 24 hours, however, I do not reply to emails after 10pm. Do not contact me with a problem the day before it will become an issue.
 - I will not reply to any emails/appointments concerning grades for a full 24 hours after the assignment has been returned. If you have a question about a grade, it is best to see

me within a week of receiving the assignment back. I do not review assignment grades during finals or the last week of class.

- Special Needs: If you have a disability or special need that will impact your performance or require special accommodations, you must give notice and provide proper documentation to the Office of Disability Support Services as early as possible.
- Academic Dishonesty: Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism or cheating, is a serious university offense, and will receive zero tolerance. You should, at all times, credit those whose work you are using or building upon. In this course, all citations are expected to follow the Chicago Manual of Style (15th edition), which is an assigned course text. Be sure to also consult and adhere to the Baruch College Code of Academic Integrity (<http://www.baruch.cuny.edu/facultyhandbook/AcademicIntegrity.htm>).
- **Students are responsible for all information** in this syllabus. It is not the instructor's responsibility to remind students of these policies, inform them of missing work, late penalties they may be receiving, or upcoming due dates (though he often will). This syllabus is subject to change during the semester, however, the instructor will provide notification of any such changes.

Required Texts

The following texts are available for purchase at the university bookstore. Copies have also been placed on reserve at the university library. Numerous other readings and images have been placed on Blackboard (BB).

- Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor about the Jews: Antisemitism, conspiracy, and the Protocols of Zion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Christopher Browning. *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992).
- Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, vol. 1; The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939*. (New York: HarperCollins, 1997).
- Jeffrey Herf, ed. *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective; Convergence and Divergence* (London: Routledge, 2007).
- Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2006).
- Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980).
- Matthias Kuntzel, *Jihad and Jew-Hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11* (New York: Telos Press Publishing, 2007).
- Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
- Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

- Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (Metropolitan Books, 2014).
- David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: the Western Tradition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2013)
- Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).
- Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ed. *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).
- Pierre-Andre Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck: The New Anti-Semitism in Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004).

Those students who are new to the study of Jewish history may also want to consider a survey of the broad courses of Jewish history, against the backdrop of which our course is set. Lloyd P. Gartner's 2001 *History of the Jews in Modern Times* is one of many such texts that would fill this roll adequately for our course. Students are also expected to have a firm grasp of the main themes of modern and pre-modern European history, and should undertake prefatory reading as needed. Students should also possess a style guide containing the Chicago documentation style. I recommend Diana Hacker, *A Pocket Style Manual, Fourth Edition* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2004).

Schedule of Classes

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| Week 1.A | Introduction - Why Study Antisemitism? |
| Week 1.B | Antisemitism: Past or Present? A Living Lexicon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Salo Baron, "Ghetto & Emancipation" (BB); Zygmunt Bauman, "Allosemitism: Premodern, Modern, Postmodern" (BB) |
| Week 2.A | Towards Definitions of Antisemitism and anti-Judaism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gavin Langmuir, <i>Towards a Definition of Antisemitism</i>, (all); David Engel, "Away from a Definition of Antisemitism" (BB) |
| Week 2.B | Periodizing and Theorizing Antisemitism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selected readings on racism and other prejudices (BB) |
| Week 3.A | Antisemitism, Anti-Judaism, or Judeo-Phobia? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Robert Wistrich, <i>Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred</i>, selections (BB); Walter Laqueur, <i>The Changing Face of Antisemitism</i>, |

selections (BB); additional selected readings (BB); Peter Schafer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World*, selections (BB).

- Week 3.B **Early Christian anti-Judaism**
- Documentary selections (BB)
- Week 4.A **Medieval Images of the Jews**
- Sara Lipton, *Dark Mirror: The Medieval Origins of Anti-Jewish Iconography* (all).
- Week 4.B **Medieval Communities in Practice**
- David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages*, selections (BB); Documentary selections (BB).
- Week 5.A **Pre-Modern Islam and the Jews**
- Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, (all).
- Week 5.B **Dhimmitude: Tolerance or Subjugation?**
- Documentary selections (BB)
- Week 6.A **Anti-Judaism and the Realm of Ideas**
- David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: the Western Tradition* (all).
- Week 6.B **Texts, ands Jews, on Trial**
- Documentary selections (BB)
 - **Term paper proposal due**
- Week 7.A **Early modern attitudes towards Jews**
- Marvin Perry and Frederick Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, ch. 8-9; Documentary Selections (BB).
- Week 7.B **Enlightenment: Posing the Jewish Question**
- Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (all); Marvin Perry and Frederick Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, ch. 10-12; Paul Mendes-Flohr, *The Jew in the Modern World*, selections from chapters 2, 3, and 6 (BB)

- Week 8.A **The Jewish Question: Posing Answers; Conspiracy, Race, and Marx**
- Stephen Eric Bronner, *A Rumor about the Jews: antisemitism, conspiracy, and the protocols of Zion* (all); Documentary readings (BB)
- Week 8.B **Antisemitism in France, Russia, and the USA**
- Documentary readings (BB)
- Week 9.A **Nazism and "Redemptive Antisemitism"**
- Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, vol 1; The Years of Persecution, 1933-1939* (all)
- Week 9.B **Nazism as "Reactionary Modernism"**
- Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich*, selections (BB); Saul Friedlander, *Nazi Germany and the Jews, vol 2; the Years of Extermination, 1939-1945*, selections (BB).
- Week 10.A **Nazi Propaganda and Ideological Antisemitism**
- Jeffrey Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust* (all);
- Week 10.B **Images and Emotions in the Shoah**
- Marvin Perry and Frederick Schweitzer, *Antisemitic Myths*, ch. 17-22; *Shoah*, selections (BB), Documentary readings (BB)
- Week 11.A **Explaining a Holocaust: Browning and Goldhagen**
- Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*, (all); A.D. Moses, "Structure and Agency in the Holocaust: Daniel J Goldhagen and His Critics," (BB).
- Week 11.B **Memory and the Shoah (No Class: Visit to the United States Holocaust Museum)**
- Week 12.A **Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism since WWII**
- Jeffrey Herf, ed., *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective*, selected chapters; Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives*, selected chapters.

- Week 12.B **Antisemitism, the Soviet Bloc, and its Discourse**
- Jeffrey Herf, ed., *Anti-Semitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective*, Introduction, chapters by Angelica Timm and Dariusz Stola; Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives*, selected chapters; Documentary Selections (BB)
- Week 13.A **A New Antisemitism? The case of Europe**
- Pierre-Andre Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck* (all); Laqueur, *The Changing Face of Antisemitism*, selections (BB).
- Week 13.B **A New Antisemitism? The case of the Middle East**
- Documentary Selections (BB);
- Week 14.A **Islamism and Antisemitism**
- Matthias Kuntzel, *Jihad and Jew-hatred: Islamism, Nazism and the Roots of 9/11* (all)
- Week 14.B **Contemporary Antisemitism**
- **Term Paper Due**
 - Documentary Selections (BB)