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Blaustein 307A
Course Level: Undergraduate
Seminar Course
Religious Studies

Antisemitism

At the heart of antisemitism, “the oldest hatred,” is its elasticity: it changes its form depending on the religio-political context in which it appears. This course will examine its history and its contemporary relevance by looking specifically at three contexts in which it played or plays a role and various Jewish responses to them in order to begin to understand how antisemitism and responses to it might inform them: the Crusades, the Holocaust and Zionism.

We will begin our study of antisemitism (as we call it today) with the anti-Judaism in medieval Christian thought and experience which was one motivating factor of the Crusades. Our second course of inquiry will be the Holocaust, and we will ask to what extent the history of Jew-hatred in medieval Christian Europe informed it. Finally, we will look at Zionism from the vantage point of antisemitism. We will ask how the complicated history between European Jews and non-Jews, and – after the break-up of the Ottoman Empire – between Middle Easterners and European Jews, informs Zionism and complicates any easy understanding of its founding as an example of colonialism.

This class will be addressing topics that are sensitive and may be even painful for some students. We will work together to create a safe space in which each student is able to challenge his or her previous beliefs or assumptions and in which everyone feels free to express him or herself.

If you are unfamiliar with a particular term or idea in a reading, please consult www.jewfaq.org.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will develop a familiarity with key concepts of antisemitism, with emphasis on its fluidity across time and place.
2. Students will develop a familiarity with the diversity of influences informing the Crusades, the Holocaust and the Israel-Palestine conflict, of which antisemitism is only one.
3. Students will develop a familiarity with some of the ways Jews have responded to antisemitism.
4. Students will develop an understanding of the difficulty of identifying antisemitism as a cause or catalyst of various social phenomena.

Assignments:

1. One to two page responses to **five** of the readings, due **before** the reading is discussed in class (25%). These writing assignments are to be reaction papers. You do not have to wait until the date on the syllabus to submit them, but they are due **by** that date: so, for instance, if a reading strikes you deeply before the due date, feel free to write about it. If you so choose, you may write about the reading using the first person and include your visceral responses. You may also choose to write more objectively about the reading. Due dates:
2. One mid-term **exam** (20%). Your success on this exam will depend upon your having done all the readings and begun to grasp some of the concepts of antisemitism.
3. One 6 page paper (20%). More specific instructions will be provided. The paper will be based on **cumulative** knowledge of what has preceded it in the course. In other words, you will find the paper nearly impossible to do if you have not been keeping up with the material. **No accommodations will be made.**
4. A final paper and oral presentation (25%). More specific instructions will be provided.
5. **Participation and Attendance:** (10%) Participation is important to the success of this class. Please come to class having completed all assigned readings and reflected on how they contribute to our investigation of antisemitism. Participate readily in class discussions. Engage actively not only with me, but also with your classmates. Please **bring readings** to class each day (included in **participation grade**).

Absences: You are responsible for anything that occurs in class during an absence. This includes all work, any changes made to the syllabus, work assignments and all other announcements. Please ask a classmate for his/her notes or feel free to contact me via email. **Three (3) unexcused absence will result in failure of the course.**

Note Taking: While I do not require you to take notes in class, it is a good idea. Notes should include not only what is written on the board and not only what I say, but also your thoughts about it and comments from other students. Remember that notes are private to you to help you master the material in a way that makes sense to you.

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated. **No late assignments will be accepted** without prior arrangement. Assignments must be turned in in **hard copy**.

All work for this course must be done in compliance with the **Connecticut College Honor Code**. If you are not already familiar with the Honor Code and its standards of academic conduct, please acquaint yourself with them immediately.

The Roth Writing Center provides one-to-one peer tutoring (free of charge) to help student writers of all abilities during all stages of the writing process. To make an appointment, call x2173 or stop by the Writing Center at 214 Blaustein. If you're a confident, experienced writer they can help you to push your ideas and polish your style; if you're a relatively inexperienced and not-so-confident writer they can also help you, by

working on grammar or organization or whatever you need. Writing Center tutors are trained to help you to discover what you think through writing. Working with a tutor gives you the opportunity to share your work-in-progress with an actual reader, so that you can get useful feedback on that work *before* you have to turn it in for a final grade. For further information, visit the Writing Center web page at <http://write.conncoll.edu/>.

Disability Accommodations

If you have a physical or mental disability, either hidden or visible, which may require classroom, test-taking, or other reasonable modifications, please see me as soon as possible. If you have not already done so, please be sure to register with the Office of Student Disability Services. You can do so by going to the Office of Student Disability Services which is located in Crozier Williams, Room 221, or by contacting the Office at Campus Extensions 5428 or 5240, or by email to sherine.miller@conncoll.edu or Barbara.mcllarky@conncoll.edu.

All Readings are on Moodle.

Week 1: Introduction: What is Antisemitism?

Readings:

- Robert S. Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession. Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (New York, 2010)
- Albert S. Lindemann, "The Jewish Question" in *Antisemitism: A History*, ed. Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy, (Oxford, 2010)

Jewish (Normative Prophetic and Rabbinic) Response:

- *Jeremiah* 29.1-11; Psalm 137
- Rabbinic Destruction Texts (selection)

Weeks 2-3: The Church and the Crusades

Readings:

- Richardson, "The beginnings of Christian anti-Judaism, 70-c. 235," ed. Steven T. Katz, in *The Cambridge History of Judaism 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Cambridge, 2006), 244-258.
- Melito of Sardis, "Homily on the Passover"
- Bestul, "The Representation of Jews in Medieval Passion Narratives," in *Texts of the Passion: Latin Devotional Literature and Medieval Society*, (Philadelphia : University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 69-110
- Video: Billy Bragg and Wilco, "Christ for President"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9cO5yUzWAu8>

Jewish Responses:

- Maimonides, "A Letter Concerning Apostasy"
- Yehudah Halevi, "My Heart is in the East"

- Reznikoff, *The Lionhearted*

Weeks 4-6: The Holocaust

Readings:

- Protocols of the Elders of Zion (selection), in *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr and Y. Reinharz
- Marr, “The Victory of Judaism over Germanism,” in *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr and Y. Reinharz
- Steigmann-Gall, “Old Wine in New Bottles? Religion and Race in Nazi Antisemitism,” in *Antisemitism, Christian Ambivalence, and the Holocaust*, ed. Kevin P. Spicer (Indiana, 2007)
- Spicer, “Working for the Führer: Father Dr. Philipp Haeuser and the Third Reich,” in *Antisemitism, Christian Ambivalence, and the Holocaust*, ed. Kevin P. Spicer (Indiana, 2007)
- Bergen, “Antisemitism in the Nazi Era” in *Antisemitism: A History*, ed. Lindemann and Levy (Oxford, 2010)

Jewish Responses:

- Herzl, *The Jewish State* (selection), in *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr and Y. Reinharz
- *Protestrabbiner* response (selection), in *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr and Y. Reinharz
- Weininger, *Sex and Character* (selection), in *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr and Y. Reinharz
- Hecht and Schoffman, “A Stone for His Slingshot” in *The Jewish Review of Books*, Spring, 2015
(<http://jewishreviewofbooks.com/articles/735/a-stone-for-his-slingshot/>)
- FILM: *The Long Way Home*
- Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, part 3; and Psalm 44
- Neuman & Deutsch, “There’s No Business Like Shoah Business,” in *The Big Book of Jewish Conspiracies* (NY: St. Martin’s, 2005)
- Karl Shapiro, “Travelogue for Exiles”

Weeks 7-10: Zionism

Readings:

Palestine

- Trevor-Roper “Jewish and Other Nationalisms,” in *Commentary*, 35:1 (1963: Jan), 15
- The Palestinian National Charter: Resolutions of the Palestine National Council July 1-17, 1968 (http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/plocov.asp#art18)
- The Hamas Covenant (Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement), 1988
(http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp)

- The New Hezbollah Manifesto, November 2009 (<http://www.lebanonrenaissance.org/assets/Uploads/15-The-New-Hezbollah-Manifesto-Nov09.pdf>)
- Videos: Palestinian Media Watch (<http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=1100>)
- Stern, “Humiliation,” in *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003)

Middle East

- “The Damascus Affair,” in *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr and Y. Reinhartz, 313-315
- David Menashri, “Iran, the Jews and the Holocaust”
- NEEDED: Article re pre-colonial Islamic Jew-hatred

Jewish Responses:

- Susser, “The Ideology of Affliction” in *Diasporas and Exiles: Varieties of Jewish Identity*, ed. Howard Wettstein (Berkeley: Univ. of CA, 2002), 221-33.
- Stern, “History” in *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill* (New York: HarperCollins, 2003), 85-106.
- Daniel Schroeter, “A Different Road to Modernity: Jewish Identity in the Arab World,” in *Diasporas and Exiles*, ed. H. Wettstein, 150-163.
- Rozin, “Terms of Abhorrence: How Old-Time Israelis Viewed Immigrants from the Islamic World,” in *The Rise of the Individual in 1950s Israel: A Challenge to Collectivism*, trans. Watzman (Brandeis, 2011)
- Waldman, “Souvenir from Libya,” in *The Flying Camel: Essays on Identity by Women of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish Heritage*, ed. Loolwa Khazzoom
- Shohat, “Reflections of an Arab Jew,” in *The Flying Camel: Essays on Identity by Women of North African and Middle Eastern Jewish Heritage*, ed. Loolwa Khazzoom

Weeks 11-13: Antisemitism Today: Is Anti-Zionism Antisemitism?

Readings:

- *Nostra Aetate*, Pope Paul VI, October 28, 1965
- Tobin, “The Pope is Right: Anti-Israel Does Equal Anti-Semite” in *Commentary*, May 29, 2015
<https://www.commentarymagazine.com/culture-civilization/religion/judaism/pope-francis-is-right-anti-israel-does-equal-anti-semite/>
- Mary Scully Reports: “Pope Francis the Zionist,” 1 Nov. 2015
<http://www.maryscullyreports.com/pope-francis-the-zionist/>
- Barry A. Kosmin & Ariela Keysar, Foreword by Kenneth L. Marcus, *National Demographic Survey of American Jewish College Students 2014*
- Amcha Initiative, “Report on Antisemitic Activity During the First Half of 2016 At U.S. Colleges and Universities With the Largest Jewish Undergraduate Populations”

<http://www.amchainitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Report-on-Antisemitic-Activity-During-the-First-Half-of-2016.pdf>

- Marcus, “Is the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions Movement Anti-Semitic?” in *The Case Against the Academic Boycotts of Israel*, ed. Cary Nelson & Gabriel Noah Brahm, (Wayne State, 2015) 243-58
- David Hirsh, “How raising the issue of antisemitism puts you outside the community of the progressive: The *Livingstone Formulation*”
- Introduction to *A New Antisemitism? Debating Judeophobia in 21st Century Britain* Profile Books, London, 2003 Paul Iganski & Barry Kosmin
- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, “Working Definition of Antisemitism”
(<http://www.antisem.eu/projects/eumc-working-definition-of-antisemitism/>)
- Hirsh, “Defining Antisemitism Down” in *Fathom*, Winter 2013
<http://fathomjournal.org/defining-antisemitism-down/>
- Ted Talk: Zak Ebrahim, “I am the son of a terrorist. Here's how I chose peace,” 2014
(https://www.ted.com/talks/zak_brahim_i_am_the_son_of_a_terrorist_here_s_how_i_chose_peace?language=en)

Weeks 14-15: Student Presentations