

Name of the course: *Jewish History and Culture*



校训：厚德 博学 日新 笃行
校风：求是至善 尚实致用



Instructor: *Shuqing Zhang, Professor, Ludong University, China*

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- Name of the course: *Jewish History and Culture*
- Time of delivery: *Fall 2018*
- Course level: *Undergraduate*
- Type of course: *Lecture*
- Department: Department of History and Culture, Ludong *University*
- *Chinese course for Chinese students*

at Ludong University



Course description



- The course will introduce the students Jewish history and culture, with anti-semitism from the past to the present as main and serious issue to study and discuss.
 - Joint theoretical and empirical framework: as one of the origins of western civilization, the experience of Jewish people is unique which offers us significant historical background to understand what anti-semitism used to be and why it still happens and it remains a serious issue for us to study, to discuss and to combat.
1. It will introduce the framework of Jewish history from ancient time to the establishment of Israel and the uniqueness of Jewish culture, which serve as the background of anti-Semitism.
 2. The course shall discuss the origin of anti-semitism, medieval and modern anti-Semitism and its manifestations in Christian and Muslim countries from historical, religious and social perspective by reviewing classical and modern works.
 3. At the beginning of each class, one student will be encouraged to give presentation on whatever topic which is related to this course they are interested in for 20 minutes, and another 10 minutes will be used for all the other students to discuss about it.
 4. By the end of the course, student will need to present their own empirical case study about Jewish history and culture, including the main issue anti-Semitism.

Goals

- To equip students with the systematic knowledge of uniqueness of Jewish history and culture, and its significant position in world civilization.
- To give students a thorough grounding in the history of anti-semitism, with lectures on all aspects of this subject. Teaching anti-semitism should aim not only to aware students of what happened, though this is essential, but also to explain how and why it happened. Lessons from anti-semitism must seek to address issues like racial and cultural discrimination, the importance of tolerance, and the respect owing to every individual.
- To spark their interest to start their own research on any field of Jewish history and culture, anti-Semitism will be one of the main topics.
- Hence, hopefully, they will have a better understanding of why anti-semitism remains a serious issue for us to study and how it affects the relationship between Jewish people and their neighbors.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

Week 1. Introduction: discussion of course requirements, teaching methods, etc.

- Introduce to the students why we open this course and what methods we will use to study.
- It will introduce main reading materials and important websites.
- It will introduce the main Jewish study centers and important scholars in this field in China.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

Week 2. The formation of Jewish nation and its ancient history

- This session shall briefly overview Jewish history from patriarchic age till 135 when the main body of Jewish people were expelled from Palestine.
- It introduces the history of ancient Hebrew kingdoms and the inter-relationship between Jewish minorities and the dominant people in various societies under control of Persian Empire, Hellenized kingdoms and Roman Empire.
- This session will shed light on the definition and origin of anti-Semitism from historical and religious perspectives.
- **Reading materials:**
 - Xu Xin, *Antisemitism: Past and Present*, the People's Publishing House, 2015, pp. 26-66 .
 - Xu Xin, *The History of Jewish Culture*, Peking University Press, 2011, pp. 1-31.
 - Qianhong Zhang, *The History of Israel*, the People's Publishing House, 2014, pp. 1-50.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 3: the Diaspora**

- It will introduce the definition of Diaspora which serves as the main historical background of anti-semitism.
- This session will briefly explain the role of Jewish minorities in different diaspora centers from past to the modern period, highlighting the migration path of Jewish people and the significance of Diaspora in Jewish history.
- It will help students understand the uniqueness of Jewish history and the main reason for anti-semitism.
- **Reading materials:**
 - Xu Xin, *The History of Jewish Culture*, Peking University Press, 2011, pp. 34-79.
 - Qianhong Zhang, *The History of Israel*, the People's Publishing House, 2014, pp. 50-66.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 4: Jewish festivals and customs**
- It will first introduce the special Jewish calendar.
- This session will shed light on different kinds of Jewish holidays and their cultural significance.
- Jewish life cycle ritual and cultural liturgical consumables will be introduced to the students, hence, hopefully lead them to understand better unique Jewish culture.
- This session serves as one of the cultural backgrounds for anti-semitism, especially during Roman empire period.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 5: Anti-semitism in Medieval Europe**
- This session first explain the stranger's status: source one of anti-semitism in the middle ages, and then introduce its forms: expulsion (customary tactics of persecutions), crusade massacres, desecration of the Host, blood libel, prejudice against moneylenders, isolation and separation (Jewish badges and the Ghetto), etc.
- Origin of antisemitism in Islamic world (Dhimmi status) will be covered.
- This session contributes to the deep root of antisemitism in modern and contemporary time.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 6: Jews during the Renaissance period**
- This session first discuss whether there were any Hebrew factors in Italian renaissance humanism, and then introduce the construction of Jewish humanist movement in the west.
- **Home assignment:** Were there still any kinds of anti-semitism during the renaissance period in Europe?

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 7: Haskala and Hasidic movement**
- This session will first introduce the basic information about Jewish enlightenment and Hasidic movement.
- Then questions and discussions: why did such two different kinds of movements happened during almost the same period at western and Eastern Europe?
- It will be emphasized that new forms of anti-Semitism: from the religious to the secular took place during this period.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 8: Modern Anti-Semitism and Holocaust**
- This session will introduce the rise of modern anti-semitism, anti-semitism in Eastern Europe, and will explain to the students the different theoretical basis for modern anti-semitism.
- Holocaust as one of the racist exterminations will be examined deeply in the class.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 9: Movies and Discussion**
- *Films Schindler's List, Life is Beautiful, the Pianist, the Boy in the Striped Pajamas, 24 Days: The True Story of the Ilan Halimi Affair* will be introduced to the students.
- The document movie *She Was There and She Told the Story* will be showed to the students.
- Discussion on the movie.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 10: Jewish communities in China**
- This session will overview the history of Jewish people in Kaifeng, Harbin and Shanghai from ancient time to 20 century. Such issues as assimilation of Kaifeng Jewish people, their contribution to modern Harbin economic development, the attitude of Chinese people to Jewish refugees in Shanghai will be highlighted.
- It must be emphasized that there were never any forms of anti-semitism in China.
- **Home assignment:** what is the significance of Jewish communities in China during the Diaspora?

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 11: Zionism and the Establishment of Israel**
- This session will first introduce to the students the definition of zionism, and then the historical background for the rise of zionism.
- It will explain the significance of the establishment of Israel as all Jewish people's homeland and new center of new Jewish culture.
- **Questions and discussion:** what was the relationship between anti-Semitism and Zionism?

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 12-13: Contemporary Anti-semitism**
- It will first introduce the information of ISGAP.
- Some of the lectures by the scholars on contemporary anti-semitism in 2017 ISGAP SUMMER INSTITUTE will be shared with the students.
- It will explain the new forms of anti-semitism such as anti-Israel, Holocaust denial, and sometimes it is used as political tool, etc., reactions to antisemitism will be discussed, as well.
- Reading materials:
- Xu Xin, *Antisemitism: Past and Present*, the People's Publishing House, 2015, pp. 275-323 .
- Small, Charles Asher (2014): *Gobal Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*. New York.

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week 14: Nowaday's Israel and the characteristics of Jewish Culture**
- This session will introduce briefly Israel's parliament politic, economic achievements and the tension between religion and secular, peace and war, oriental Jews and Ashkenazi Jews, and Jews and Arabs, as well.
- It will shed light on the uniqueness of Jewish culture and the cultural mechanism for the success of Jewish people.
- **Questions and discussion:** what's the similarity between Jewish culture and Chinese culture? What can we learn from Jewish experience?

Weekly Themes (16 100 Minutes)

- **Week15-16: presentations**
- Each of another 16 students shall give 10 minutes' presentation on any topic they are interested in related to this course. The issue anti-semitism in any country and in any era will be encouraged to discuss.
- **Assessment, evaluation:**
- 70 points: term paper
- 20 points: home assignments
- 10 points: presentation at the beginning of class and at the end of the term.

READINGS:

- Xu Xin, *The History of Jewish Culture*, Peking University Press, 2011.
- Xu Xin, *Antisemitism: from the Past to the Present*, the People's Publishing House, 2015.
- Qianhong Zhang, *Jewish Culture*, the People's Publishing House, 2013.
- Qianhong Zhang and Rengui Ai, *An Introduction to Jewish History*, Peking University Press, 2017.
- Qianhong Zhang, *The New Dimensions of Jewish History Studies*, the People's Publishing Press, 2015.
- Pan Puang, *The Jewish Civilization*, China Social Science Press, 1999.
- Small, Charles Asher, *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, New York, 2014..
- Wistrich, Robert S., *A Lethal Obsession. Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, New York, 2010.

Thank you for your attention!

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