

THE POLITICS OF CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM

PROFESSOR ELMAN - SPRING 2021

Office Hours 1:00-2:00pm Tuesdays and Thursdays and by appointment

Our course examines antisemitism's political resurgence from the close of the 20th century to the present. After a brief overview of the religious doctrine, racial science and nationalism that gave rise to the Holocaust, we will focus on antisemitism in the postwar world. More specifically, we will consider how and why non-state actors (e.g., social movements and non-governmental organizations) and transnational organizations (e.g., the European Union and United Nations) gather data on, deny, mitigate and promote antisemitism. Upon completion of this course students will be able to define "antisemitism", understand its appeal, and appreciate the difficulties in countering it.

GRADING: Given the pandemic, every effort has been taken to be accommodating while maintaining rigor, so please read the following requirements with care.

2 exams are required, each is worth 25 percent (see outline below). Because everyone is entitled to miss one of the three exams that will be given, there are no makeup, substitute or late exams. Simply complete two required exams at the time they are given.

Weekly quizzes comprise 10 percent of your grade and the lowest one is dropped.

A final presentation/annotated bibliography is worth 30 percent of your grade and will either be due 10th week or during the final exam class period. Again, no late work is accepted as flexibility is already built into this deadline. Plagiarized work or any cheating will result in an F for the entire course.

Class participation (10 Percent) is strongly encouraged! Our lectures and discussions are *never to be* recorded. Recording without one's consent in Michigan is illegal.

Participation 10-point scale.

As noted, your participation is evaluated throughout our term and 10% of your final grade is earned through your *overall* contribution to the class or the lack thereof.

To earn all 10 points, a student's contribution to class discussions must prove outstanding. This student frequently contributes thoughtful insights, questions and comments throughout the term that are relevant to the lectures, readings and current events. The student also facilitates conversations between students (and the professor) in ways that reveal a keen ear for what others say.

To earn 8 points, a student's contributions to class must be very good. This student regularly contributes thoughtful questions, insights and comments throughout the term that are relevant to the lectures, readings and current events. Sometimes these contributions facilitate conversations between students (and the professor) and reveal respectful attention to others.

To earn 6 points, a student sometimes issues questions, comments and insights premised in relevant materials and news events. However, this rarely happens without the professor's prompting. This student, while generally polite, could be more engaged in discussions.

To earn 4 points, a student seldom contributes to class discussion of their own volition and/or issues comments that are not always relevant to the material. While this student may try, they display little attention to what others say and thus the student needs to pay greater attention to the course (i.e., the outline, readings, lectures, news and the contributions others make).

To earn 2 or less points, a student never contributes to discussion of their own volition and/or offers extraneous comments that reveal limited attention to the readings, lectures, the news and contributions of others. This student maintains a blank online presence and/or is repeatedly absent, late, or leaves early.

TEXTS: While every effort was taken to save you money and make texts accessible online, please print these materials if you are able and work with them accordingly. Studies reveal that while many of you prefer online reading, you are better able to comprehend and retain information through printed texts and writing (by hand).

GUIDANCE: Readings and screenings of videos should be completed prior to class as lectures do not replicate them and we can best grasp material and contribute to discussion when we attend prepared. *Our outline may change slightly, depending on class interest and extenuating world events. Thus, we'll reflect on the syllabus throughout.* Please maintain this e-copy as it contains important links to readings, reports, data sets, videos and websites. For example, follow a US NGO that counters discrimination via [Vital Statistics: Jewish Population of the World](#) (via the Virtual Jewish Library), understand "[The continuing decline of Europe's Jewish population](#)" (via Pew Research), explore a video archive that contains over 3,000 interviews with Holocaust survivors [Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies](#) (via Yale University) or check a site that includes information about projects and publications on antisemitism as well as an analysis of current trends with over 20,000 items from 1984 to the present through [Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Anti-semitism](#) (via Hebrew University).

1. INTRODUCTION: THE JEW(S)

Week 1: Tuesday March 30

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) [Memo on Spelling of Antisemitism](#).

Yad Vashem, "[A problematic term – Antisemitism from Its Origins to the Present](#),"

Patterson, [Word, Blood and Redemption: The Essence of Antisemitism](#) (online via ISGAP, March 2021 – watch just the first 40 minutes)

1. INTRODUCTION: THE JEW(S)

(Continued)

Week 1: Thursday April 1

Wistrich, *The Longest Hatred*, Film (online via Teams Folder or Moodle) or

Small, "[Introduction](#)," *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity* (2013), pp. 1-19 (skim)

Week 2: Tuesday April 6

Garrard, "[The Pleasures of Antisemitism](#)," *Fathom* (Summer 2013).

Rosenfeld, *Resurgent Antisemitism* (2013), Introduction, pp. 1-7, (online via Teams Folder or Moodle).

2. DEFINING ANTISEMITISM & DISAPPEARING DATA

Week 2: Thursday April 8

[US State Department's Definition of Antisemitism](#). And, suggested, see Marcus, "The Definition of Antisemitism," *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity*, (2013), 1: 99-111.

The European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) Survey of EU Jewish Communities "[Experiences and perceptions of antisemitism: Second survey on discrimination and hate crimes against Jews in the EU](#)" (March 2019). See the summary.

Elman, "The EU's Response to Contemporary Antisemitism: A Shell Game," in Rosenfeld's *Deciphering the New Antisemitism* (2015), pp. 405-429, (online via Teams Folder or Moodle).

Week 3: Tuesday April 13

Arcady, *24 Days*, Film (via Kalamazoo College's Kanopy site)

Trigano, "[A Journey Through French Antisemitism](#)," *Jewish Review of Books* (2015).

Katz and Mandel, "[Strange Journey: A Response to Shmuel Trigano](#)," *Jewish Review of Books* (2015). Then read Trigano's response at the bottom of this article.

Suggested, note a similar debate unfolds in the UK - skim Pears Foundation Study and Baker's response "[A recent study into rising antisemitism in Europe ignores the role of Muslim Migrants](#)" (May 24, 2018).

3. HOLOCAUST DENIAL & HOLOCAUST INVERSION

Week 3: Thursday April 15

Klaff, "[Holocaust Inversion and contemporary antisemitism](#)," Fathom (Winter 2014).

Bruckner, "Antisemitism and Islamophobia: The Inversion of the Debt" in Rosenfeld's *Deciphering the New Antisemitism* (2015), pp. 7-20, (online via Teams).

AJC on Whoopi Goldberg's View, listen to this People of the Pod [podcast](#)

Week 4: Tuesday April 20

EXAM 1 – First three sections

4. ZIONISM & THE ISRAELIZATION OF ANTISEMITISM

Week 4: Thursday April 22

Harrison, "Anti-Zionism, Antisemitism and the Rhetorical Manipulation of Reality" in Rosenfeld's *Resurgent Antisemitism* (2013), pp. 8-41, (online via Teams Folder or Moodle).

Hirsch, "[Accusations of malicious intent in debates about Palestine-Israel conflict and about antisemitism](#)" *transversal* 2010, pp. 47-77.

Week 5: Tuesday April 27

Kaplan and Small, "[Anti-Israel Sentiment Predicts Antisemitism in Europe](#)" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol. 50, No. 4, (2006): 548-61.

Sassoon, [Review Essay: Israeli Attitudes on Civil Rights, Democracy and Arab-Jewish Relations](#)

5. ISLAMIC ANTISEMITISM

Week 5: Thursday April 29

Kuntzl, [Islamic Antisemitism: How it Originated and Spread](#) (2018) or "Islamic Antisemitism: It's Genesis, Meaning, And Effect," *Antisemitism Studies*, Vol.2, No. 2, (2018).

Patterson, "[How Antisemitism Prevents Peace](#)," *Middle East Quarterly*, pp. 73-83.

Recommended, compare and contrast [Protocols of Zion](#) with [Hamas Charter](#) and [Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam](#).

6. LEFT ANTISEMITISM

Week 6: Tuesday May 4

Wistrich, “Anti-Zionist Connections: Communism, Radical Islam and the Left” in Rosenfeld’s *Resurgent Antisemitism* (2013), pp. 402-423, (online via Teams Folder or Moodle).

Johnson, “[The Left & Jews: Time for a Rethink](#),” *Fathom* (2015).

Arnold, “From Occupation to Occupy,” in Rosenfeld’s *Deciphering the New Antisemitism* (2015), pp. 375-404, (online via Teams Folder or Moodle).

7. ALT-RIGHT ANTISEMITISM

Week 6: Thursday May 6

Ward, In this “conversation on black-Jewish relations,” pay close attention to the arguments made by Eric Ward concerning the centrality of antisemitism to the Alt-Right <https://news.berkeley.edu/2021/03/12/race-and-responsibility-a-conversation-on-black-jewish-relations-and-the-fight-for-equal-justice/>

ADL, “[Steve Bannon: Five Things to Know](#)” and the “[ADL Primer about the New White Supremacy](#)”.

EXAM 2 – covers last 4 sections

8. TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Week 7: Tuesday May 11

Wistrich, *A Lethal Obsession* (2010), Chapter 13, pp. 465-493, on reserve at the library.

Fiss, [The Durban Diaries](#) (2001).

Elman, *European Union, Antisemitism and the Politics of Denial* (2014), Introduction, Chapters 1 and 5.

9. "SOCIAL MOVEMENTS" - HUMAN RIGHTS & NGOs

Week 7: Thursday May 13

[NGO Monitor](#) website (skim to get a sense of NGOs engaged in antisemitic activities)

Pollack, "[Racializing Antisemitism: Black Militants, Jews and Israel, 1950-Present](#)" (2013), Acta Hebrew University.

Week 8: Tuesday May 18

Allam, "[How the Women's March Is Fighting Through Its Anti-Semitism Crisis](#)," BuzzFeedNews (March 2018).

Elman, "[BDS and the Queer Appropriation of Pinkwashing](#)," Academic Engagement Network, Pamphlet Series 6 (April 2019).

Week 8: Thursday May 20

EXAM 3 - Covers the last 2 sections

9. Antisemitism – Exploiting Current Crises & Fighting Back

Week 9: Tuesday May 25

Ward, [AJC Podcast](#) follow-up to his earlier work on what fighting racism entails (just listen to the first 20 minutes). See too this video [Martin Luther King on Jews, Israel, Hatred](#)

Wisse, "[How Do We Put an End to Antisemitism: No, Really. How Do We?](#)" (ISGAP, video).

Pinto, "[Viral Hatred: Coronavirus, Conspiracies and Classical Antisemitic Tropes](#)" (ISGAP video). Just watch the first 34 minutes, until she concludes.

Students select works and consider how antisemitism permeates discussions pertaining to contemporary crises and political conflicts including, but not limited to, dictatorships, economic instability, the environment, hate speech codes, the migration crisis and COVID. The question to address is this: given your particular focus, employ Wisse and consider how do you/we put an end to antisemitism?

Week 9: Thursday May 27. Class period for organizing upcoming presentations

Week 10: Tuesday and Thursday June 1 and June 3

RESERVED - FINAL PRESENTATION DEVELOPMENT – present during finals!