

RELIGIOUS STUDIES 225/JEWISH STUDIES 200
THE JEWISH TRADITION
COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
Fall 2016

Dr. John Huddlestun
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides a window into the history, beliefs, and practices of Jewish tradition. Proceeding roughly chronologically, we begin with the Biblical foundations (Abraham) and continue up to the modern State of Israel. Particular emphasis will be given to modern Judaism (i.e., post-1800) and the various ways it has responded to changes in the world around it. As the survey progresses, we will examine the origins and rituals of the various Holy Days and select festivals celebrated or commemorated during the Jewish calendar year. Topics to be discussed include Rabbinic Judaism and the classic texts that emerged from it (Midrash, Mishnah, Talmud, etc.), the central role of study and debate in Jewish tradition, Jewish philosophy and mysticism, messianic movements, the emergence of non-Orthodox movements (e.g., Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Renewal, Humanistic, etc.), the origins of reform here in Charleston, Jewish responses to the Holocaust, and the never ending debates over Jewish identity.

GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO)

This course addresses the following two GenEd learning outcomes: (1) Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted, or valued in various expressions of human culture; and (2) Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the humanities area under study and interpret that material in writing assignments. These outcomes will be assessed by means of a paper on the book by Primo Levi (see below for required texts).

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ALTERNATIVE

This course has been approved to satisfy the Foreign Language Alternative program. Upon completion of this course, students will possess the ability to contextualize and analyze artifacts, practices, and perspectives from cultures in a specific world region (Student Learning Outcome 3).

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION:

If you have a documented disability and have been approved to receive accommodations through the Center for Disability Services/SNAP (Students Needing Access Parity), please come and discuss this with me as soon as possible during my office hours (or by appointment). Students approved for accommodations are responsible for notifying me at least one week before accommodation is needed and must provide any relevant forms.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT SERVICES: The Center for Student Learning

The CSL, located on the first floor of the library, offers a wide variety of tutoring and other academic resources that support many courses offered at the College. Services include walk-in tutoring, by appointment tutoring, study strategies appointments, Peer Academic Coaching (PAC), and Supplemental Instruction (SI). All services are described on the CSL website (<http://csl.cofc.edu>) or call 843.953.5635 for information.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

- 1) Philip S. Alexander (ed.), *Textual Sources for the Study of Judaism* (University of Chicago, 1990)
- 2) Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath. Its Meaning for Modern Man* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Young, 1951)
- 3) Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*. Translated from Italian (1958), with original English title *If This is a Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1966)
- 4) A collection of readings, available on OAKS (accessed via your MyCharleston account).

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

- 1) Bible (Old Testament/Hebrew Scriptures only). We will be looking at various biblical texts, especially in the early part of the term. Students who do not own a Bible/Tanakh should borrow one from a friend or family member or, better yet, buy one. I recommend the *New Revised Standard Version* (NRSV) or *TANAKH: A New Translation of the HOLY SCRIPTURES According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia/New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985/1999). The last mentioned translation is now available in an excellent study edition: *The Jewish Study Bible*, ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (2d edition; Oxford, 2014).
- 2) Raymond P. Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. *Two papers (15% each)*. Over the course of the term, students will write two analytical papers on the books by Heschel and Levi. Separate sheets will be distributed with questions and requirements for content, format, and style.
2. *Mid-term Examination (20%)*. This exam covers material presented and/or discussed up to the day of the exam. The exam consists of fill-in-the-blank, passage identification, and essays. Review sheets will be handed out prior to the exam containing material for which you are responsible. It is imperative that you notify me *in advance* if you are unable to attend an exam day. Should that be the case, call me at my office (953-4996) to explain your situation or, if I'm not in, leave a detailed message on my voice mail that day. Make-up exams may be of increased difficulty and must be taken as soon as possible after the original exam day, within a day or two at most (unless you have been excused legitimately for a longer period); these exams will be given *only* to those who provide what I deem to be a valid excuse.
3. *Final Examination (25%)*. This is not cumulative, but covers material subsequent to the mid-term and will be a bit longer. The format includes passage identification and essays (no fill-in-the-blank).
4. *GenEd SLO Assignment*. The second paper on the Levi book (see above, worth 15%) satisfies the GenEd requirement for Student Learning Outcomes in the Humanities.
5. *Class Attendance and Participation (15%)*. Students are expected to attend class, ready and eager to discuss the material that they've *carefully read before coming to class*. I will take attendance. You are permitted a total of **THREE** absences, for whatever reason, over the course of the term (you need not provide documentation for these). Any number greater than this will result in a lowered or failing grade for the course (8 or more absences results in automatic withdrawal). If only a few participate, I will randomly call on individuals to answer questions. If you are consistently unable to respond and it is

apparent that you've not done the readings, you will be assigned an obscure and indecipherable passage from the Talmud for class presentation (probably not, but I *will* note this in my determination of your final grade). I will assign brief writing assignments over particular readings or topics, plus I reserve the right to give pop quizzes over the readings to aid in the motivation of languid and lethargic students.

Computer Policy. Laptops are permitted in class **ONLY** for access to Oaks readings or taking notes. If I suspect other activity I will ask you to close your evil electronic device for the rest of that class period, and for subsequent classes you will be required to sit in the front row of the classroom (if you wish to continue using it). If this happens more than once your laptop privileges will be revoked for the duration of the course. Also, smart phone use (e.g., texting) is strictly prohibited; all phones should be set on silent (not vibrate) or turned off. If I see you continually staring at your crotch and smiling, I will assume you have a phone (if not, I don't want to know).

6. *Synagogue visit or website analysis (10%).* Students have the option of doing a synagogue visit(s) (attending a Friday evening or Saturday service outside your own denomination, where applicable) or analysis of a web site relating to a denomination or movement (or a combination of these). Handouts will be distributed with specific information, questions and guidelines for the written assignment relating to the visit.

GRADING SCALE: Final grades are determined in accordance with the following scale.

A = 100-94	C = 75-73
A- = 93-90	C- = 72-70
B+ = 89-86	D+ = 69-66
B = 85-83	D = 65-62
B- = 82-80	D- = 61-59
C+ = 79-76	F = 58-

LECTURE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

This schedule is subject to revision. Please bring all relevant materials to class!

Aug. 24 -- Introduction

Readings:

Satlow, "Introduction" (Oaks #1)

Aug. 29 – Sept. 7 -- The Biblical Heritage: An Historical Survey from Abraham to ben-Zakkai

Readings: (see Oaks #2 for time charts etc.)

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament historical survey (handout)

Segal, "The Biblical Legacy" (Oaks #3)

Murphy, "Israel before the Second Temple Period" (Oaks #4)

“ “The Restoration” (Oaks #5)

“ “Hellenism, Judaism, and the Maccabees” (Oaks #6)

First Maccabees, chapters 1-4 (Oaks #7)

Murphy, "Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Sanhedrin" (Oaks #8)

Sept. 12-14 -- The Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism; the Synagogue, Prayer and Liturgy

Readings:

Goldin, "The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan" (Oaks #9)
Alexander, *Textual Sources*, 1.2 (Intro) and 3.1 ("Weekday Liturgy")
Treppe, "Prayer and the Prayer Book" (Oaks #10)
Medwed, "Prayer" (Oaks #11; selections)

Sept. 19–26 -- In the Beginning was the Text: Midrash, Targum, Mishnah, Talmud
(Generally, Segal, "Judaism of the Talmud and Midrash" - Oaks #12)

Readings A:

Alexander, *Sources*, 1.1 (Intro) and 4.3, 4.5, and 4.6
Midrash "The Oral Law" (Oaks #13)
Passover in three dimensions (Bible/Mishnah/Talmud) - handout

Readings B:

Alexander, *Sources*, 2.3. (Genesis in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Exodus in Mekhilta of R. Ishmael). **PLEASE read the biblical texts carefully (Genesis 22:1-19 and Exodus 19-20) before looking at the commentary!**

Readings C:

Alexander, *Sources*, 1.4 (Intro) and 5.1.2 (Mishnah + gemara on work on Shabbat)
Jacobs, "The Obligation of Studying Torah" (Oaks #14)

*****Oct. 1 - Paper on Heschel's *The Sabbath* due (in class)*****

Sept. 28--Oct. 5 -- Shabbat and Kashrut

Readings:

Biblical texts: Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14:4-21
Donin, "The Sabbath: An Island in Time" (Orthodox view; Oaks #15)
Alexander, 3.2 ("Sabbath Liturgy") and review 5.1.2
("Work Forbidden on Sabbath")
Greenberg, "Kashrut" (a modern Orthodox perspective; Oaks #16)
Sasson, "Should Cheeseburgers be Kosher?" (Oaks #17)

Oct. 3 - Rosh Hashanah (no class - I will be out of town)

*****OCT. 10 -- MIDTERM EXAM*****

Oct. 12 - Yom Kippur (no class, but you will be assigned a film for review)

Oct. 17-19 -- The Jewish Calendar (see charts in Oaks #2)

- A. The High Holy Days: Rosh Hashanah – Yom Kippur
- B. Pesach (Passover), Hanukkah, and Purim

Readings:

Biblical texts: Lev. 16 (Yom Kippur) and 23 (the calendar)
Alexander 3.3 and The Passover Haggadah (Oaks #18)
Lucas, "Holy Days and Holidays" (Oaks #19 - selections)
Treppe, "*Yamim Noraim*, The Days of Awe" (Oaks #20)

Oct. 24 -- Philosophers and Mystics

Readings:

Alexander, 1.6 and 1.7 (Introduction) and 7.1 (Saadia Gaon) 8.3.1 (on Ein Sof and Sefirot), 8.3.4 (on Tiqqun), and 8.3.6 (spiritual constitution of man)
Segal, "Kabbalah" and "The Mystic Path" (Oaks #21 and 21a)

Oct. 26 -- Hasidism and the Brooklyn Messiah (7th Lubavitch Rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson)

Readings:

Segal, "Kabbalah" (pp. 98-102)
Dein, "Lubavitch and its Messianism" (Oaks #22), "The Death of the Rebbe"
and "The Convert's Zeal" (Oaks #23)

Oct. 31–Nov. 2 From Alien to Citizen: Anti-Semitism, Enlightenment, Emancipation, and Identity

Readings:

Alexander, 1.8 (all), 1.10, and 11.1 thru 11.4
French National Assembly documents (Oaks #24)
Seltzer, "The European State and the Jews, 1770-1880" (Oaks #25)
Alexander, 9.3.1 (Moses Mendelssohn)
Seltzer, "The 18th Century Enlightenment and Moses Mendelssohn's
Defense of Judaism" (Oaks #26)
Alexander, 10.2 ("Laws of the State of Israel") plus handout

*****Nov. 7 -- Fall Break*****

Nov. 9-16 -- Updating the Tradition: Modern Movements, Thinkers and the Problem of Identity

Readings A:

Alexander, 9.2 (Pittsburgh and Columbus Platforms)
San Francisco Centenary Statement (1976) and Pittsburgh Statement of
Principles (1999) (both available online at
<http://ccarnet.org/rabbis-speak/platforms/>)
Alexander, *Sources*, 9.3.2 (Hirsch) and 9.3.3 (Schechter)

Readings B (Reform in Charleston):

Plaut, "American Beginnings" (Oaks #27)
Liberles, "Conflict Over Reforms: The Case of Congregation Beth
Elohim, Charleston, South Carolina" (Oaks #28)

Readings C:

Kaplan, "Principles of Reconstructionism" (Oaks #29)
Rabbi Richard Hirsh, "Reconstructionist Faith and Belief" (video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WhCUGg6AFgE&index=5&list=PLma9H-xhTDH5bQPitOIk9zg-j3yNkYMR>)
Alpert and Staub, "Who is a Jew?" (Reconstructionist view; Oaks #30)

Jewish Renewal movement:

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2005/09/30/september-30-2005-jewish-renewal/9580/>

(Note the link to the full interview with Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi at the bottom of the page.)

Wilkes, “Jewish Renewal” (Oaks #31)

Nov. 21 – guest lecturer TBA

Nov. 23 – Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 28 – “Jews, Race, and Black Lives Matter” (reading forthcoming)

Nov. 30 -- Paper on Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz* due (in class)

Nov. 30 -- Discussion of Primo Levi and Jewish Responses to the Holocaust

Readings:

Scheindlin, “The Holocaust” (Oaks #32)

Katz, “Jewish Faith after the Holocaust: Four Approaches” (Oaks #33)

Jacobs, “(If) There is No ‘Commander’?...There are No ‘Commandments!’” (Oaks #34)

Dec. 5 -- Secular Jews and Humanistic Judaism

Liebman and Yadgar, “Secular-Jewish Identity and the Condition of Secular Judaism in Israel” (Oaks #35)

Chalom, “Beyond *Apikorsut*: A Judaism for Secular Jews” (Oaks #36)

Optional: Yagdar and Liebman, “Beyond the Religious-Secular dichotomy: Masortim in Israel” (Oaks #37)

“Humanistic Jewish Stories” (video) - <http://www.shj.org/> (video at bottom of page)

*****December 9 – Final Examination (Friday) @ 4:00 -6:00pm*****

Some Useful Bibliography

- 1) David Biale (ed.), *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York: Schocken Books, 2002).
- 2) Robert M. Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought: The Jewish Experience in History* (New York: Macmillan, 1980).
- 3) Schwartz, Seth, *Imperialism and Jewish Society 200 B.C.E to 640 C.E.* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).
- 4) Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).
- 5) Cohen, Shaye J. D., *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties.* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999).
- 6) Barry W. Holtz (ed.), *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts* (New York: Summit Books, 1984).
- 7) Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1979).
- 8) Martin S. Cohen (ed.), *The Observant Life: The Wisdom of Conservative Judaism for Contemporary Jews* (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 2012).
- 9) Jack Wertheimer, *A People Divided: Judaism in Contemporary America* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).
- 10) Marc Lee Raphael, *Judaism in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).
- 11) Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2004).
- 12) Michael L. Satlow, *Creating Judaism: History, Tradition, Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).
- 13) Zvi Gitelman (ed.), *Religion or Ethnicity? Jewish Identities in Evolution* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2009).
- 14) Susan A. Glenn and Naomi B. Sokoloff (eds.), *Boundaries of Jewish Identity* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2010).