

Instructor: Dr. Ellen Haskell
Office: Foust 103K
Office Hours: Mondays 3:30-4:45 and by appointment
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REL 215-01: Judaism
M/W 2:00-3:15pm
Petty 313
GHP, GL, GPM

Course Description

This course will provide a broad introduction to the religious tradition of Judaism. Central topics for the course include Jewish text, history, ritual, thought and culture. Course readings and discussions will stress the creative tension between tradition and innovation that has allowed Judaism to endure as a vital and diverse religion in an ever-changing world.

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successfully completing this course, students will be able to 1) demonstrate a working knowledge of Judaism, its cultural contexts, its spirituality, its sacred calendar and its many literary forms 2) analyze, discuss and write about different forms of Jewish text, spirituality and culture 3) illustrate an ability to read significant primary sources for Judaism, such as the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic literature, and the prayer book 4) appreciate Judaism as a multifaceted world religion that is constantly adapting to its diverse environments.

Teaching Methods and Assignments for Achieving Learning Outcomes

In this course we will be developing background knowledge through lecture and secondary sources, as well as applying our knowledge to specific primary sources during class discussions. The course will emphasize both Judaism's inner-cultural understanding and its role in historical cultures. Through a series of short writing assignments, as well as one test to ensure mastery of Judaism's terminology, students will not only become familiar with the Jewish tradition, but will also learn to compare and contrast different phases of Judaism's cultural and historical development.

Course Evaluation and Grading

- **Class Participation (20% of grade):** You will be expected to participate regularly in classroom discussions. The central elements of classroom participation are:
 - **Intellectual Preparation:** You must do your reading for each class session, and you are expected to come to class prepared with something to say about your reading assignment. **In order to help with this preparation process, you are required to create one group discussion question for each class session and to write one interesting thing from your reading. You must write these two items down on a clean sheet**

of paper that is separate from your notes and reading materials (it's fine to use a blank page in a notebook). Do not write these things in the margins of your notes or reading materials, because I will occasionally collect them in class. Please be compassionate! Write questions that you believe will lead to interesting and productive classroom conversations. You can save your specific questions about the material for our general classroom discussions. For some class sessions, I will assign specific topics for you to think about, rather than having you write general questions.

- **Speaking in Class:** In this course, you are required to be an active participant in classroom discussion. You should try to contribute to our discussion at least once during each class session, and should always be prepared to lead your classmates in a discussion of your prepared question. Don't be shy! Your thoughts and ideas matter! Furthermore, you are always welcome to ask your own questions during class. Also, feel free to respond to your classmates' ideas and comments, not just to mine.
- **1 Short Paper (20% of grade):** This 3-4 page paper on an assigned topic will be due February 18.
- **1 Test (20% of grade):** There will be one examination held in class on March 2. The purpose of the test is to make sure that you have a working knowledge of the terms and concepts we will be covering in class.
- **1 Response Paper (10% of grade):** This 3 page response paper will address the film "Last Days," and will be due April 8. The paper will also be used to facilitate class discussion.
- **Final Paper (30% of grade):** This 7-8 page paper will be due on May 4, the last day of class. You will have your choice of several assigned topics for this paper. If you would like to write on a topic of your own selection, you must get this topic approved by the instructor two weeks before the paper is due.
- **Important Paper Requirements**
 - All papers are due in class, at the beginning of class. This means that if you are late to class, your paper is late.
 - All papers must be printed in black ink on white paper.
 - Papers must be printed in 12 point font and double spaced.
 - Page numbers must be included on each page of the paper.
 - Your name must be clearly visible on the first page of your paper.
 - Papers must be stapled together (folding over the corner doesn't count).
 - Your papers must have titles.
 - Always follow instructions for individual assignments.
 - Failure to meet these formal requirements will result in the reduction of your paper grade by 1/3 for each problem. (So, if you don't staple your paper, an A- paper would become a B+. If you don't staple and forget page numbers, the same paper becomes a B.)

Other Classroom Policies and Requirements

- **Course Materials:** You are required to bring your reading materials to every class. Electronic readings **MUST** be printed out and brought with you as well.

- **Academic Integrity:** All students are required to adhere to the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. You can find this online at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>
- **Grading Standards:** Standards of grading for course assignments are those described online at <http://www.uncg.edu/reg/Catalog/current/AcaRegs/Grading.html>
- **Attendance:** If you do not attend this class on a regular basis, you will not succeed in this course. This is because you will be receiving lots of information in the classroom that is NOT in your readings. You are responsible for this information, and will need it to complete your assignments. You may have three “free” absences from this class, and after that your final grade will begin to fall. (Here’s the math: for each unexcused absence beyond the two allowed, I lower your final numerical grade for the course by .1) Please note that you are still responsible for course materials on days that you are absent! If you are absent from class more than 6 times, I reserve the right to drop you from this course. If you have some truly compelling reason for your absence and can provide documentation proving this reason, I may choose to excuse your absence. (For example, if you’re terribly ill, don’t come to class and cough all over everyone—just bring a doctor’s note when you’re feeling better.)
- **Arriving On Time:** At the beginning of each class, I will send around an attendance sheet. It is your responsibility to arrive on time, and to sign the sheet, in order to be counted as present. If arriving in a timely way becomes a problem, I reserve the right to change this policy and penalize lateness.
- **Extension/Late Paper Policy:** No extensions on assignments will be granted in this course. Late papers drop by one letter grade for each day that they are late. (As with the attendance policy, if you have a truly compelling reason for an extension, speak to me about it in office hours. A really busy schedule doesn’t count.)
- **Talk to the Instructor!:** I enjoy visits from students. Please stop by and see me in office hours (or make an appointment to meet with me) if you want to talk to me about class topics, if you want to talk about an assignment, or if you just want to chat. If you are concerned that a personal situation inside or outside the classroom may affect your class performance, this is also the sort of thing you should let me know. I reserve the right to alter my attendance and extension policies for students with truly exceptional circumstances.
- **Be Courteous:** Basically, use common sense. In this class, you will be expected to be courteous, respectful, and considerate of the instructor, each other, and yourselves. All criticism should be constructive. Don’t let your cell phones ring in class, don’t check messages, don’t send text messages, etc. If you use a laptop to take notes, DO NOT use class time to explore the internet or check your e-mail. The instructor reserves the right to forbid laptop use in the classroom if abuse of computer privileges becomes a problem.

Required Texts

- **Stephen Wylan, *Settings of Silver***

- **Electronic Readings:** There are many electronic sources that are required reading for this class. They will be available through Blackboard as course documents, at blackboard.uncg.edu. These readings MUST be printed out and brought to class!!!

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 21: Introduction

January 26: Judaism in General: Judaism and God

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (3-14) * Arthur Green, *These Are the Words*, “Y-H-W-H” (3-4), “Adonai” (5-6), “Din” (9), “Elohim” (10-11), “Melekh” (19-20), “Rahamim,” (26), “Ruah ha-Kodesh” (27), “Shaddai” (32), “Shekhinah” (33-34), “Mitsvah” (98-99) (electronic)

January 28: Jewish Text and Jewish Thought: TaNaKH: Written Torah

Hebrew Bible, Genesis 1-2, 15, Exodus 19-20, Deuteronomy 5-6, 2 Samuel 7, Psalm 27, Isaiah 40 (all readings electronic)

February 2: Jewish History: The Ancient World: Rome

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (185-220)

February 4: Jewish Text and Jewish Thought: Oral Torah

Barry Holtz, *Back to the Sources*, excerpt from “Introduction,” (11-24) * Arthur Green, *These are the Words*, “Aggadah” (39), “Halakhah” (41-3), “Midrash” (48-49), “Mishnah” (50), “Talmud,” (63-64) (all readings electronic)

February 9: Jewish Text and Jewish Thought: Aggadah

Babylonian Talmud (BT) Bava Metzia 59b (oven of Akhnai), BT Menakhot 29b (Moses on Sinai), Song of Songs Rabbah 1:13 (commandments and kisses), Genesis Rabbah 1:1 (Torah as blueprint), Genesis Rabbah 39:1 (owner of the building), Genesis Rabbah 68:4 (creation and marriage), Genesis Rabbah 53:9 (Sarah and the children) (all readings electronic)

February 11: Jewish Text and Jewish Thought: Halakhah

BT Bava Metzia 21a-b (laws of lost and found), BT Berakhot 61b (the meaning of the Shema and the martyrdom of Rabbi Akiva) * Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism*, “More Than Inwardness” (293-305) (all readings electronic)

February 16: Jewish History: The Middle Ages

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (233-246, 252-261, 271-75)

February 18: Jewish Text and Jewish Thought: Medieval Philosophy and Mysticism

****1st short paper due in class, at the beginning of class****

Jehuda Halevi, *Kuzari*, trans. Isaak Heinemann (27-35, 40-41) * *A Maimonides Reader*, ed. Isadore Twersky, excerpts from Maimonides’ Mishnah Torah, “Gifts to the Poor” (135-139), “Parable of the Palace” (341-349) * *Sefer ha-Zohar* (excerpts from The

Wisdom of the Zohar, eds. Isaiah Tishby and Fischel Lachower) “The Parable of the Woman in the Palace” (196-7) (all readings electronic)

February 23: Jewish Rituals and Holy Days: Jewish Calendar and Lifecycle Rituals

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (79-95) * *The Complete Art Scroll Siddur*, “The Marriage Service” (203-207), “Circumcision” and “Giving the Name” (209-215), “Death and Bereavement” (797-803) (electronic) **when doing the readings from the siddur, please be sure to read the explanatory footnotes**

February 25: Jewish Rituals and Holy Days: Daily Blessing, Liturgy, Ritual

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (99-109) * Arthur Green, *These are the Words*, “Mezuzah” (201), “Tallit” (206-207), “Tefillin” (208) (electronic) * Arthur Green and Barry Holtz, eds., *Your Word is Fire*, (20-25, 69, 71-72) (electronic)

March 2: *In-Class Test*****

March 4: Jewish Rituals and Holy Days: The Sabbath

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (124-136) * *The Complete Art Scroll Siddur*, “Lechah Dodi” (317-319) (electronic)

MARCH 9: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

MARCH 11: SPRING BREAK: NO CLASS

March 16: Jewish Rituals and Holy Days: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

Wylen, *Settings of Silver*, (137-52) * *The Complete Art Scroll Siddur*, confessional prayer for Yom Kippur (777-781) (electronic) * Martin Buber, excerpt from *I and Thou* (128-133) (electronic)

March 18: Jewish Rituals and Holy Days: Passover

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (153-169) * selected excerpts from different versions of the Passover Haggadah (electronic)

March 23: Jewish Rituals and Holy Days: Other Holy Days

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (170-182) * selected readings on Hanukkah in America (electronic)

March 25: Topics in Jewish Ritual and Spirituality: Kashrut

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (95-98) * Arthur Waskow, *Down to Earth Judaism* (69-82, 97-103) (electronic)

March 30: Jewish History and Jewish Thought: Eastern Europe and Hasidism

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (287-309) * Nahman of Bratslav, *The Tales*, ed. Arnold Band, “The King and the Wise Man” (117-119) (electronic)

April 1: Jewish History and Jewish Thought: Modernity and Emancipation

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (313-335) * excerpts from *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed., Paul Mendes-Flohr (97-103, 112-116) (electronic)

April 6: Jewish History: Modern Europe: The Holocaust

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (358-379) * In-class Film: Last Days

April 8: Jewish History: Modern Europe: The Holocaust

*****short response paper due in class, at the beginning of class*****

Discussion of film

April 13: Jewish History and Jewish Thought: Zionism and Israel

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (380-406) * excerpt from Theodor Herzl's "The Jewish State" in *The Zionist Idea*, ed. Arthur Hertzberg 204-215) (electronic)

April 15: Forms of Modern Judaism: Judaism in Modernity

Wylen, *Settings of Silver* (336-357, 407-427)

April 20: Forms of Modern Judaism: Reform Judaism

"Sea Changes in the Pursuit of Tikkun" from www.huc.edu (electronic) * additional reading to be announced

April 22: : Forms of Modern Judaism: Conservative Judaism

Excerpts from *Emet ve-Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism* (17-25, 39-48, 56-57) (electronic)

April 27: Forms of Modern Judaism: Orthodox Judaism

Lis Harris, *Holy Days*, "Sabbath" (54-76) * "Tikkun Olam: Orthodoxy's Responsibility to perfect G-d's World" from www.ou.org (all readings electronic)

April 29: Topics in Judaism: Jewish Communities around the World

In-class film to be announced

May 4: LAST DAY OF CLASS

Discussion of film

*****(final papers due in class, at the beginning of class*****