



Jewish Studies 1250F – Intro to Modern Jewish Thought
Fall 2022
Wednesday 8:30-9:30; Friday 8:30-10:30
Room: HC-V208

Prerequisite(s): None

Office: A223

Office Hours: Mondays, 1:30-2:30 (or by appointment)

Instructor: Dr. Peter Sabo

Contact Information: psabo2@uwo.ca

Course Description:

The course examines the impact of modernity on Jewish thought and religion. The European Enlightenment and the Haskalah movement led Jews to confront crucial issues surrounding tradition and law, reason and revelation, community and individuality, and so on. In the first weeks of the course, we will briefly survey the major periods of Jewish history leading up to the Enlightenment. The purpose of doing so is to establish a working acquaintance with important concepts, events, and figures of Judaism and to appreciate the important differences between Jewish thought and religion in the premodern era in comparison to that of the modern era. The central part of the course looks at various Jewish modern thinkers, such as Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Hirsch, and Buber. We will read primary writings for each of these thinkers, exploring and analyzing their historical context, overall intellectual contributions, and interpretations of their thought. In the final part of the course, we will turn to broader historical phenomena that came out of the modern period: the rise of Zionism; the Holocaust; and issues of feminism, gender, and sexuality.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will gain abilities in critical thinking, furthering their abilities to analyze complex and nuanced ideas, make considered decisions, and form coherent, reasoned and fact-based judgements.
2. Students will gain knowledge of representative thinkers and intellectual trends of modern Jewish thought.

3. Students will familiarize themselves with various Jewish thinkers' reflections on Zionism, the Holocaust, and issues of feminism, gender, and sexuality.
4. Students will familiarize themselves with central events, concepts, and figures of Jewish history.
5. Students will learn to be clear and concise writers.
6. This course will prepare students for further courses in Jewish Studies and Religious Studies.

Required Readings:

There are no required purchases for readings for this course, as all readings will be provided on our OWL course website.

Evaluation:

Grades will be determined by the following:

- Preparation and Participation 10%
- Midterm 20%
- Essays 40%
- Final Exam 30%

Preparation and Participation (10%)

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. After two unexcused absences, each additional unexcused absence will result in your participation grade being lowered by five points. If you have a compelling reason to miss class, I ask you to let me know. If you are unsure as to whether your reason is compelling, please discuss it with me. See the appendix to this syllabus for information on academic accommodations.

Attendance is just one aspect of the preparation and participation grade for this course. During class, moreover, you should pay attention, participate regularly in discussion, and contribute to group discussions and the like. It is expected that you will have completed the required reading *before* each class. At times, there will be homework assignments to be posted on OWL that will be due before class as well. These homework assignments will mostly be based on the readings, though they may also simply be reflection posts or the like.

Midterm (20%)

The midterm will consist of some combination of multiple choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and long answer questions. It will cover all content from the beginning of the course until the date of the midterm (that is, it will be based on class material and lectures, the reading assignments, etc.). The midterm will take place on October 12th.

Essays (40%)

There will be two analysis essays in the course, each between 4-5 pages (double-spaced) in length. The focus of these essays will be analysis of a specific issue in modern Jewish thought. You will be given a series of prompts and possible topics for each essay, though you are also free to choose your own topic (as long as it is a relevant topic and you have instructor approval

beforehand). These essays are not meant to be major research projects, though there will be a small research component, as you will be required to have at least two research sources for each essay. I will provide more information about the expectation for the essays later in the course.

In place of one of the two analysis essays, you may choose to do a more creative project, such as a video essay, PowerPoint presentation, podcast, and so on. You will need, however, instructor approval at least three weeks beforehand.

Final Exam (30%)

There will be a final exam based for this course. The date and time of the final exam is TBD.

Late Policy

Missed or Late Work Late assignments will not be accepted, and as a rule I do not grant extensions mere days before an assignment is due. However, some flexibility is possible. I encourage you to look over the syllabus and check it against your schedule. If you have a conflict, I am willing to work with you to set a new deadline, provided that you contact me **well in advance**. For more information on academic accommodations for medical and non-medical reasons please consult the appendix below.

Tentative Schedule:

(Please note that this schedule may change depending on the pace with which we move through the readings).

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments Due
Sept 9 (F)	Class Intro.	
Sept 14 (W)	-Introduction to Religious Studies and Jewish Studies	-Rodrigues and Harding, "Introduction to the Academic Study of Religion"
Sept 16 (F)	-Biblical and Second Temple Period	-Readings on Bible, Torah, Prophets, Writings, and Dead Sea Scrolls
Sept 21 (W)	-Rabbinic Period	-Readings on Talmud and Halakhah
Sept 23 (F)	-Medieval and Early Modern Period	-Readings on Jewish mysticism and Hasidism
Sept 28 (W)	-The Enlightenment and Haskalah	
Sept 30 (F)	-Baruch Spinoza	-Spinoza Reading -Edward Breuer, "Jewish Study of the Bible Before and During the Jewish Enlightenment"
Oct 5 (W)	NO CLASS	NO CLASS

Oct 7 (F)	-Emancipation and Reform Movement	-Moses Mendelssohn reading -Abraham Geiger reading
Oct 12 (W)	Midterm	Midterm
Oct 14 (F)	-Orthodox and Conservative Movements	-Samson Raphael Hirsch reading -Zechariah Frankel reading
Oct 19 (W)	-Reconstructionist Judaism	-Mordecai Kaplan reading
Oct 21 (F)	-From Reason to Experience	-Martin Buber reading -Franz Rosenzweig reading
Oct 26 (W)	-Zionism	-Theodor Herzl reading
Oct 28 (F)	-Zionism	-Ahad Ha'am reading -Abraham Isaac Kook reading
Oct 31-Nov 6	BREAK	
Nov 9 (W)	-The Shoah	1st Paper Due -Richard Rubenstein, <i>After Auschwitz</i> (excerpts) -Emil Fackenheim, <i>The Jewish Return into History</i> (excerpts)
Nov 11 (F)	-The Shoah	-Irving Greenberg, selection of writings -Elie Wiesel, <i>All Rivers Run to the Sea</i> (excerpts)
Nov 16 (W)	-Home, Nation, and Land	-Excerpts from various scholars and authors
Nov 18 (F)	<i>*Film Analysis (TBD)</i>	<i>*Film Analysis (TBD)</i>
Nov 23 (W)	-Home, Nation, and Land	-Israel's Religiously Divided Society
Nov 25 (F)	-Feminism, Gender, and Sexuality	-Cynthia Ozick, "Notes Toward the Right Question" -Judith Plaskow, "The Right Question is Theological"
Nov 30 (W)	-Feminism, Gender, and Sexuality <i>*Trembling Before G-d (Film)</i>	-Robert B. Ridinger, "Who Knew? Writing LGBT People in Judaism"
Dec 2 (F)	-Jewish Identity	2nd Paper Due -Gad Barzilai, "Who is a Jew? Categories, Boundaries, Communities, and Citizenship Law in Israel"
Dec 5 (W)	-Jewish Identity	-Sarah Imhoff, "Traces of Race"
Dec 7 (F)	Recap	

Appendix to Course Outlines: Academic Policies & Regulations Fall 2022

Pandemic Contingency

Huron will continue to follow the guidance of public health and government officials. It is anticipated that there will be no further disruptions to in-person instruction. This is subject to change.

Student Code of Conduct

Membership in the community of Huron University College and Western University implies acceptance by every student of the principle of respect for the rights, responsibilities, dignity and well-being of others and a readiness to support an environment conducive to the intellectual and personal growth of all who study, work and live within it. Upon registration, students assume the responsibilities that such registration entails. While in the physical or online classroom, students are expected to behave in a manner that supports the learning environment of others. Please review the Student Code of Conduct at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/sites/default/files/Res%20Life/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Revised%20September%202019.pdf>.

Prerequisite and Antirequisite Information

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have successfully completed all course prerequisites and that they have not completed any course antirequisites. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Attendance Regulations for Examinations

A student is entitled to be examined in courses in which registration is maintained, subject to the following limitations:

- 1) A student may be debarred from writing the final examination for failure to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year.
- 2) Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the Department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course. The Dean of the Faculty offering the course will communicate that decision to the Dean of the Faculty of registration.

Review the policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations here: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)

Statement on Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#). The appeals process is also outlined in this policy as well as more generally at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsundergrad.pdf.

Turnitin.com

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

It is not appropriate to use electronic devices (such as, but not limited to, laptops, tablets, cell phones) in the classroom for non-classroom activities. Such activity is disruptive and distracting to other students and to the instructor, and can inhibit learning. Students are expected to respect the classroom environment and to refrain from inappropriate use of technology and other electronic devices in class.

Statement on Use of Personal Response Systems (“Clickers”)

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. If clickers are to be used in a class, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the device is activated and functional. Students must see their instructor if they have any concerns about whether the clicker is malfunctioning. Students must use only their own clicker. If clicker records are used to compute a portion of the course grade:

- the use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence
- the possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offence.

Academic Consideration for Missed Work

All students pursuing academic consideration, regardless of type, must contact their instructors no less than 24 hours following the end of the period of absence to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic responsibilities missed during their absence. **Students are reminded that they should consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying submission of work, and are encouraged to make appropriate decisions based on their specific circumstances.**

Students who have conditions for which academic accommodation is appropriate, such as disabilities or ongoing or chronic health conditions, should work with Accessible Education Services to determine appropriate forms of accommodation. Further details concerning policies and procedures may be found at: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>.

Policy on Academic Consideration for a Medical/ Non-Medical Absence

- (a) Consideration on Medical Grounds for assignments worth *less than 10%* of final grade:
Consult Instructor Directly and Contact Academic Advising**

When seeking consideration on **medical grounds** for assignments worth *less than 10%* of the final course grade, the student should contact the instructor directly. The student need only share broad outlines of the medical situation. The instructor **may** require the student to submit documentation to the academic advisors, in which case she or he will advise the student and inform the academic advisors to expect documentation. If documentation is requested, the student will need to complete and submit the **Student Medical Certificate**. The instructor may **not** collect medical documentation. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the

medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation.

b) Medical Grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of final grade: Go Directly to Academic Advising

University Senate policy, which can be found at [Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](https://www.uwo.ca/academic_calendar/) requires that all student requests for accommodation on medical grounds for assignments worth 10% or more of the final grade be made directly to the academic advising office of the home faculty (for Huron students, the “home faculty” is Huron), with supporting documentation in the form (minimally) of the Senate-approved Student Medical Certificate found at: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The documentation is submitted in confidence and will not be shown to instructors. The advisors will contact the instructor when the medical documentation is received, and will outline the severity and duration of the medical challenge as expressed on the Student Medical Certificate and in any other supporting documentation. The student will be informed that the instructor has been notified of the presence of medical documentation, and will be instructed to work as quickly as possible with the instructor on an agreement for accommodation. The instructor will not normally deny accommodation where appropriate medical documentation is in place and where the duration it describes aligns with the due date(s) of assignment(s). Before denying a request for accommodation on medical grounds, the instructor will consult with the Dean. The instructor’s decision is appealable to the Dean.

c) Consideration on Non-Medical Grounds: Consult Huron Support Services/Academic Advising, or email huronsss@uwo.ca.

Students seeking academic consideration for a **non-medical** absence (e.g. varsity sports, religious, compassionate, or bereavement) will be required to provide appropriate documentation. All consideration requests must include a completed [Consideration Request Form](#). Late penalties may apply at the discretion of the instructor.

Please review the full policy on Academic Consideration for medical and non-medical absence at: [accommodation_medical.pdf \(uwo.ca\)](#). Consult [Huron Academic Advising](#) at huronsss@uwo.ca for any further questions or information.

Support Services

For advice on course selections, degree requirements, and for assistance with requests for medical accommodation, students should email an Academic Advisor in Huron’s Student Support Services at huronsss@uwo.ca. An outline of the range of services offered is found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>.

Department Chairs, Program Directors and Coordinators are also able to answer questions about individual programs. Contact information can be found on the Huron website at: <https://huronatwestern.ca/contact/faculty-staff-directory/>.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your workload is not manageable, you should consult your Academic Advisor. If you are considering reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines. Please refer to the Advising website,

<https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/academic-advising/> or review the list of official Sessional Dates on the Academic Calendar, available here:
<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/SessionalDates.cfm>.

You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP and/or Scholarship/Bursary eligibility.

Huron Student Support Services: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/>
Office of the Registrar: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/>
Student Quick Reference Guide: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/student-services/#1>
Academic Support & Engagement: <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/>
Huron University College Student Council: <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life/beyond-classroom/hucsc/>
Western USC: <http://westernusc.ca/your-services/#studentservices>

Wellness and Health Supports at Huron and Western

University students may encounter setbacks from time to time that can impact academic performance. Huron offers a variety of services that are here to support your success and wellbeing. All Huron staff and faculty have received training on responding to disclosures of Gender-Based Sexual Violence (GBSV); students should know that the Community Safety Office is a resource for survivors, providing support and, if desired, guidance while referring them to the further supports that they may require. Please visit <https://huronatwestern.ca/student-life-campus/student-services/wellness-safety> for more information or contact staff directly:

Wellness Services: huronwellness@huron.uwo.ca
Community Safety Office: safety@huron.uwo.ca
Additional supports for Health and Wellness may be found and accessed at Western through, <https://www.uwo.ca/health/>.

Western Calendar - Policy Pages -

[Academic Calendar - Western University \(uwo.ca\)](#)