

Introduction to Jewish Thought and Politics

CJS200H1F

Monday 10am – 12pm

Sidney Smith Hall 2105

INSTRUCTORS

Prof. Clifford Orwin

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Office: AH 323

Contact Hour: Thursday 4–6pm

Prof. Jeffrey Kopstein

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Contact Hour: Tuesday 9–11am

Dr. Sol Goldberg

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Office: JHB, 218b

Contact Hour: Thursday 9–11am

DESCRIPTION

This course provides a multifaceted introduction to Jewish thought and politics. Different methodological approaches are modeled, as students become familiar with core issues in the political life and theory of Jews from antiquity to the present.

LECTURE SCHEDULE

September 10 – Introduction: What is and was Jewish Studies? And who studies and teaches it?

September 17 – No class (Rosh Hashanah)

Section I: The Book of Genesis

September 24 – From “Cain and Abel” (Genesis 4) to “The Tower of Babel” (Genesis 11)

October 1 – No class (Sukkot)

October 8 – No class (Thanksgiving)

October 15 – “Sodom and Gomorra” (Genesis 19)

October 22 – “The Rape of Dina” (Genesis 34, plus secondary sources)

Section II: Jews and their Neighbors

October 29 – Jews and their European Neighbors (Jan Gross, *Neighbors*)

November 5 – Jews and their Middle Eastern Neighbors (Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*)

November 12 – No class (November break)

November 19 – Jews and their North American Neighbors (Nathan Englander, “What We Talk about When We Talk about Anne Frank” & “How We Avenged the Blums”)

Section III: Jewish Membership: The Ins and Outs

November 26 – The Terms of Jewish Community (Lorberbaum & Zohar, “The Terminology of Membership”; Last Stone, “The Jewish Tradition and Civil Society”; Eleazar, “Covenant and Community”; Cover, “Obligation: A Jewish Jurisprudence of the Social Order”)

December 3 – Who is a Jew? American and Israeli Perspectives (Gavison, *The Law of Return at Sixty*; Walzer, “Who is an American Jew?” & “What Does It Mean to Be an ‘American?’”)

December 5 – Who isn’t a Jew? The Case of Spinoza and his Secular Heirs (Yovel, “Spinoza, the First Secular Jew?”; Biale, “Historical Heresies and Modern Jewish Identities”)

“BLACKBOARD”

All of the course readings will be available on “blackboard.” Please log-in to portal.utoronto.ca, and follow the instructions in order to find this course. It is essential that you check “blackboard” regularly, as instructions for all assignments and notifications about any last-minute changes will be posted there.

EVALUATION

For each of the three sections of the course, there will a writing assignment (four to five pages long). Each assignment will be worth 30% of the final grade. The remaining 10% of the final grade will be based on attendance and participation. The topic for each assignment will be distributed a week before it is due, so be sure to budget time accordingly.

ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES

- Section One: November 5
- Section Two: November 26
- Section Three: December 12

LATE WORK

For each day your work remains late, a deduction of 5% will be applied. Papers will not be accepted after 7 late days (weekends included). If you have legitimate and **documented** reasons for not being able to complete your assignment, these penalties will not apply. If you feel that you have legitimate reasons for not completing the assignment on time, please get in touch with either Dr. Sol Goldberg, the course’s coordinator, or Yaniv Feller (yaniv.feller@mail.utoronto.ca), the course’s teaching assistant.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Participation is important. It means not only offering thoughts on subject matter but also listening respectfully to the views of others. If you have a problem (e.g., shyness) that will inhibit your ability to participate in class discussion, please inform the course coordinator.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the act of using the ideas or work of another person as if it were one’s own. As plagiarism is grounds for dismissal from the University, students are strongly cautioned to use all appropriate documentation to credit any sources used in compiling their own work. Most plagiarism we encounter is partial and accidental rather than complete and intentional, resulting from inexperienced research writing. If you suspect you may have inadvertently plagiarized, please see the course coordinator *before submitting your essay for evaluation*. Plagiarism will result in the automatic failure of the assignment in question; a second occurrence will earn the offender an “F” for the course. Further discussion of plagiarism can be found at: <http://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/home/integrity>