

**RELIG 210: INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM**  
**WINTER 2009 (M,W 2:30-4:20)**  
**Smith Hall 205**

Instructor: Noam Pianko  
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Office: 218 Thomson Hall  
Office Hours: Thursday, 2-3:00pm and by appointment  
Class Web Site: <http://courses.washington.edu/judaism>  
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**Introduction:**

This class explores the question: what is Judaism? However, the course will not provide a single definitive answer—such as a specific belief, set of ritual practices, or shared texts and myths. Instead, our investigation of Judaism will illustrate the limitations of any effort to identify a single, static conception of Judaism. Judaism, this course argues, can only be understood as a dynamic religious tradition that has developed many forms (most of which no longer exist today) during a more than 3000-year history that has spanned nearly the entire globe. The goal of this course is to enable students to compare and contrast these diverse expressions, both past and present, that have called themselves “Judaism.” Students will gain the tools for this analysis by engaging with primary sources ranging from the Bible to modern Jewish philosophy, by investigating the liturgical and holiday cycles, by familiarizing themselves with Jewish history, and by discussing Jewish beliefs and practices. Particular attention will be paid to innovations introduced during the last two hundred years in Europe and the United States. No prior knowledge of Judaism is required or expected.

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to wow their friends at cocktail parties by answering the question “what is Judaism” with a nuanced and sophisticated discussion of its diverse (and sometimes contradictory) beliefs, practices, and values.

**Required Sources**

*Available at the University Bookstore*

- Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. *The Jewish Study Bible*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004 (abbreviated as JSB)
- *Essential Judaism* (abbreviated as EJ)

*Optional*

- Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People* (Short History)

**Please note:**

- All the course texts can be found on reserve in the library
- All biblical texts can be found in JSB (we will go over how to find biblical books, chapters, and verses on the first day of class)

- Please bring JSB to every lecture and section
- You will be expected to read a number of articles in addition to the works listed above. These readings will be available through the library's electronic reserves (<https://eres.lib.washington.edu/eres/courseindex.aspx?page=search>.) You should also be able to access the electronic reserves directly through a link on your My UW account. **You must bring a printed copy of the material marked in italics on the syllabus to the relevant lectures and sections.**

## Requirements

Your grades will be determined by:

- Four Essays (50%) (Due: 1/21, 2/4, 2/18, and 3/4 at 2:30pm)
- Class and Section Participation (10%)
- Pop quizzes on EJ reading (10%)
- In-Class Final Exam 3/17 at 2:30pm (30%)

The heavy emphasis on writing assignments in this course is designed to help you develop your writing and critical thinking skills. (It also means that this course qualifies as a "W" or "writing intensive" class!) During the quarter you will write four short essays (three double-spaced pages each). Your papers will be graded for content, as well as organization, clarity of expression, and style. I highly recommend taking advantage of the various writing support available to UW students before handing in your papers.

The topics for the four essays will be handed out during the course of the quarter, at least one week before they are due. If you choose, you may substitute a synagogue visit/write-up for essay #3 or #4. More information and a specific assignment will be handed out by mid-quarter.

Please adhere to the following guidelines for all written work:

- Paginate, date, staple, and double-space all work; use twelve-point font and one-inch margins
- Check for grammatical and typographical errors
- Demonstrate that you have read the relevant readings carefully by referring to specific elements in them. Please provide references to page numbers in parentheses (e.g., *Jewish Study Bible*, 123).

**Late Policy: No extensions will be granted for papers unless you provide documentation of serious extenuating circumstances. Papers will be marked down at least one-third of a point for late hand-ins.**

### *Class Participation*

Despite the large enrollment in this course, I intend to involve students in class conversations with the instructor and with one another. Toward this end, I expect you to complete the reading assignments for each class and will not spend class-time "telling" you what you were supposed to have read. I hope to take advantage of our class time to

reflect with you upon the reading and to closely analyze the assigned primary sources. I encourage you to bring any questions or comments you might have about the reading to class. **You should check the website before you start your reading to see if there are any changes or additions to the assignments listed on the syllabus. In addition, please bring assigned readings every lecture and discussion session.**

### *Section Participation*

Discussion sections will give you the opportunity to review course material (especially primary source readings) on a weekly basis. Please make sure to bring required readings for that week's lectures to each section meeting.

Jill Weinstein (jill\_weinstein@mac.com) is the TA for this course. She will be responsible for leading discussion sections, reviewing course material and grading your assignments. Please contact Jill directly if you have any questions about your grades or assignments.

### **Other Important Information**

#### *E-Mail Policy*

Please feel free to e-mail me anytime with questions, concerns, or comments about the course or other issues at npianko@u.washington.edu. I will try to respond to your messages within twenty-four hours (Monday-Friday).

#### *Office Hours*

My office hours are Thursday 2:00-3:00 pm in Thomson 218. If that is not convenient for you, please contact me by e-mail to schedule another time.

#### *Plagiarism Policy*

Plagiarism is defined as the use of creations, ideas or words of publicly available work without formally acknowledging the author or source through appropriate use of quotation marks, references, and the like. Plagiarizing is presenting someone else's work as one's own original work or thought. This constitutes plagiarism whether it is intentional or unintentional. The University of Washington takes plagiarism very seriously. Plagiarism may lead to disciplinary action by the University against the student who submitted the work. Any student who is uncertain whether his or her use of the work of others constitutes plagiarism should consult the course instructor for guidance before formally submitting the course work involved. (Sources: UW Graduate School Style Manual; UW Bothell Catalog; UW Student Conduct Code)

#### *Accommodations Statement*

If you would like to request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact Disabled Student Services, 448 Schmitz, 205-543-8924 (voice/TTY). If you have a letter from Disabled Student Services indicating you have a disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for the class.

## Syllabus

Date	Class	Reading (Due by lecture on date listed)
1/5	Introduction-What Is Judaism?	
1/7	The Hebrew Bible and Judaism's Foundational Narratives	EJ, pp. 257-299 JSB, pp.1-11; 102-106 "The Religion of the Bible" (JSB 2021-2040) Browse Maps (JSB, Maps Section) Genesis 11:26-12:9; 15:1-17:27; 21:1-21; 22:1-19; 32; Exodus 1-15 <i>Heschel, "God, Torah, and Israel" (OLR)</i>
1/12	Torah as Revelation, Law, and Teaching	EJ, pp. 303-309 The Canonization of the Bible (JSB, 2072-2077) Exodus 19:1-20:18; 32:1-35 Leviticus 11;19 Deuteronomy 4-7; 30:1-20 Isaiah 57-58 Nehemiah 9:1-37 (Renewal of the Covenant) <i>Heschel, "A Preface to an Understanding of Revelation" (OLR)</i> <i>Kaplan, "The Meaning of God" pp. 25—39 (OLR)</i>
1/14	Interpretation as Religious Practice- Rabbinic Judaism and Halachah (Jewish law)	EJ, pp. 310-359; 195-229 Classical Rabbinic Interpretation (JSB, 1844-1863) <i>Oral Torah Readings (OLR)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mishnah Avot</i></li> <li>• <i>Mishnah Bava Kamma</i></li> <li>• <i>Mekhilta of Rabi Ishmael, Mishpatim 8</i></li> </ul> <i>Babylonian Talmud, Baba Metzia 58b-59ba (OLR)</i> <i>Menahot 29b ("Talmud Readings"-OLR)</i>
1/19	No Class-Holiday	
1/21	God, Torah, and Israel in Rabbinic Aggadah	<b>Essay 1 Due</b> Midrash and Midrashic Interpretation (JSB 1863-1875) <i>Covenant and Consent (OLR)</i> <i>Mishnah Avodah Zarah 3:4 ("Talmud Readings"-OLR)</i> <i>Kiddushin 39b ("Talmud Readings"-OLR)</i> <i>Gittin 56A: ("Talmud Readings"-OLR)</i> <i>Avoda Zara 17b-18b ("Talmud Readings"-OLR)</i> <i>Heschel, "Halachah and Aggadah" (OLR)</i>
1/26	The Jewish Calendar	EJ 76-137 Re-read Exodus Story (Review Exodus 1-15) Numbers 28:1-30:1 Leviticus 23 <i>Haggadah Selections (OLR)</i> <i>Pesachim 116a ("Talmud Readings"-OLR)</i>

		<i>Shabbat Kiddush (OLR)</i> <i>Kaplan, "The Meaning of God, pp. 40-61</i>
1/27	Extra Credit Lecture	Steven Beller, "Antisemitism: An Eternal Hatred?" Parrington Hall Forum, Rm 309 @ noon
1/28	Jewish Lifecycles	EJ, 138-174, 184-193 Review Genesis 17 (Abraham's Circumcision) <i>Sheva Brachot (OLR)</i>
2/2	Understanding Jewish Prayer	EJ 1-55 The Bible in the Liturgy (JSB, 1937-1948) Sh'ma (OLR) Weekday Amidah-Traditional and Reform Versions (OLR)
2/3	Extra Credit Lecture	James Kugel, "Has Biblical Research Killed the Bible?" Kane Hall Room 120 @6pm
2/4	Jewish Prayer; Tu BiShvat Celebration	<b>Essay 2 Due</b> <i>Heschel, "The Spirit of Jewish Prayer" (OLR)</i> <i>Kaplan, "The Meaning of God, pp. 29-34 (OLR)</i>
2/9	Medieval Jewish Thought; Jewish Mysticism	EJ 360-386; 404-424 Medieval Jewish Interpretation (JSB 1876-1892) The Bible in the Jewish Philosophical Tradition (JSB, 1951-1961) <i>Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed and Introduction to the Mishnah Torah (OLR)</i>
2/11	Judaism and the Social and Intellectual Challenges of Modernity	EJ 55-65;424-453; 458-480; 505-507;516-520;534-536 "Modern Jewish Interpretation" (JSB, 1908-1919) The Bible in the Jewish Philosophical Tradition (JSB, 1963-1975) <i>Modernity 1 (OLR)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Spinoza, Theological Political Treatise</i></li> <li>• <i>Moses Mendelssohn, "Jerusalem"</i></li> </ul> <i>Modernity 2 (OLR)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Debate on the Eligibility of Jews for Citizenship</i></li> <li>• The New Israelite Temple Association</li> <li>• The Light of Splendor</li> <li>• The Hamburg Rabbinical Court</li> <li>• The Question of Messianism</li> <li>• On Changes in Judaism</li> <li>• Religion Allied to Progress</li> </ul>
2/16	No Class-Holiday	
2/18	Tradition and Change in the Modern Period	<b>Essay 3 Due</b> EJ 65-69; 397-399; 516-534 Jewish Women's Scholarly Writings on the Bible (JSB 2000-2005) Ozick, Notes Toward Finding the Right Question, (OLR) Plaskow, "The Right Question is Theological" (OLR)

		Greenberg, Blu. "Orthodox Feminism and the Next Century." ( <a href="http://www.shma.com/jan00/feminism.htm">http://www.shma.com/jan00/feminism.htm</a> ) Peruse Jewish Women's Archive ( <a href="http://www.jwa.org">www.jwa.org</a> )
2/23	Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust	EJ 489-504 Beller, Antisemitism (OLR) Holocaust Readings (OLR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Adolf Hitler, A Letter on the Jewish Question (OLR)</i></li> <li>• <i>Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz (OLR)</i></li> <li>• <i>Emmanuel Ringelblum, Last Letter from Warsaw (OLR)</i></li> </ul> I-97 Divestment Bill in Seattle (OLR) Israel Antisemitism Debate (OLR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ian Buruma, "How to Talk about Israel"</li> <li>• Judith Butler, "No, It's Not Anti-Semitic"</li> </ul> March 2008: "Contemporary Global Anti-Semitism" U.S. State Department Report to Congress" (PDF)
2/25	Zionism and Jewish Peoplehood	EJ 480-489; 528-534; 536-540 The Bible in Israeli Life (JSB, 1990-2000) Zionism Readings (OLR) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Theodor Herzl, A Solution of the Jewish Question</i></li> <li>• <i>Ahad Haam, "The First Zionist Congress"</i></li> <li>• <i>Rabbi Zakok HaChohen Rabinowitz, The Zionists are not our Saviors</i></li> <li>• <i>Isaac Breuer, "Judaism and National Home"</i></li> <li>• <i>Yeshayahu Leibowitz, "The Religious Significance of the State of Israel."</i></li> </ul> Mordecai Kaplan, Judaism as a Civilization (OLR)
3/2	Judaism in the I-Pod Era- The Transformation of Jewish Identity and Culture	David Ellenson, "Judaism Resurgent? American Jews and the Evolving Expression of Jewish Values and Jewish Identity in Modern American Life." (OLR) Cohen and Kelman, "The Continuity of Discontinuity" ( <a href="http://www.acbp.net/About/publications.php">http://www.acbp.net/About/publications.php</a> ) Cohen, "Beyond Distancing: Young Adult American Jewish and their Alienation from Israel" ( <a href="http://www.acbp.net/About/publications.php">http://www.acbp.net/About/publications.php</a> ) Uncoupled: How our Singles are Reshaping Jewish Engagement, Steven Cohen and Ari Kelman ( <a href="http://www.acbp.net/about/pdf/uncoupled.pdf">http://www.acbp.net/about/pdf/uncoupled.pdf</a> ) Slingshot: A Resource Guide to Jewish Innovation ( <a href="http://www.slingshotfund.org/">http://www.slingshotfund.org/</a> ) Web Site Review: Jewschool, Jewlicious, and Jewcy

3/4	Recovering Tradition: Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Judaism	<p><b>Essay 4 Due</b> EJ 388-391</p> <p>Saul Berman, The Ideology of Modern Orthodoxy (<a href="http://www.shma.com/feb01/berman.htm">http://www.shma.com/feb01/berman.htm</a>)</p> <p>Haym Soloveitchik, Rupture and Reconstruction: The Transformation of Contemporary Orthodoxy” (OLR)</p> <p>Menachem Friedman, “Life Tradition and Book Tradition in the Development of Ultra Orthodox Judaism.”</p> <p>Eisenberg, “Boychicks in the Hood” (OLR)</p> <p>David Berger, “The New Messianism” (OLR)</p> <p>Debra Renee Kaufman, “Four Portraits: Ba’alot Teshuvah as Finders” (OLR)</p>
3/9	Who is a Jew? The Contested Boundaries of Judaism Today	<p>Fishman, Sylvia Barack. “Double or Nothing: Jewish Families and Mixed Marriage.” (OLR)</p> <p>Liebman, Charles S. and Sylvia Barack Fishman. 2000. “Jewish Communal Policy toward Outmarried Families: The Question of Outreach.” (OLR)</p> <p>Greenwood, Dru. “Congregational Policy and Inter-marriage.” (OLR)</p>
3/11	New Jews and the Future of Judaism	<p>Wertheimer, Jack. 2005. All Quiet on the Religious Front? Jewish Unity, Denominationalism, and Postdenominationalism in the United States. (OLR)</p> <p>Greenberg, Anna. 2004. “OMG!: How Generation Y is redefining Faith in the iPod Era.” <a href="http://www.rebooters.net/poll/rebootpoll.pdf">http://www.rebooters.net/poll/rebootpoll.pdf</a>.</p> <p>Steven Cohen , et all. “Emergent Jewish Communities and Their Participants Study: Preliminary Findings from the 2007 National Spiritual Communities Study.” (<a href="http://www.jewishemergent.org/survey/">http://www.jewishemergent.org/survey/</a>)</p> <p>“Emergent Web Site List” (OLR)</p> <p>Landres, “Emerging Patterns of Interreligious Conversation” (OLR)</p>
3/17	Final Exam	Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 230-420 pm, SMI 205

**Web Sites for Reference and Fun**

<b>General Reference Sites</b>	<b>Description</b>
<a href="http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/oceanos4.html">http://faculty.washington.edu/snoegel/oceanos4.html</a>	Prof. Noegel's Map references
<a href="http://www.MyJewishlearning.com">www.MyJewishlearning.com</a>	Excellent reference for Jewish history, daily life and practice, holidays, etc
<a href="http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com">www.jewishencyclopedia.com</a>	Jewish encyclopedia
<a href="http://www.bh.org.il/Communities/index.aspx">www.bh.org.il/Communities/index.aspx</a>	On-Line museum of the Jewish people
<a href="http://www.digital-librarian.com/judaism.html">www.digital-librarian.com/judaism.html</a>	An extensive set of links related to all manners of Jewish Studies.
<a href="http://www.mechon-mamre.org">www.mechon-mamre.org</a>	Torah in Hebrew and English
<a href="http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/jewishbook.html">www.fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/jewishbook.html</a>	Internet Jewish history sourcebook
<a href="http://philo.ucdavis.edu/zope/home/bruce/RST23/chart.html">http://philo.ucdavis.edu/zope/home/bruce/RST23/chart.html</a>	Timeline of Jewish history
<a href="http://www.geocities.com/vienna/6640/zion/essential.html">www.geocities.com/vienna/6640/zion/essential.html</a>	Essential texts of Zionism
<a href="http://www.jwa.org/main.htm">www.jwa.org/main.htm</a>	Jewish Women's Archive
<a href="http://www.hillel.org">www.hillel.org</a> (click on Jewish Resource)	Center for Jewish Learning
<a href="http://www.blmj.org">www.blmj.org</a>	Bible Lands Museum
<a href="http://www.Jewishtvnetworks.com">www.Jewishtvnetworks.com</a>	
<b>Judaism Today</b>	
<a href="http://www.Jewishrock.org">www.Jewishrock.org</a>	Everything you wanted to know about Jews and Rock n' Roll
<a href="http://www.heebmagazine.com">www.heebmagazine.com</a>	A racy Jewish magazine
<a href="http://www.jdubrecords.org">www.jdubrecords.org</a>	Jewish record label
<a href="http://www.jewcy.com">www.jewcy.com</a>	A politics-and-culture webzine
<a href="http://www.jvibe.com">www.jvibe.com</a>	Virtual Jewish community
<a href="http://www.rebooters.net/rebootstereophonic">www.rebooters.net/rebootstereophonic</a>	Another Jewish record label
<a href="http://www.ikar-la.org">www.ikar-la.org</a>	A new LA Jewish community