

RS 3320: Introduction to Judaism

The University of Texas at El Paso

Semester: Spring 2020

Instructor: Chavah Schwartz

E-mail: cischwartz@utep.edu



Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer I – Gustav Klimt (1907)

“...everything has a past. Everything - a person, an object, a word, everything. If you don't know the past, you can't understand the present and plan properly for the future.”

- Chaim Potok, *Davita's Harp*

Course Description

What is Judaism? Judaism has been described as a religion, a race, a culture and a nation. What each of these descriptions offer are different representations of what Judaism is and what it can entail. How we approach these different representations can shape our understanding of Judaism and what it is. An academic approach allows us to deal with questions like, “Is Judaism a religion?”, “Is Judaism a nation?”, “Is Judaism a race?”, and “Is Judaism a culture?” This sort of investigation allows us to deal with Judaism as a unique complexity of history, religion, life and philosophy. The goal of this course is to learn about Judaism by considering the different contributions offered by the academic study of Judaism.

Required Text

Nichols de Lange & Miri Freud-Kandel. *Modern Judaism: An Oxford Guide*. Oxford University Press, 2005.
ISBN-9780199262878

Grading

Discussion Boards – 35%

Reading Reflections – 25%

Midterm – 15%

Final – 25%

Course Policies

This is a college level course and the amount of assigned work reflects that fact. *It is up to each student to maintain their responsibilities to this course.* This is a seven-week course taught entirely online. This means that we will be moving through the material at an accelerated rate and it is important that students take the time to understand all course policies and expectations.

Discussion Board Etiquette – Students are expected to always be respectful of one another. Any inappropriate or offensive behavior will not be tolerated. Should this become an issue, students will not be allowed to participate in the weekly discussion boards and will not receive credit for those missed discussions.

Late Work/Make-up Policy – Given the brevity of this course, all submission links will only remain available until 24 hours after the scheduled deadline. Work that is submitted late will only be eligible for half credit. Once a submission link is no longer available, an assignment can no longer be submitted for credit. Further arrangements for making up work beyond this will not be made.

Extra Credit – Please understand that there is no obligation to provide extra credit opportunities, so additional arrangements outside of what is outlined here will not be made. There will be exactly two opportunities for extra credit during the course: one opportunity for extra credit to count toward the midterm exam, and a second opportunity for extra credit to count toward the final exam. More information about these assignments can be found under the link “Extra Credit” on the Home Page in Blackboard.

Course Drop – It is the responsibility of students to initiate and complete any course drops. Faculty drops for this course will not be offered. For more information: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/registrar/students/registration.html>

Email:

In accordance with university policy, all email correspondence will be done **exclusively** through our UTEP email addresses. Emails sent from any other accounts will not be opened or viewed. Please allow at least a 24-hour window for response.

Blackboard:

This course is offered entirely online through Blackboard and will be used for weekly announcements, readings, grades, assignment submissions, etc. *Please plan ahead and anticipate technological issues.* If students are experiencing trouble or having any issues accessing Blackboard, do not hesitate to contact the Help Desk for troubleshooting.

Technology Support Help Desk: <http://helpdesk.utep.edu>

Phone: 915-747-HELP (4357)

Email: helpdesk@utep.edu

Location: 3rd floor of Library, Room 300

Weekly Modules – Each week a learning module will be made available under this link on the Home Page in Blackboard. Each module is scheduled to become available at midnight on Mondays and will remain available until the next module is released. The learning modules will provide brief outlines of the assigned material with an emphasis towards the weekly goals and objectives. These modules are intended to help guide reading and clarify the purpose of the assigned materials each week. Students are responsible for keeping up with all course materials and should not rely solely on the information provided on the slides to complete assignments.

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism:

“Any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts. Proven violations of the detailed regulations, as printed in the *Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)*, and available in the Office of the Dean of Students and on the

homepage of the Dean of Students at www.utep.edu/dos, may result in sanctions ranging from disciplinary probation, to a failing grade on the work in question, to a failing grade in the course, to suspension or dismissal, among others.” For more information: <http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=73922>

Graduate Student Requirements:

“Undergraduate courses approved for graduate credit require additional work, the amount and nature of which to be determined by the instructor.” For more information: <http://catalog.utep.edu/grad/the-graduate-school/general-degree-requirements/>

Disability Accommodations:

“UTEP seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities. This university will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required affording equal educational opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with The Center for Accommodations and Support Services within the first two weeks of classes, and inform the faculty member to arrange for appropriate accommodations.”

The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS): <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>

Location: Union Building East Room 106

Phone: (915) 747-5148

Email: cass@utep.edu

Class Assignments & Requirements

Discussion Boards:

Students will be responsible for participating in seven discussion boards worth a total 35% of the final grade. Discussion boards will become available each week after 11:59 p.m. MST on Sundays and must be completed before the scheduled deadline. Each discussion board will detail the necessary requirements for full credit. The purpose of this assignment is to see that students are keeping up with the assigned readings and can substantially contribute to an academic discussion about the material. Late submissions will only be eligible for half-credit and will not be accepted beyond the scheduled availability.

Reading Reflections:

Students will be responsible for submitting a reading reflection on weeks 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 which will be worth a total 25% of the final grade. The submission link will be made available in each weekly module and must be submitted before the scheduled deadline. The purpose of this assignment is to see that students understand the material so that they can expand on the ideas presented and reflect on how they contribute to the study of Judaism. Late submissions will only be eligible for half-credit and will not be accepted beyond the scheduled availability. Further instructions and an example have been provided under the link “Course Materials” on the Home Page in Blackboard.

Midterm Exam:

Students will be responsible for completing a midterm exam on **Friday, February 14th, 2020** which will comprise 15% of the final grade. The midterm exam will cover material from weeks 2 – 3 and consist of 20 multiple choice questions. The exam will become available in the weekly module on Blackboard at midnight and must be completed by 11:59 p.m. MST. Any exams submitted late will only be eligible for half-credit. Exams will not be accepted beyond the scheduled availability.

Final Exam:

Students will be responsible for completing a final exam on **Friday, March 6th, 2020** which will comprise 25% of the final grade. The final exam will cover material from weeks 2, 3, 5, 6 and consist of 40 multiple choice questions. The exam will become available in the weekly module on Blackboard at midnight and must be completed by 11:59 p.m. MST. Any exams submitted late will only be eligible for half-credit. Exams will not be accepted beyond the scheduled availability.

****Failure to complete any of the requirements will severely affect your grade for the course.***

Grading Scale:

A: 90-100%

B: 80-89%

C: 70-79%

D: 60-69%

F: 59% and below

SCHEDULE:

	READING(S)	ASSIGNMENT(S)
	*Key: (MJ) – Modern Judaism (BB) – Blackboard	*All deadlines are at 11:59 p.m. MST, unless stated otherwise.
WEEK 1: 1/21 – 1/24	<u>What Is Judaism?:</u> <i>Demographic Issues</i> – Rebhun (MJ) <i>Social Issues: Survey</i> – Goldberg (MJ) <i>Judaism in the History of Religions</i> – Neusner (BB) <i>Jewish Studies Is Too Jewish</i> – Hughes (BB) <i>Too Jewish Studies (Response to Hughes)</i> – Braiterman (BB)	Discussion Board 1 – DUE 1/23 Reading Reflection 1 – DUE 1/24
WEEK 2: 1/27 – 1/31	<u>Is Judaism a Religion?:</u> <i>Prayer and Worship</i> – Langer (MJ) <i>The Authority of Texts</i> – de Lange (MJ) <i>The Future of Jewish Practice</i> – Wanderer (MJ) <i>American Jewry</i> – Waxman (MJ) <i>Israeli Jewry</i> – Kaplan (MJ)	Discussion Board 2 – DUE 1/29 Reading Reflection 2 – DUE 1/31
WEEK 3: 2/3 – 2/7	<u>Is Judaism a Nation?:</u> <i>Modernist Movements</i> – Freud-Kandel (MJ) <i>Traditionalist Strands</i> – Don-Yehiya (MJ) <i>A National Home</i> – Ottolenghi (MJ) <i>Post-Zionism</i> – Ottolenghi (MJ) <i>Jewish Identities</i> – Kopelowitz (MJ)	Discussion Board 3 – DUE 2/5 Reading Reflection 3 – DUE 2/7
WEEK 4: 2/10 – 2/14	Review for MIDTERM EXAM	Discussion Board 4 – DUE 2/12 MIDTERM EXAM – 2/14
WEEK 5: 2/17 – 2/21	<u>Is Judaism a Race?:</u> <i>Emancipation and Enlightenment</i> – Dubin (MJ) <i>Persecution</i> – van Pelt (MJ) <i>Covenant</i> – Ochs (MJ) <i>The Problems of Evil</i> – Rynhold (MJ)	Discussion Board 5 – DUE 2/19 Reading Reflection 4 – DUE 2/21
WEEK 6: 2/24 – 2/28	<u>Is Judaism a Culture?:</u> <i>Halakhic Issues: Survey</i> – Cohen (MJ) <i>Contemporary Issues in Halakhab</i> – Resnicoff (MJ) <i>Jewish Ethics in a Modern World</i> – Zank (MJ) <i>The Changing Role of the Woman</i> – Baskin (MJ)	Discussion Board 6 – DUE 2/26 Reading Reflection 5 – DUE 2/28
WEEK 7: 3/2 – 3/6	Review for FINAL EXAM	Discussion Board 7 – 3/4 FINAL EXAM – 3/6