

Three Answers to the Jewish Question

SOC387H1-S/CJS391H1-S

Course website: <https://q.utoronto.ca>

Wednesday, 10:10 am–12 pm

Winter 2021

Instructor

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office hours (via Zoom): by appointment

Prerequisites

- For students wanting a Sociology credit: 1.0 sociology credits at the 200 level or higher.
- For students wanting a Jewish Studies credit: 5.0 university courses, at least 2.0 of them in the humanities or social sciences.

Course Format

This course will be delivered entirely online. All elements will be synchronous. Lectures will be delivered on Wednesdays between 10:10 am and noon. There will be a five- to ten-minute break between the first and second half of each lecture. You will be expected to leave your web camera and microphone on during class to facilitate discussion. Before each lecture, a document summarizing the lecture, including text, images, tables and graphs will be circulated. Please print the document before the lecture and have it available during the lecture. You will be able to meet with Professor Brym by [making an appointment via email](#). Tests will be administered at the beginning of class on the dates indicated [below](#). Each test will take about an hour and will consist mainly of multiple-choice questions. Some questions requiring paragraph-long answers may also be included. Tests will be proctored. Lecture, tests and meetings with the instructor will take place via Zoom. Students with little or no background in Jewish history should read the first item in the reading list [below](#) (#0) immediately below before the start of classes.

Technical Requirements

You will need a computer equipped with a web camera, microphone and fast Internet connection for this course. To see if your remote setup meets requirements, click [here](#). If your remote setup does not meet requirements, solutions are offered on the web page just cited.

You will need to access PowerPoint (.ppt), Word (.doc, .docx), Acrobat (.pdf), .mp4, Kindle and Kobo files for this course. You will also need the Zoom client. If you do not have appropriate apps, here are some free options:

- Download the Zoom client [here](#).
- For .mp4 files, install [VLC](#) or [Quick Time](#). Movies will be available for download in .mp4 format from the **Files**→**movies** folder on the course's Quercus site.

- For .docx files, install [Google Docs](#) or [Apple Pages](#). Documents will be available in .docx format.
- For .ppt files, install [PowerPoint Viewer](#). Slides displayed during lectures will be available for download in .ppt format in the **Files→slides** folder of the course's Quercus site.
- For .pdf files, install [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#). Some required readings will be available for download in .pdf format in the **Files→readings** folder of the course's Quercus site.
- To download the Kindle app, click [here](#). Some required readings will be available in Kindle format.
- To download the Kobo app, click [here](#). Some required readings will be available in Kobo format.

Overview

One must refuse everything to the Jews as a nation and grant the Jews everything as individuals.... Individually, they must be citizens.

—Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre, French National Assembly, debate on the eligibility of Jews for citizenship (1789)

Let us not look for the secret of the Jew in his religion.... An organization of society that would abolish the prerequisites of haggling...would make the [existence of the] Jew impossible.

—Karl Marx, *On the Jewish Question* (1844)

A corner of Palestine, a "canton," how can we promise to be satisfied with it? We cannot. We never can. Should we swear to you we would be satisfied, it would be a lie.

—Vladimir Jabotinsky, Evidence Submitted to the Palestine Royal Commission (1937)

דער מענטש טראַכט און גאַט לאַכט. People plan and God laughs.

—Yiddish folk saying

The Jewish Question asks how Jews ought to adapt to the modern world. Seeking answers, Jews formulated competing ideologies and joined social and political movements that, they believed, would help them realize their dreams. This course examines the origins, development, implementation, successes and failures of the three main secular solutions Jews advocated: liberalism, communism and Zionism.

- *Liberalism* promoted the integration of Jews into democratic, capitalist societies with the same civil and political rights as non-Jews.
- *Communism* invited Jews to fight for the creation of a classless society in which, as Marx put it, each person would contribute "according to his ability" and receive "according to his needs."
- *Zionism* advocated the founding of a sovereign state in the Jews' ancient homeland.

The liberal, Zionist and communist dreams succeeded in some respects to live up to the expectations of their advocates. However, like most human endeavors, they failed in other respects, sometimes tragically. It is unlikely that this course will generate compelling answers to the Jewish Question for the 21st century. However, it may raise issues that prompt you to inquire further as you seek your own meaningful values and courses of action.

Evaluation

Item	Value	Due Date
In-class participation*	20 percent	weekly
Multiple-choice test #1	25 percent	3 Feb
Multiple-choice test #2	30 percent	10 Mar
Multiple-choice test #3	25 percent	7 Apr
OPTIONAL essay in place of test #3**	25 percent	7 Apr
*Students earn participation marks by asking and answering questions in class and, optionally, volunteering to summarize and discuss readings and movies in class. **Professor Brym will suggest topics. Students may also suggest topics but they must be approved by Professor Brym.		

Readings

Students with little or no background in Jewish history should read the first item (#0) in the list immediately below *before the start of classes*. The remaining items (#1 to #15) are required readings for all students.

Books that should be acquired before the course begins

#0 David Myers. 2017. *Jewish History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press. Click [here](#) for a free online version of this book, available through the University of Toronto library system. The book can also be purchased for \$7.19 as a [Kobo edition](#) or a [Kindle edition](#).

#1 Zvi Gitelman. 2001 [1988]. *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present*, 2nd ed. Bloomington IN: Indiana University Press. This book can be purchased for \$9.99 as a [Kindle edition](#).

#2 Milton Viorst. 2016. *Zionism: The Birth and Transformation of an Ideal*. New York: Thomas Dunne. This book is available for \$8.99 as a [Kobo edition](#).

Items available free on the course Quercus site (**Files**→ **readings**)

#3 Jacob Katz. 1971 [1958]. "The economic basis of the Jewish community." Pp. 43-63 in *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*. New York: Schocken.

#4 Robert Brym. 2018. "The political economy of the Jewish Question (1096-1900)." Unpublished manuscript.

#5 Louis Greenberg. 1944. "The West-European background of *Haskalah*" and "The first attempt at emancipation." Pp. 12-28 in *The Jews in Russia: The Struggle for Emancipation*. New Haven CT: Yale University Press.

#6 Pauline Wengeroff. 1967 [1908-10]. "Memoirs of a grandmother." Pp. 160-8 in Lucy Dawidowicz, ed. *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe*. Boston: Beacon.

#7 Pavel Borisovich Axelrod. 1967 [1924]. "Socialist Jews confront the pogroms." Pp. 405-10 in Lucy Dawidowicz, ed. *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe*. Boston: Beacon.

#8 Robert Brym. 1988. "Structural location and ideological divergence: Jewish Marxist intellectuals in turn-of-the-century Russia." Pp. 359-79 in Barry Wellman and Stephen Berkowitz, eds. *Social Structures: A Network Approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

#9 Lucy Dawidowicz. 1975. Pp. 201-23, 463-79, 544 in *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*. New York: Bantam.

#10 Ari Shavit. 2013. Pp. 99-132 in *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

#11 Robert Brym. 2018. "Explaining suicide bombers." Pp. 33-51 in Robert Brym, *Sociology as a Life or Death Issue*, 4th Canadian ed. Toronto: Nelson.

#12 Nir Gazit and Robert Brym. 2011. "State-directed political assassination in Israel: a political hypothesis." *International Sociology* 26(6): 862-77.

#13 Zvi Gitelman. 1998. "The decline of the diaspora Jewish nation: boundaries, content, and Jewish identity." *Jewish Social Studies* 4(2): 112-32.

#14 Robert Brym, Anna Slavina and Rhonda Lenton. 2020. "Qualifying the leading theory of diaspora Jewry: an examination of Jews from the former Soviet Union in Canada and the United States." *Contemporary Jewry* 40(3): 367-85.

#15 Robert Brym and Rhonda Lenton. 2020. "Jewish religious intermarriage in Canada." *Canadian Jewish Studies* 30(2): 67-82.

Movies

Assigned movies will be available on the course Quercus site (**Files-->movies**) two or three weeks before they are due to be viewed. Viewer discretion is advised.

- *Jew Süss* (1940; Germany; 1:35). Süss was a real historical figure. He served as financial advisor to the Duke of the German state of Württemberg in the early 1700s. When the Duke died, Süss's enemies accused him of fraud, embezzlement, treason, lecherous relations with court ladies, accepting bribes and trying to re-establish Catholicism in the Protestant state. After a trial in which no proof of guilt was produced, Süss was found guilty. Given a chance to convert to Christianity, he refused and was hanged.
Two centuries later, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi Minister of Propaganda, backed a reinterpretation of the story of Süss that became the most notorious antisemitic film ever produced. A box office sensation across Germany, it became a staple of propaganda evenings organized by Hitler Youth, the SS and other Nazi organizations. The film depicts Süss as a figure of cynical cunning and malign will, a sexual predator sowing corruption everywhere whose promotion of Jewish emancipation brings Württemberg to the brink of moral and social ruin.
- *Paradise Now* (2005; Palestine and Israel; 1:31). This film won 13 film awards, including a Golden Globe Award for best foreign film, and was nominated for an Oscar for best foreign film. It portrays two Palestinian friends from the West Bank who are recruited for a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv during the second *intifada* (2000-05). However, things go wrong, and the attackers follow separate paths.
- *The Gatekeepers* (2012; Israel; 1:41). This documentary film won seven film awards including the Award of the Israeli Film Academy for best documentary. It was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary. The three principals are all former heads of Israel's internal security service, *ha-sherut ha-bitakhon halkali* (more widely known as *shabak* or *shin bet*). They provide compelling arguments about how best to solve the Palestinian question that are at odds with current government policy.
- *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1974; Canada; 1:55) is based on Mordecai Richler's 1959 novel of the same name. The film won four film awards, including the Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Film, and was nominated for an Oscar for best adapted screenplay. Benjy (played by Richard Dreyfus) is a young Jew in 1940s Montreal whose father drives a taxi. While his rich uncle is putting Benjy's brother through McGill medical school, Benjy must use his guile and street smarts to make it

big. Along the way, he betrays a friend and loses his *Québécoise* girlfriend and much of traditional value.

Weekly calendar of topics, readings and films

Numbers preceded by a # correspond to the items listed [above](#). Page numbers are in parentheses. The amount of required reading varies from week to week. Please plan accordingly. Films will be made available online and viewed the week before they are discussed in class.

Date	Topic	Readings	Film
Before start	The course of Jewish history	#0	
13 Jan	The Jews in medieval & early modern Europe: 1096-1900	#3 #4	
20 Jan	The Haskalah: 1750-1880	#5 #6	
27 Jan	Zionism: 1881-1914	#1(1-58);#2(1-182)	
3 Feb	TEST		
10 Feb	Marxism: 1848-1905	#1(59-114) #7 #8	
17 Feb	READING WEEK	#1(115-43) #9	<i>Jew Süss</i>
24 Feb	The holocaust: 1933-45		
3 Mar	The Jews under communism: 1917-91	#1(144-95)	
10 Mar	TEST		<i>Paradise Now</i>
17 Mar	The Palestinian question: 1947-67	#10 #11 #12	<i>The Gatekeepers</i>
24 Mar	Nationalism vs democracy in Israel: 1967-2019	#2(185-284)	<i>Duddy Kravitz</i>
31 Mar	Democracy: Russia and North America	#1(212-74) #13 #14 #15	
7 Apr	TEST or OPTIONAL ESSAY DUE		

Plagiarism

Cheating and misrepresentation will not be tolerated. If you commit an academic offence, you will face serious penalties. Avoid plagiarism by citing properly. Practices acceptable in high school may be unacceptable in university. Know where you stand by reading the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#).

Attendance

Attendance at all classes is required. If you cannot attend a class due to illness or family emergency, please obtain lecture notes from a classmate.

Deadline

The optional essay is due by noon on 31 March. If you submit the essay late for medical reasons, a doctor's note is not required. However, on 31 March you must [email Professor Brym](#) and declare your absence on ACORN. If you submit late because of a family emergency, you must notify your college registrar on 31 March and have the registrar e-mail me. If these conditions are not met, the penalty for late submission will be 2 percent per day.

Accessibility

If you require accommodation or have any accessibility concerns, please [register with accessibility services](#) right away. If you require extra time to write tests, you must also [inform the Accommodated Testing Service](#) AT LEAST TWO WEEKS BEFORE EACH TEST.

If you miss an assessment

If you miss an assessment due to illness or injury, you must immediately [email Professor Brym](#) and declare your absence on ACORN. If you miss an assessment due to a family emergency or other personal reason, you must immediately contact your College Registrar, who will inform Professor Brym. If for any reason you miss an assessment, the value of the missed assessment will be distributed as follows:

Assessment	Original distribution	If test 1 missed	If test 2 missed	If test 3 missed
Class participation	20	25	25	30
Test 1	25	missed	35	35
Test 2	30	40	missed	35
Test 3	25	35	40	missed
Total	100	100	100	100

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree you earn will be valued as a true indication of your academic achievement and will continue to receive the respect and recognition it deserves.

Familiarize yourself with the University of Toronto's [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). It is the rule book for academic behaviour at U of T. You are expected to know the rules. Potential offences include, but are not limited to, the following:

Papers and assignments

- using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement;
- copying material (including lecture and study group notes) word-for-word from a source and not placing the words in quotation marks;
- submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the Professors in both courses;
- making up sources or facts;
- including references to sources you did not use;
- lending your work to a classmate who submits it as his/her own without your permission and without written acknowledgment to you on his/her submission;
- obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment including working in groups on assignments that are supposed to be individual work and having someone rewrite or add material to your work while "editing."

On tests and exams

- using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone;
- looking at someone else's answers;
- letting someone else look at your answers;
- misrepresenting your identity;
- submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation

- falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including doctor's notes;
- falsifying institutional documents or grades.

To remind you of these expectations and help you avoid accidental offences, you are required to include a signed *Academic Integrity Checklist* with your optional essay. You will find a copy of the *Academic Integrity Checklist* on the next page. If you do not include a completed *Academic Integrity Checklist* with your optional essay, your work will not be graded.

The University of Toronto treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously. All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated following the procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). The consequences for academic misconduct can be severe, including a failure in the course and a notation on your transcript. If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in this course, please contact Professor Brym. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek additional information from Professor Brym or from other available campus resources such as the [U of T Writing Website](#). If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to Professor Brym or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Academic Integrity Checklist

SOC387/CJS391

Professor Robert Brym

I affirm that this assignment represents entirely my own efforts. I confirm that:

- I have acknowledged the use of another's ideas with accurate.
- If I used the words of another author, instructor or information source, I have acknowledged this with quotation marks or appropriate indentation and proper citation.
- When paraphrasing the work of others, I put the idea into my own words and did not just change a few words or rearrange the sentence structure.
- I have checked my work against my notes to be sure I have correctly referenced all direct quotes and borrowed ideas.
- My bibliography includes only the sources used to complete this essay.
- This is the first time I have submitted this assignment (in whole or in part) for credit.
- Any proofreading by another person was limited to indicating areas of concern which I then corrected myself.
- This is the final version of my assignment and not a draft.
- I have kept my work to myself and did not share answers/content with others, unless otherwise directed by my instructor.
- I understand the consequences of violating the University's academic integrity policies as outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#).

By signing this form I agree that the statements above are true.

If I do not agree with the statements above, I will not submit my assignment and will consult the course instructor immediately.

Student name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____