

THREE ANSWERS TO THE JEWISH QUESTION
SOC387H1/CJS390H1
COURSE WEBSITE: <https://q.utoronto.ca>
WEDNESDAY, 10 AM–12 PM
WINTER 2019
9 JANUARY–3 APRIL 2019
SS2105 – SIDNEY SMITH HALL, 100 ST. GEORGE STREET

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Professor

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Prerequisites

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

This course outline is available in PDF format through University of Toronto's Quercus at <https://q.utoronto.ca>

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)

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 they seek your own meaningful values and courses of action.

Evaluation

| Item | Value | Date |
|--|------------|-----------------------|
| Participation in class discussions | 15 percent | weekly |
| Mid-term, in-class, multiple-choice test | 35 percent | 6 Feb |
| Final exam or essay (your choice) | 50 percent | essay 3 Apr; exam TBA |

Required readings

Books available for purchase at the U of T Textbook Store

- #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.
- #2 Milton Viorst (2017) *Zionism: The Birth and Transformation of an Ideal*. New York: Thomas Dunne.

Articles and chapters available free of charge on the course website (via the U of T portal)

- #3 Edna Bonacich (1973) "A theory of middleman minorities." *American Sociological Review* 38(5): 583-94.
- #4 Jacob Katz (1971 [1958]) *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*. New York: Schocken, pp. 43-63.
- #5 Michael Meyer (1967) *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824*. Detroit: Wayne University Press, pp. 11-56.
- #6 Pauline Wengeroff (1967 [1908-10]). "Memoirs of a grandmother." In Lucy Dawidowicz, ed. *The Golden Tradition: Jewish Life and Thought in Eastern Europe*. Boston: Beacon, pp. 160-8.
- #7 Robert Brym (1988) "Structural location and ideological divergence: Jewish Marxist intellectuals in turn-of-the-century Russia." In Barry Wellman and Stephen Berkowitz, eds. *Social Structures: A Network Approach*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 359-79.
- #8 Lucy Dawidowicz (1975) *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*. New York: Bantam, pp. 201-23, 463-79, 544.
- #9 Ari Shavit (2013) *My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Israel*. New York: Spiegel & Grau, pp. 99-132.
- #10 Robert Brym (2018) "Explaining suicide bombers." In Robert Brym, *Sociology as a Life or Death Issue*, 4th Canadian ed. Toronto: Nelson, pp. 33-51.
- #11 Nir Gazit and Robert Brym (2011) "State-directed political assassination in Israel: a political hypothesis." *International Sociology* 26(6), pp. 862-77.
- #12 Zvi Gitelman (1998) "The decline of the diaspora Jewish nation: boundaries, content, and Jewish identity." *Jewish Social Studies* 4(2), pp. 112-32.

Online material available free of charge

- #13 Robert Brym, Keith Neuman, and Rhonda Lenton (2018) *The Canadian Jewish Community: A Survey*. Toronto: Environics Institute. URL TBA.

Movies

The movies listed below deal with inhuman cruelty and deep moral and political quandaries. In other words, they mirror life. Accordingly, viewer discretion is advised.

- *The Quarrel* (1991; Canada; 1:55), screenplay by David Brandes, directed by Eli Cohen, starring Saul Rubinek and R.H. Thomson, based on Chaim Grade's Yiddish short story, "My Quarrel with Hersh Rasseynar" (1950). Grade (pronounced GRAD-eh) was a secularized Yiddish writer educated in a European *yeshiva*. He is viewed by some scholars as fourth in the line of classical Yiddish writers (preceded by Mendele Mocher Sforim, Sholom Aleichem and Y. L. Peretz). The film, set in a Montreal park, records a heated philosophical dialogue between childhood friends—one devout, the other an atheist—about the meaning and lessons of the Holocaust.
- *Daniel* (1983; United States; 2:10), screenplay by E.L. Doctorow, directed by Sidney Lumet, starring Timothy Hutton and Mandy Patinkin, based on Doctorow's *The Book of Daniel* (1971). This film is based on the life story of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, American communists who were convicted as spies and executed by the United States government in 1953 for handing nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union. It follows the Rosenbergs' adult son as he attempts to find out more about his parents, who were put to death while he and his sister were children.
- *Paradise Now* (2005; Palestine and Israel; 1:31), screenplay by Hany Abu-Assad and Bero Beyer, starring Kais Nashif and Ali Suliman. This film won 13 film awards, including a Golden Globe Award for best foreign film, and was nominated for an Oscar. It portrays two Palestinian friends who are recruited for a suicide bombing in Tel Aviv during the second *intifada*. However, things go wrong and the attackers follow separate paths.
- *The Gatekeepers* (2012; Israel; 1:41), documentary, directed by Dror Moreh, starring Ami Ayalon, Avraham Shalom and Avi Dichter. This film won 7 film awards including the Award of the Israeli Film Academy for best documentary, and it was nominated for an Oscar for best documentary. The three principals, all former heads of the *Shin Bet*, provide compelling arguments about how best to solve the Palestinian question.
- *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* (1974; Canada; 1:55), screenplay by Mordecai Richler, directed by Ted Kotcheff, starring Richard Dreyfus, based on Richler's book of the same name (1959). This film won 4 film awards and was nominated for an Oscar. Benjy 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 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 will be discussed in the class following viewing.

| Date | Topic | Readings | Film |
|----------|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| 9 Jan | The Jews in Pre-modern Europe: 1095-1748 | #3; #4 | |
| 16 Jan | The Haskalah: 1749-1881 | #5; #6 | |
| 23 Jan | Zionism: 1881-1948 | #1(1-58); #2(1-182) | |
| 30 Jan | The Marxist Challenge: 1848-1939 | #1(59-114); #7 | |
| 6 Feb | MID-TERM | | <i>Quarrel</i> |
| 13 Feb | The Holocaust I: 1939-45 | #1(115-43); #8 | |
| 20 Feb | READING WEEK | | |
| 27 Feb | The Rise & Decline of Ashkenazic Culture: 1000-1945 | In-class handout | <i>Daniel</i> |
| 6 Mar | The Jews under Communism: 1945-91 | #1(144-95) | <i>Paradise Now</i> |
| 13 Mar | The Palestinian Question: 1881-2018 | #9; #10; #11 | <i>Gatekeepers</i> |
| 20 Mar | Nationalism & Democracy in Israel: 1881-2018 | #2(185-284) | <i>Duddy Kravitz</i> |
| 27 Mar | The Jews and Liberal Democracy I: 1881-2018 | #1(212-74); #12 | |
| 3 Apr | The Jews and Liberal Democracy II: 1881-2018 | #13 | |
| 3 Apr | ESSAY DUE | | |
| 6-30 Apr | FINAL EXAM | | |

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* at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/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, obtain lecture notes from a classmate.

Essay submission

You cannot submit the essay by fax or email, nor can you hand in the essay to the receptionist at the Department of Sociology or the Centre for Jewish Studies. You must submit the essay to the Professor in person on the due date.

Deadline

The essay is due at the start of class on 3 April. Late work will not be accepted without proper documentation from your physician or college registrar (see "Documentation from physician or college registrar," below).

Accessibility

If you require accommodation or have any accessibility concerns, please visit <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility> as soon as possible.

Make-up test

If you miss the test you will receive a mark of zero unless, within three days of the test date, you give the TA a written request for special consideration that explains why the test was missed. Proper documentation from a physician or college registrar must accompany the request (see “Documentation from physician or college registrar,” below). The request should include your telephone number and email address so that the date, time and place of the make-up test can be communicated to you. If you miss the test and the subsequent make-up test you will not have a third opportunity to take the test. Instead, the grade assigned for the missed test will be the same as the combined grade you earn on the other methods of evaluation in the course (see “Evaluations,” above).

Documentation from physician or college registrar

If you miss the test or the essay deadline, do not contact the Professor or TA unless you have followed one of the procedures listed immediately below. Telling the Professor or the TA why you missed the test or the essay deadline is insufficient for receiving a new submission deadline or permission to write a make-up test.

In case of illness, complete a *Verification of Student Illness or Injury* form (available at www.illnessverification.utoronto.ca) or provide a doctor’s note that specifies the start and end date of the medical problem. The form or the note must be placed in a sealed envelope which is addressed to the Professor and submitted to the TA before class or during the TA’s office hours.

If a personal or family crisis prevents you writing the test or meeting the essay deadline, obtain a letter from your college registrar explaining the circumstances. Place the letter in a sealed envelope addressed to the Professor and submit it to the TA before class or during the TA’s office hours.

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* (<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>). 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 essay. You will find a copy of the *Academic Integrity Checklist* on the last page of this course outline. If you do not include a completed *Academic Integrity Checklist* with your 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*. 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 the Professor. If you have questions about appropriate research and citation methods, seek additional information from the Professor or from other available campus resources such as the *U of T Writing Website* at <http://writing.utoronto.ca/>. If you are experiencing personal challenges that are having an impact on your academic work, please speak to the Professor or seek the advice of your college registrar.

Academic Integrity Checklist

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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 citations.
- If I used the words of another (e.g., author, instructor, 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 or borrowed ideas.
- My bibliography includes only the sources used to complete this assignment.
- This is the first time I have submitted this assignment (in whole or in part) for credit.
- Any proofreading by another 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: _____