REL 220/2 A:  
INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND RELIGION OF THE JEWS

Time: Wednesday and Friday, 1015-1130  
Location: H 407 SGW  
Professor: Ira Robinson  
Office: R (2050 McKay St.), room 303  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 1300-1400  
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Course Website: Moodle: accessed through your “My Concordia”

Course Description:  
This course will examine the history of Jews and of Judaism from ancient times until the present. It will emphasize the continuities, changes and interrelationships with respect to Jewish social, religious and intellectual life through the ages. It will also carefully examine the varieties of belief and practice in contemporary Jewish life.

Course Requirements:  

1. Students will write a take-home mid-term assignment and a final take-home assignment. The mid-term and will be worth 20% of the final grade and the final take-home assignment will be worth 40% of the final grade.

2. Along with each reading assignment there will be a question assigned. Students are required to submit a 1 page (typewritten) response to any ten assignments during the course of the term. Responses for any question will be accepted for full credit only on the day it is due at the end of class unless accompanied by a reasonable excuse. Responses received after the due date, or non-hard copy responses (e.g. email attachments) without a reasonable excuse will be penalized one point if the response is up to one week late, and two points if it is more than a week late. If you choose to submit more than ten responses, your grade will be determined on the basis of your best ten responses. Each response will be worth 4% of the final grade for a maximum of 40%.
**Grading Standards**

A Superior grasp of the material; explanations clear and well-written; presentation of original insights going beyond class discussion.

B Good grasp of the material; clear and orderly presentation; demonstration of ability to utilise concepts learned.

C Adequate grasp of the material; reasonably clear presentation.

D Clearly inadequate grasp of the material; unclear presentation.

F Assignments not presented.

**Learning Objectives:**

The learning objectives of this course include competency in the area of Judaism, improved ability to synthesize information, and improved writing ability.

**Plagiarism:**

The most common offence under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism that the Code defines as "the presentation of the work of another person as one's own or without proper acknowledgement."

This could be material copied word for word from books, journals, internet sites, professor's course notes, etc. It could be material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It could be the work of a fellow student, for example, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased through one of the many available sources. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone - it can also refer to copying images, graphs, tables, and ideas. "Presentation" is not limited to written work. It also includes oral presentations, computer assignments and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into French or English and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism.

**In Simple Words:**

**DO NOT COPY, PARAPHRASE OR TRANSLATE ANYTHING FROM ANYWHERE WITHOUT SAYING FROM WHERE YOU OBTAINED IT!**
SOME UNIVERSITY SERVICES:

• Concordia Counselling and Development offers career services, psychological services, student learning services, etc. http://cdev.concordia.ca/

• The Concordia Library Citation and Style Guides: http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations.html

• Advocacy and Support Services http://supportservices.concordia.ca/
• Student Transition Centre http://stc.concordia.ca/
• New Student Program http://newstudent.concordia.ca/
• Access Centre for Students with Disabilities http://supportservices.concordia.ca/disabilities/
• Student Success Centre http://studentsuccess.concordia.ca/
• The Academic Integrity Website http://provost.concordia.ca/academicintegrity/
• Financial Aid & Awards http://web2.concordia.ca/financialaid/
• Health Services http://www-health.concordia.ca/

Student Advising:
Students who have questions concerning their programme of study or need assistance relating to academic difficulties can contact the Department either by phone (848-2424, ext. 2065) or email religion@alcor.concordia.ca and make an appointment to meet with an undergraduate advisor.

Undergraduate Listserve:
Religion students and students taking one or more Religion courses have the option of being added to the Religion Undergraduate Listserve. This listserve helps to keep students informed of upcoming events, guest speakers and academic deadlines.

Department Web Page:
Visit the Department’s webpage and find information on the various courses offered, course outlines, faculty research interests, guest lectures and conferences, information on our graduate programmes plus much more: http://www.concordia.ca/artsci/religion.html

CONCORDIA RELIGION STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (CRSA):
If you are studying within the Department of Religion (i.e. if you are an Honours, Major, Minor or just taking a course offered by the department), you are a member of the CRSA. CRSA is a student-administered organization dedicated to fostering community and expanding the educational experience of all Religion students. Each year the executive branch of CRSA (five students elected to plan and administer CRSA affairs) offers Religion students the chance to meet each other and faculty at various social gatherings, as well as the opportunity to enliven their education by attending CRSA sponsored lectures given by learned academics and religious thinkers from all parts of the world. CRSA members are urged to take advantage of the student lounge located in the basement of annex R (2050 Mackay). This is a place where students can study, hang out or use the free phone. If you would like more information about CRSA, leave a message in our mailbox at the Department of Religion. The website is: www.crsaconcordia.weebly.com

Texts:


All other required readings will be made available in a course pack, available at the Concordia University Bookstore.

Recommended Website:

For more background information, students are urged to go to the following website: www.myjewishlearning.com

There are many other websites relating to the study of Judaism. Students are urged to consult with the instructor and the TA concerning the appropriateness of individual websites.

Course Syllabus:

September 7: Introduction to Course; Who is a Jew?  
No required reading  

September 9: Hebrew Bible: Torah as Story  
Reading:  
Hebrew Bible: Exodus, chapters 1-15  
Brenner, pp. 1-17.
September 14: Hebrew Bible: Torah as Constitution
Reading:
Hebrew Bible: Exodus, chapters 19-23

September 16: Ancient Judaism: Temple and Community; Challenge of Hellenistic Civilization
Reading:

September 21: Ancient Judaism: Varieties of Judaic Belief
Reading:
Josephus, Jewish Antiquities 18; Jewish War 2 (Cambridge, MA, Loeb Classical Library, 1969)

September 23: Rabbinic Judaism: Torah as Constitution
Reading:

September 28: Rabbinic Judaism: Torah as Story
Reading:

September 30: Medieval Judaism: Polemic with Christianity
Presentation of the video "The Disputation"
Reading:

October 5: Medieval Judaism: Between Islam and Christianity
Reading:
Brenner, pp. 69-81, 95-115.
October 7: Medieval Judaism: Encounter With Philosophy

**Reading:**

October 12: No Class--Yom Kippur

October 14: Medieval Judaism: Mysticism

**Reading:**

October 19: Early Modern Judaism: Women

**Reading:**

October 21: Early-Modern Judaism: Messianism and Hasidism

**Reading:**
Brenner, pp. 137-165.

October 26: Early Modern Judaism: Spinoza, Revolution, and Emancipation

**Reading:**
Brenner, pp. 167-207.

October 28: Modern Judaism: Religious Responses to Emancipation

**Reading:**
November 2: Modern Judaism: Secular Responses to Emancipation
Reading:
Brenner, pp. 273-306

November 4: Modern Judaism: Anti-Semitism
Reading:
Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf tr. Ralph Manheim (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1971), pp. 300-329

November 9: Modern Judaism: Holocaust
Reading:
Abraham Sutzkever, "Never Say This is the Last Road", in Leo W. Schwarz, ed. The Root and the Bough: the Epic of an Enduring People (New York, Rinehart, 1949), pp. 66-92, 155-163.
Brenner, pp. 319-347.

November 11: Modern Judaism: Zionism
Reading:

November 16: Contemporary Judaism: Israel
Reading:

November 18: Contemporary Judaism: Diasporas
Reading:
November 23: Contemporary Judaism: The Judaic Calendar and Lifecycle  
**Reading:**  

November 25: Contemporary Judaism: Jewish Religious Movements  
**Reading:**  

November 30: Contemporary Judaism: Women and Judaism  
**Reading:**  

December 2: The Jewish Situation Today; Conclusions  
**Reading:**  