

## **Antisemitism: Its History and Politics**

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### **Course Description:**

This course explores the history and politics of antisemitism. We begin with “traditional” Jew-hatred in the Middle Ages and discuss its religious, political, and economic causes. We then examine the gradual transition in the character of the hostility towards the Jews against the background of modern developments such as the emergence of the modern state; the age of Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution, the shift to a capitalist economy and the rise of nationalism. In the second part of the course, we discuss the appearance of modern antisemitism at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a “cultural code” in Germany, France and Russia, and the re-emergence of antisemitism as an important political force in Germany after WWI. Finally, we examine the unique features of Nazi antisemitism as "redemptive antisemitism."

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **Full attendance.**

**Weekly assignments** and responses: Students are required to read/listen/watch the assigned items for each week and to post on Moodle weekly responses.

**Response papers:** Students are required to submit two response papers (three if you do not submit a final paper), each 3 pages long. The papers should discuss the main reasons for the hatred or hostility toward Jews in a specific period, using at least three of the texts from the relevant section in the reading list. The paper should also include the student's own reflections on the implications of the arguments in the texts for our understanding of the dynamic of antisemitism. The response papers should be submitted by the end of the semester via Moodle and a copy should be sent to my email. Please use word files, not PDF.

The final grade is determined by attendance, participation in class that reflects engagement with the reading materials (25%), and the response papers (75%).

**Final paper:** Students may submit a final paper: a short, referat paper or a seminar paper. Referat papers are to be submitted by the end of July 2025. Seminar papers are to be submitted by the end of October 2025. Please send me a research proposal consisting of the research question, a tentative outline of the chapters and preliminary sources you will rely on by the end of the semester. The part of the paper in the final grade will be 70%, participation 15% and response papers 15%. Please use word files, not PDF.

### **Reading list:**

#### **1. Introduction: Questions in the Study of Antisemitism**

Gavin I. Langmuir, "Toward A Definition of Antisemitism," in *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 311-352.

Hannah Arendt, "Antisemitism as an Outrage to Common Sense," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt, Inc., 1968), chap. 1 (3-10).

David Engel, "Away from a Definition of Antisemitism," in *Rethinking European Jewish History*, eds. Jeremy Cohen and Murray J. Rosman (Oxford; Portland, Or.: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2009), 30-53.

#### **2. Medieval foundations**

Alex Novikoff, "The Middle Ages," in *Antisemitism: A History*, ed. Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 4.

Lecture: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icAMWP8hjAA>

### Additional reading

Saint Augustine, "In Answer to the Jews," in *Treatises on Marriage and Other Subjects*, trans. Charles T. Wilcox et al., ed. Roy J. Deferrari (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1955), 391-414.

John Chrysostom, Against the Jews

[http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom\\_adversus\\_judaeos\\_01\\_homily1.htm](http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/chrysostom_adversus_judaeos_01_homily1.htm).

Jeremy Cohen, "The Doctrine of Jewish Witness," in *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 23-44.

Leon Polakov, "The Image of the Jew," in *The History of Antisemitism*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Schocken Books, 1976), 123-169.

### **3. The Reformation, Shylock, and the Expulsion from Spain**

Thomas Kaufman, "Luther and the Jews," in *Jews, Judaism, and the Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Germany*, ed. Dean P. Bell and Stephen G. Burnett (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 69-104.

Martin Luther, excerpts from *On the Jews and Their Lies*:

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/martin-luther-quot-the-jews-and-their-lies-quot>

The Edict of Expulsion of the Jews: <http://www.sephardicstudies.org/decree.html>

Movie: The Merchant of Venice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEvaJRPRd88>

### Additional reading:

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, ed. Charles Edelma (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Jonathan Elukin, "Shylock, the Devil and the Meaning of Deception in The Merchant of Venice," *European Judaism* 51(2) (2018): 44-51.

Christopher J. Probst, *Demonizing the Jews: Luther and the Protestant Church in Nazi Germany*

(Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2012), 39-58.

#### **4. The Enlightenment, the Romantic Movement, and the Rise of Nationalism**

Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Antisemitism, 1700-1933*

(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 34-47; 74-91

*The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Paul Mendes-Flohr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 279-285.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *The Jew in the Thorns*, <https://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm110.html>

#### Additional reading:

Stefan Rohrbacher, "The 'Hep Hep' Riots of 1819: Anti-Jewish Ideology, Agitation, and Violence," in *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*, ed. Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut W. Smith (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 23-42.

#### **5. [Special reading for Passover break:] Protocols of the Elders of Zion**

Protocols of the learned elders of Zion, translated from the Russian of Nilus by Victor E. Marsden (New York: Gordon Press, 1978).

Randall L. Bytwerk, "Believing in the 'Inner Truth': *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in Nazi Propaganda, 1933-1945," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 29(2) (2015): 212-2229.

#### **6. German Antisemitism (1)**

Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 23(1) (1978): 25-46.

*The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, eds. Jehuda Reinharz and Paul Mendes-Flohr (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 302-327.

#### Additional reading

Richard Wagner, "Judaism in Music," in *Judaism in Music and Other Essays*, ed. William Ashton Ellis (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 75-122.

Paul L. Rose, "Richard Wagner: Prophet of Revolutionary Antisemitism," in *German Question, Jewish Question: Revolutionary Antisemitism from Kant to Wagner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 279-379.

Moshe Zimmermann, *Wilhelm Marr: The Patriarch of Antisemitism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), chap 7.

Shulamit Volkov, "Readjusting Cultural Codes: Reflections on Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism," in *Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism in Historical Perspective*, ed. Jeffrey Herf (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

### **7. The Dreyfus Affair and French Antisemitism**

Vicki Caron, "From Dreyfus to Vichy," in *French History Since Napoleon*, ed. Martin Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 172-202.

The Dreyfus Affair – podcast: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71leih-\\_L7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71leih-_L7s)

#### Additional reading:

Vicky Caron, "Catholics and the Rhetoric of Antisemitic Violence in fin-de siècle France," in *Sites of European Antisemitism in the Age of Mass Politics, 1880-1918*, eds. Robert Nemes and Daniel Unowsky (Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry, University Press of New England, 2014), 36-60.

Sandrine Sanos, *The Aesthetics of Hate: Far Right Intellectuals, Antisemitism, and Gender in*

*1930s France* (Stanford University Press, 2013), chap. 6.

## **8. East European Pogroms**

John D. Klier, “Christians and Jews and the ‘Dialogue of Violence’ in Late Imperial Russia,” in *Religious Violence between Christians and Jews: Medieval Roots, Modern Perspectives*, ed. Anna S. Abulafia (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 157-167.

David Engel, “What’s in a Pogrom? European Jews in the Age of Violence,” in *Anti-Jewish Violence: Rethinking the Pogrom in East European History*, ed. Jonathan Dekel-Chen, David Gaunt, Natan S. Meir and Israel Bartal (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 2011), 19-37.

### Additional reading:

Michael Aronson, “The Anti-Jewish Pogroms in Russia in 1881,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 39-61.

Robert Weinberg, “The Pogrom of 1905 in Odessa: A Case Study,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 248-290.

## **9. The Birth of Judeo-Bolshevism**

Oleg Budnitskii, *Russian Jews Between the Reds and the Whites, 1917– 1920*, trans. Timothy J. Portice (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2012), Chap. 6.

### Additional reading:

Peter Kenez, “Pogroms and White Ideology in the Russian Civil War,” in *Pogroms: Anti-Jewish*

*Violence in Modern Russian History*, ed. John Klier and Shlomo Lambroza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 293-313.

Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Hunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Harvard University Press, 2018), chap. 1: The Idea of Judeo-Bolshevism.

## **10. German Antisemitism (2)**

Oded Heilbrunner, “From Antisemitic Peripheries to Antisemitic Centres: The Place of Antisemitism in Modern German History,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 35 (4) (2000), 559-576.

David C. Large, “Out with the *Ostjuden*’: The Scheunenviertel Riots in Berlin, November 1923,” in *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*, ed. Christhard Hoffmann, Werner Bergmann, and Helmut W. Smith (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 123-140.

### Additional reading:

Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness* (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), chap. 3.

Paul Lerner, “Consuming Powers: The ‘Jewish Department Store’ in German Politics and Culture,” in *The Economy in Jewish History: New Perspectives on the Interrelationship between Ethnicity and Economic Life*, ed. Gideon Reuveni and Sarah Wobick-Segev (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011), 135-154.

## **11. Antisemitism, colonialism, racism**

Christian S. Davis, *Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Germans of Jewish Descent in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2012), chap. 1+2.

Watch: <https://youtu.be/Rbon6HqzjEI>

Additional reading:

Claudia Bruns, "Antisemitism and Colonial Racism: Transnational and Interdiscursive Intersectionality," in *Racisms Made in Germany*, ed. Wulf D. Hund, Christian Koller, and Moshe Zimmermann, 99-121.

**12. Redemptive Antisemitism**

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, chap. 11: Race and People.

Adolf Hitler, *The Second Book*, conclusion.

Additional reading:

Houston S. Chamberlain, *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. John Lees, vol. I (London and New York: John Lane Company, 1911), chap. 4.



## **Instructions for papers:**

Response papers: roughly half of the paper should be a summary of the main arguments of the texts, and the other half should reflect on the broader implications of these arguments for antisemitism studies, for example: what do they teach us about the dynamic of antisemitism; do they have implications for fighting against antisemitism; do they challenge popular conceptions of the meaning of or reasons for antisemitism; etc.

Referat papers: 10 pages, 1.5 space, integration of at least 6 sources to examine a specific theme in antisemitism studies, for example: what were the motivations behind the 1881-2 pogroms in Russia? What does the "Merchant of Venice" teach us about the anti-Jewish imagination in 16<sup>th</sup> century England? How did antisemitism function as a "cultural code" in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany/France? etc. While no original contribution is expected, students should still make clear their own "voice" in the discussion.

Seminar papers: 25 pages examining a research question similar to the examples in "referat papers" above, using at least 15 sources, including primary documents if possible. An original contribution by the student is expected.