

JUDAISM – TH 450

Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary – Summer 2018

Time and Place: August 6-17 Monday-Thursday 1:00-5:00
Tues/Thurs 5:30-7:30
Schlegel Room 122

Instructor – Contact Information: Prof. Natalie C. Polzer
568-3009 – leave a message
natalie.polzer@louisville.edu

Communication and Consultation: The best way to communicate with me is by email or phone. I do not have a cell phone, so do not expect an instant response. During the course, I will check my email several times a day for communication. If you phone, leave a message on my answering machine and I will get back to you as soon as I can.

Arrangements can be made to meet with me before class, during breaks or between 5-5:30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays or on Fridays and Sunday afternoons at Quill's Café on Baxter Ave. While I am happy to answer questions as best as possible by email, face to face consultation about assignments is advantageous for fostering comprehension and student success. Lots of assignments are due the week after classes. Since U of L begins this week, I will have time only on Tuesdays and Thursdays during this week.

Course Description: The course will survey the texts, traditions and historical events that have influenced contemporary Jewish belief, religious practice and communal life and institutions. With a focus on the realities of the spiritualities and identities of contemporary North American Judaism, the course will demonstrate both the multi-faceted nature of the Jewish religion and how it was influenced by various historical, social and religious factors in the course of its development. The course will be conducted through lectures, accompanied by assigned readings in the textbook and handouts, as well as the two Learning Cell assignments and several films to be screened during class time. Much emphasis will be placed on reading and discussing primary source material in class. **Due to the concentration of the class in two short weeks, successful completion of the course requires a large amount of preparation time outside of class preparing assignments and reading assigned texts.**

The lectures will be in four thematic units, with corresponding assignments:

- I. **Introduction to Judaism Today:** A survey of the cultural and historical developments leading to contemporary Judaism.
- II. **Encounter:** An exploration of different modes of understanding God and the divine human relationship in Judaism.
- III. **Worship:** An introduction to Jewish prayers, life cycle rituals and festivals.
- IV. **Identity:** Some of the main issues challenging Jewish identity today will be introduced: anti-Semitism, Zionism and the State of Israel, conversion, women's issues, intermarriage, homosexuality.

Required Texts: One text is required for purchase: **(1) *The Book of Jewish Belief***, by Louis Jacobs, which is for sale in your university bookstore. Other required texts will either be posted under Course Documents on the CAMS Portal, be available as paper reserves in the library or will be handed out in class in paper form. **Students are required to print out the readings and bring them to class in paper form for the purposes of discussion.**

Readings will also be assigned from the Hebrew Bible, so students must have access to a current English translation in book form, which they are expected to bring to class for consultation. **Jewish tradition holds the Hebrew Bible to be a holy text, the sequence of which cannot be altered. Although we will be using translations, which are not considered to be holy, to honor this belief a bound Bible in book form must be used in this class.**

Synagogue Visit A synagogue visit will be scheduled on a Saturday morning during the course of the class and students will be expected to attend. No credit is given for the visit, however students can choose to get extra credit for the visit by writing up a reflective summary of the experience, as specified in the grade breakdown section of the syllabus.

Student Learning Outcomes: Successful completion of the course will enable students to achieve the following Learning Outcomes:

- Knowledge and understanding of the theology, identities and community concerns of contemporary forms of Judaism in North America, Israel and world-wide. (QEP - SLO 1a)
- Knowledge and understanding of the historical and theological antecedents of contemporary Judaism, from the biblical period onwards. (QEP – SLO 1a)
- Informed and self-aware critical reflection on the historical and contemporary relationship between the Christian faith and different forms of Judaism. (QEP – SLO 3)
- Knowledge and informed awareness of the different forms of Judaism as religious minorities functioning currently and historically within a western Christian majority, an optimal awareness for Christian ministry leadership. (QEP – SLO 3)

Successful integration of these Learning Outcomes will be achieved through class discussion of texts and films, major written assignments comparing and contrasting Jewish texts from different periods and a final project on the Jewish life cycle rituals, in which students will summarize, interpret, compare and evaluate different contemporary modes of Jewish practice

LPTS Official Policies

Use of Inclusive Language

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. More discussion about inclusive language can be accessed from the Academic Support Center and from the section of the LPTS web site with information for current students.

Academic Honesty

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Two occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues related to academic

honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For more information, see the Policy for Academic Honesty in the Student Handbook.

Special Accommodations

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center (bherrintonhodge@lpts.edu) during the first two weeks of a semester (or before the semester begins) and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

Citation Policy

Citations in your papers should follow Seminary standards, which are based on these guides:

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6th ed. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2010.

Turabian, Kate L., Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers*. 8th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

The Chicago Manual of Style. 16th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

Attendance Policy

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.

LPTS Grading Scale:

A

100-90 Excellent work showing not only mastery of required material and analytical skills, but expressed in coherent, well written and well argued English. (A 100-93; A- 92-90)

B

89-80 Competent mastery of required material and analytical skills, adequately expressed in coherent English. (B+ 89-87; B 86-83; B- 82-80)

C

79-70 Adequate mastery of required material and analytical skills, evidencing difficulty with written English expression. (C+ 79-77; C 76-73; C- 72-70)

D

69-60 Work evidencing some, but inadequate, mastery of required material and analytical skills, as well as inadequate written expression in English. (D+ 69-67; D 66-63; D- 62-60)

F

Below 59. Insufficient mastery of material exhibited for passing grade.

Prof. Polzer's Classroom Policies

Electronic Technology in my Class: No electronic technology is allowed to be used in my class except for a laptop and then only under the following conditions: (1) if the student is registered with the Office of Disabilities who provide a written statement that the student requires a laptop to take notes; (2) if the individual student signs a contract in which he/she agrees to use the laptop responsibly and only for class purposes and to forfeit 10 points from their final course grade each

time they are apprehended using the laptop in class for anything but class purposes. No laptops may be used in my class without completing either condition 1 or 2 above.

Submission of Assignments: Submission of assignments by email is only allowed in extraordinary circumstances. *Do not, for any reason whatsoever, send me assignments as email attachments unless your special circumstances have been cleared with me in advance. I will not open, print or grade them, neither will I regard them as received and late penalties will be enforced.* If you have an emergency and cannot give me a paper copy of the assignment by the due date, call my home phone (568-3009) and leave a message telling me when you will get the assignment to me in the near future. The take-home final exam question and the short paper will be due after the official end of class. Unless an exception has been made to allow you to submit it by email you can submit this work in the following ways: (1) mail it to my home address (Dr. Natalie Polzer, 709 Rubel Ave., Louisville, KY, 40204); drop it off at my house and leave it between the two front doors to the left (709 Rubel Ave.).

ATTENTION!!! If you send me assignments by mail, the date the item is postmarked will determine whether it has been submitted on time, not the date when I receive it.

Evaluation: Without exception, written work for this course is expected to be well written, without errors of spelling, syntax and grammar. Written work at the MA level should show clearly articulated ideas, presented in an organized, coherent way in sequential paragraphs, each with a **topic sentence** at the beginning. Work that is not well written cannot receive a top grade, however excellent its content or level of analysis. If you have any doubts about your writing skills, do not hesitate to bring your work to me and have me look over it to see if you are on the right track.

Extensions/Late Penalties/24 hour Grace Period: Due to the condensed nature of this course, extensions will be allowed only in the case of emergency. **However, a 24 hour period of grace is allowed on all Learning Cell assignments and on the final paper and take-home exam – but NOT on the Critical Film Reviews.** This means as long as I receive the designated assignment no later than 24 hours after its official due date (6 pm of the day it is due) no penalty will be imposed for lateness. After the period of grace, -2 points will be imposed for each partial or whole day the assignment is overdue.

Grade Breakdown

- **Attendance** 10% A student's successful completion of a university course is directly related to their rate of class attendance. This is especially the case with a course like this, the content of which may well be unfamiliar to most students in the class. All students will be given two absences for which they are not required to provide a valid excuse. **Students who miss more than one class without a valid excuse, unless in an emergency situation, will have points deducted from the attendance grade, two points per absence without a valid excuse. One point will be deducted for arriving unreasonably late to class. For the purposes of attendance, the four night time segments of the class will be treated as separate classes.**
- **Take Home Final Exam** 15% A take-home final exam essay question will be assigned on the last day of class and will be due on **Wednesday August 22** by 6 pm.
- **Final Essay** 20% A short research essay (8-10 pages 12 point font double spaced) on Jewish life cycle rituals will be assigned. Secondary sources outside of those discussed in class

will be required. *Students will have to use reputable published books and articles, not just resources published on the Internet, for the essay to receive a passing grade.* The paper will be due on **Thursday August 23** by 6 pm.

- **Learning Cell Assignments** 40% Two Learning Cell assignments will take place during the two weeks of class. A Learning Cell is a written assignment used as the basis of student group discussion. **Attendance at the discussion groups is compulsory.** A student who misses the discussion session cannot turn in the assignment unless allowed by the instructor, and 25% of the final grade will be deducted as penalty. **Any student who misses the discussion session for whatever reason, and still intends to turn in the assignment, must communicate this to the instructor in written form by submitting a statement of acknowledgement that they missed the discussion and a statement of intention to submit the final assignment.** Students must come the day the discussion groups are scheduled with two copies of the first draft of their assignment ready. One copy is turned in to the instructor and the other is used during the student discussion. Students normally have one week after the Learning Cell discussion period to turn in the final draft. Students, who do not turn in final draft, will be graded on their first draft. Flat grades will be given: 20 (A), 17.5 (B), 15 (C), 12.5 (D). Students who earn the grade of “D” or F on the first Learning Cell assignment are allowed to redo it by **Friday August 17**, with no extensions possible; **however, they must present a written statement of intention to redo the assignment. The first graded assignment must be turned in along with the reworked assignment.** General instructions as well as more detailed instructions for each Learning Cell will be distributed.

- **Critical Film Reviews 15%** Students must complete at least **three** of the four critical film review assignments on films that will be screened in class. Each one will be worth 5%. Students may complete more than three, in which case the extra points will be added to their grade as extra credit.

Extra Credit – Students may earn extra credit in two ways: (1) up to 5 points extra credit can be earned by submitting a written summary and reflection on a synagogue visit scheduled during class time. The reflection should be between 3-4 pages long (12 point font, double-spaced) and must be submitted no later than **Friday August 17 by 6 pm**; (2) up to 5 extra points may be earned by completing all four of the Critical Film Reviews.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES, READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in the syllabus when necessary to meet course objectives and/or to compensate for lack of availability of source material, for missed classes or for other scheduling problems

BE SURE TO BRING THE TEXTBOOK, BIBLE AND ALL ASSIGNED READINGS TO EACH CLASS!

UNIT I INTRODUCTION

1	August 6	The Basics of Judaism: God, Torah, Israel – Bring Bible to Class! Jacobs, Chs. 1-5; Bible: Genesis 9:1-17; 12, 17, 21, 22 Exodus 19-24; Deuteronomy 30.
		The Different Faces of Contemporary Jewish Practice and Belief. Jacobs Chs. 1-5, 16 Learning Cell 1 Assignment and General LC Instructions handed out.

- 2 August 7 **The Different Faces of Contemporary Jewish Practice, Continued.**
The Jewish Canon I: the *Tanakh* and Commentaries – Jacobs Ch. 6
The Jewish Canon II: the Oral Law – Mishnah, Talmud, Codes
 Jacobs Chs. 7-8
5:30-7:30 Film Screening: Ushpizin
- 3 August 8 **Oral Torah – Ongoing Revelation through Law**
 Oshry, *Holocaust Responsa* (Posted on CAMS Portal)
 Hafetz Hayyim, *Guard Thy Tongue* (Posted on CAMS Portal)
Jewish History: a Brief Overview, Jacobs Chs. 17-18
Critical Film Review 1 Due.
UNIT II ENCOUNTER WITH THE DIVINE
- 4 August 9 **Learning Cell I Discussion and Wrap Up**
Modes of Divine Revelation I
 Bible: Exodus 3; 19-20; 33-34; Isaiah 6; Ezekiel 1; 3:1-15
Modes of Divine Revelation II -- History as the Revelation of Divine Will
 Jacobs Ch. 26; Bible: Exodus 1-12, Deut 1-11
Learning Cell 2 Assignment Handed Out.
5:30-7:30 Film Screening: *Half the Kingdom*
UNIT III WORSHIP
- 5 August 13 **The Synagogue and Prayer, Origins and History** – Jacobs Chs. 13-14.
 Petuchowski, *Jewish Prayer* (posted on CAMS Portal).
Jewish Prayer: Service of the Heart: Blessings and Prayer Services
Jewish Prayer, Social and Communal Issues Across Demoninations
Readings: on print reserve in the library. Students must make their own copies of the following: *The Daily Prayer Book Ha-Siddur Ha-shalem*. Edited and Annotated with Introduction by Philip Birnbaum. New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1977. pp41-44; pp71-96; pp135-138; p289-290; p551-552; pp741-744; pp771-778.
Final Draft of Learning Cell I Due.
Critical Film Review 2 Due
- 6 August 14 **Kedushah – Sanctification – Overview: Holy Time, Space, People, Individual Conduct, the Human Body.**
The Sanctification of Time: Sabbath and Festivals, Jacobs Ch. 11, 12. Other readings on print reserve in the library. Students should make their own copies of the following: *The High Holyday Prayer Book: Yom Kippur*. Translated an

Annotated by Philip Birnbaum. New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1977. pp287-294.

Contemporary Jewish Experience: the Holocaust and its Legacy

5:30-7:30 Film Screening: *Europa, Europa*

7 August 15

Kedushah – Sanctification – Continued.

The Sanctification of Body: Kashrut – The Dietary Laws

Jacobs Ch. 15; Bible: Lev 11; Deut 12:13-27; 14

The Sanctification of Body: Sexual Morality

Jacobs Ch. 25; Bible: Levi 18, Deut 21:10-14; 22:5; 22:13-30; 23:1-2; 24:1-5

The Sanctification of Conduct: Jewish Ethics – Jacobs Chs. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24

Final Essay Instructions Handed Out.

Critical Film Review 3 Due.

UNIT IV CONTEMPORARY IDENTITY

8 August 16

Learning Cell 2 Discussion and Wrap Up.

The Holocaust – Zionism, The State of Israel, The Diversity of Contemporary Judaism – Jacobs Ch. 16, 17, 18.

Critical Contemporary Jewish Issues

Take-Home Final Exam Essay Handed Out.

5:30-7:30 Film Screening: Two episodes from *The Pillar of Fire: the Emergence of the Jewish State*.

August 20

Critical Film Review 4 Due.

August 21

Final Draft of Learning Cell 2 Due.

August 22

Final Exam Take Home Question Due.

August 23

Final Essay Due.