

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science and Centre for Jewish Studies
Fall 2014
POL 383H1 and CJS383H1
Jews and Power

Jeffrey Kopstein
Jackman Humanities Building 218
Jeffrey.kopstein@utoronto.ca
Office Hours: Monday 10am-12noon

Description

This course examines the relationship between the Jewish people and political power over a 3500 year period. How have Jews defined the proper relationship of the people to political authority? What forms of power are considered legitimate? How did Jews preserve their communal interests and personal safety as an ethnic and religious minority for two millennia? What political strategies did they pursue? How did these strategies change over time and how did modernity alter the Jewish approach to politics? How did the revival of Jewish sovereignty in the state of Israel in the 20th and 21st centuries change the relationship between Jews and power? We will address these questions using a broad range of primary and secondary sources: historical, Jewish textual, and social scientific.

Readings

All the readings for the course are posted on Blackboard. A few of the books may be worth purchasing. The reading load for this course is heavy and much of it will be written in a style that is not familiar. The readings are not a substitute for attending lectures and tutorials. The readings should be done in advance of the lectures, as some of the lectures will actually be discussions.

E-mail Communication

Students are encouraged to raise their questions not answered by the syllabus in class, with the TA, and in office hours. Email should be a last, not a first, resort. In the event that a matter cannot wait until class or office hours, you should contact the instructor or the TA.

Requirements

In class mid-term test: 25 percent
Film Review: 5 percent
Five page paper: 30 percent (to be discussed in class)
Final Examination: 40 percent (cumulative)

Essay Submission

Normally, students will be required to submit their essay final draft to Turnitin.com for a review of textually similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site. Before the due date students will be given a class ID and a password. You should generate your own account and use it to submit your work. Essays have to be submitted to turnitin.com before tutorial. Submissions to turnitin.com after tutorial will count as late submissions.

Double-sided initiative: This course is taking part in the University of Toronto's double-sided initiative; you are encouraged to print your essays on both sides of the page.

Course Materials

All readings will be available on-line via blackboard. Students will be able to access the readings from links in the on-line syllabus and pdf copies of chapters and articles. All students must register for the POL 383 or CJS 383 blackboard

Cheating

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offences and will be dealt with accordingly. For further clarification and information, please see the University of Toronto's policy on plagiarism at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>

Accessibility

The University of Toronto is committed to accessibility. If you require accommodation for a disability, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please contact Accessibility Services as soon as possible (disability.services@utoronto.ca or studentlife.utoronto.ca/accessibility).

Outline

1. September 10. **The Jewish People: Introduction.** No mandatory reading but ***strongly*** recommended that you have read the book of Exodus from the Hebrew bible (the Old Testament). Any edition.
2. September 17. **Kings and Prophets: Jews, Leadership, and Rebellion**
Read: Martin Buber, "Biblical Leadership." In Buber, *Mamre: Essays in Religion* pp. 46-61;
Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, pp.3-70.
3. September 24. **Constituting a People: The Covenant and Jewish Sovereignty,**
Read: Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*, pp.73-149.

4. October 1. **Jews and Power in Antiquity.**

Read: Peter Schaefer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Ancient World*, pp.1-33, 136-160; David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History*, pp.10-33.

5. October 8. **The Rabbis: Power and the Talmud.**

Read: Jeffrey Rubenstein, *Rabbinic Stories*, "The Destruction of the Second Temple: Bavli Gittin pp.38-54; David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness*, pp.34-57.

6. October 15. **Politics in the Diaspora: Jews in the Medieval World.**

Read: Ora Limor, "Ora Limor, "The Erection of Essential Boundaries: Christians and Jews," in Miri Rubin and Walter Simon (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity IV: Christianity in Western Europe*, c.1100-c.1500 (pp. 135-148), Cambridge University Press 2009; Mark Cohen, "Anti-Jewish Violence and the Place of Jews in Christendom and in Islam: a Paradigm," in *Religious Violence between Christians and Jews*, pp.107-137; David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness*, pp.58-86; Gavin Langmuir, "Anti-Judaism as the Necessary Preparation for Anti-semitism," in *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, pp.383-389.

7. October 22. **Midterm Test.**

8. October 29. **The Politics of Emancipation.**

Read: H.H. Ben Sasson, *The History of the Jewish People*, pp.777-812; Salo Baron, "Ghetto and Emancipation," in *The Menorah Treasury: Harvest of Half a Century* (1964), pp.50-63; Ruth Wisse, *Jews and Power*, pp.79-96; David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness*, pp.87-117.

9. Nov.5. Class Cancelled.

10. November 12. **Jews and Power in Eastern Europe,**

Read: Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East-Central Europe Between the World Wars*, pp.11-83

11. Noreember 19. **Destruction and Rescue: Jews and their Neighbors in the Holocaust.**

Read: Jan Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*, Poland, pp.1-124.

12. November 26. **Jewish Sovereignty Restored: The Dilemmas of Power.**

Read: Ari Shavit, *My Promised Land*, pp.25-225.