

University of Toronto
Department of Political Science

POL 300H1/CJS _____
Judaism and Politics
Meeting Code: L0301

Fall 2015
Thursday, 12:00-2:00 PM

Instructor

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Description: Judaism has a long and incomplete tradition of governance, long because Jews have an ancient civilization, incomplete because Jews as a people have experienced only limited periods of political sovereignty. This course addresses two central questions: (1) *How have Jews governed themselves?* (often referred to as communal governance) and (2) *How have Jews related to the political system where they live?* The first few weeks of the class explore the development of the Jewish political tradition in the Biblical period, the Middle Ages (when most Jews lived under either Muslim or Christian sovereignty), and in the early modern/modern period when we focus primarily on Europe. During this historical survey, we will explore both the major political roles assumed by Jews (prophet, intermediary, etc.) and the political systems in Jewish communities. Then we focus on the political situation of Jewry in the two primary areas of Jewish concentration today--the United States and Israel. The US is a multiethnic, liberal democracy where religion is purely a voluntary matter and no concern of the state. By contrast, Israel, a nation with a Jewish majority, defines itself explicitly as a Jewish state. We will examine how these differences affect both communal government and politics at the national level.

Expectations: Students are expected to attend class each session, to keep up with the readings, and to contribute to class discussion. While in class, I ask that you show courtesy and respect by turning off your cell phones and [refraining from texting](#). Most of the class readings are journal articles posted on Blackboard but some will be open access materials available on the web. I have assigned one book for the course:

Maisel, Louis S. and Ira N. Forman, editors. 2004. *Jews in American Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

The book is available in both paperback and an e-reader version. There is a 2001 hardback edition which has a lot of reference material but is considerably more expensive.

Communication: I'm happy to meet with you during office hours or, if necessary, by appointment. Strange as it seems, I actually enjoy talking to you and get lonely and dispirited if nobody visits during office hours. As a rule, it's easiest to get in touch with me by email. Students are encouraged to raise their questions not answered by the syllabus in class, with the TA, and in office hours.

Requirements:

Midterm Examination: 40 percent

Final Examination: 60 percent (cumulative)

Course Schedule:

Week	Date	Topic & Readings
1	9/17	Introduction Jewish Population in the World (BB) Freud on Jewishness (BB) Commentaries 1 & 2 (BB) Timeline of Jewish History (BB)
2	9/24	Politics in the Biblical Period Jewish Dispersal (BB) The Zealots (BB)
3-4	10/1 10/8	Politics in the Middle Ages Biale, <i>Power & Powerlessness</i> Katz, <i>Tradition & Crisis</i> Zenner, "Jewish Retainers" Court Jew readings (BB)
5	10/15	Enlightenment & Emancipation Mendelsohn, <i>On Modern Jewish Politics: Varieties</i> Dreyfus Affair (BB) Graetz, "From Corporate Community"
6	10/22	MIDTERM EXAMINATION
7	10/29	American Jewry – Arrival & Adaptation Sarna, "Impact of the American Revolution" Elazar, <i>Community & Polity</i> , ch. 3
8	11/6* NOTE NEW DATE	American Jewry - Organizational Life Maisel & Forman, chs. 2-5, 7, 12 Shogan, <i>Prelude to Catastrophe</i> Belsky, "Allan Dershowitz" Elie Wiesel (online)
9	11/12	American Jewry – Political Behavior Wald, "Choosing People" Maisel & Forman, chs. 10-11
10	11/19	Israel – Israeli Judaism Ram, "National, Ethnic or Civic"
11	11/26	Israel - Religion & State Cohen & Susser, "From Accommodation"
12	12/3	Israel - Judaism, Foreign Policy and War Cohen, "Jewish Discourse on Armed Conflict"
	TBA	FINAL EXAMINATION – date and time TBA

*This course meeting has been rescheduled to Friday, November 6th, from 12-2:00 PM in UC 244.