

LTR 5402 Jewish-Christian Relations

Spring 2022

Course Description:

This course raises awareness of the complex, thorny, and rewarding relationship between Judaism and Christianity. It surveys the dark history of Christian anti-Semitism and the Jewish resentments it engendered, as well as recent attempts to heal this breach within the family of God. It examines the theological issues at the parting of the ways 2,000 years ago between Christians and Jews over the identity of Jesus Christ. It investigates current issues confronting, and sometimes dividing, Christians and Jews including the accusation of Jews as Christ-killers, supercessionism, proselytizing Jews, distrust of alleged Jewish power, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Course Outcomes:

At the conclusion of this course, students will:

1. Explain the beliefs, history and practices of Judaism as a religion separate from Christianity;
2. Discuss the history of Jewish-Christian relations and the phenomenon of antisemitism;
3. Explain Jewish views of Jesus, Paul and Christianity, and their basis in Jewish theology and experience;
4. Discuss how Christian churches are grappling with their views of Jews and exploring new theological options, among them the problem of proselytizing, supercessionism, allegations of Christian complicity in the Holocaust, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
5. Relate constructively with practitioners and/or leaders of the Jewish faith

Textbooks:

- Articles and videos assigned for each week.
- James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2001). ISBN-13: 978-0618219087. \$14.15 paperback
- Arthur Hertzberg and Aron Hirt-Manheimer, *Jews: The Essence and Character of a People* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1998). ISBN-13: 978-0060638344. \$17.95 paperback
- Dan Cohn-Sherbock and Dawoud El-Alami, *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003). ISBN-13: 978-1780743806. \$12.40 paperback

Course Requirements:

1. Assignment on the Gospels and Jewish-Christian relations. ***Due February 28.*** (10%)
2. Interview with a rabbi, followed by class presentation. ***Due February 14-March 21.*** (25%)
3. Antisemitism assignment. ***Due April 4.*** (10%)
4. Class presentation on a Christian statement on the Jews. ***Due May 2.*** (10%)
5. Final paper (10-15 pages) on a particular topic addressed in the course; topic to be approved in advance. ***Due May 23.*** (30%)
6. Class attendance and participation (15%)

Evaluation:

Grades for each assignment are recorded by letter, and are understood as follows:

- A Excellent
- B Good
- C Acceptable
- D Acceptable, but below expectations
- F Failure

Failure to submit an assignment will result in an F for that assignment.

Incomplete assignments are not awarded Fs until several weeks after assignments are due. Hence, students who fail to hand in assignments may not notice anything at first, until suddenly half-way through the course they see their overall grade drop. They should take it as a warning to quickly make up the incomplete work and hand in their late assignments, so as to remove those Fs before the course closes.

In calculating the final grade for the course, letter grades for assignments are converted into the following numerical equivalents, and the total is then converted back to a letter grade:

A	97	A-	91.5	B+	87
B	82	B-	77	C+	72.5
C	67.5	C-	62.5	D+	57.5
D	53	D-	50	F	0

This scale severely penalizes Fs. Therefore, it is better to hand in a poorly done assignment than not to hand one in at all.

Course Outcome Rubric

Students will be able to –

Outcome	Novice	Progressing	Mastered	Advanced
Explain beliefs, history and practices of Judaism, as a religion separate from Christianity	View Judaism from New Testament perspective	Take Orthodox Judaism as the norm	Explain diversity of Jewish beliefs and practices, rooted in Jewish history	Discuss diversity of Jewish beliefs and practices, rooted in Jewish history, and appreciate their value
Discuss the history of Jewish–Christian relations and phenomenon of antisemitism	Recognize antisemitism as defining issue	Explain anti-semitism, its origins, and its impact on Jewish history	Explain anti-semitism, Jewish efforts to deal with it, and discuss recent changes in Christianity	Discuss antisemitism, Jewish efforts to deal with it, recent changes in Christianity, and its continuing presence
Explain Jewish views of Jesus, Paul and Christianity, and their basis in Jewish theology and experience	Explain that Jewish views of Jesus... are based on ignorance	Recognize that Jewish views of Jesus... are rooted in its own theology	Explain that Jewish views of Jesus... are rooted in its own theology, and discuss Jewish insights	Explain that Jewish views of Jesus... are rooted in its own theology, discuss Jewish insights, and discuss relevance to own faith
Discuss how Christian churches are grappling with their views of Jews and exploring new theological options	Recognize changing Christian views	Discuss reassessment of Christian views generally	Discuss new Christian theologies of Judaism and its role in God’s providence	Discuss new Christian theologies of Judaism, controversies for Christians arising from theologies of Judaism, and challenges to faith
Relate constructively with practitioners and/or leaders of the Jewish faith	Relate with a Jewish practitioner mainly from own faith perspective	Show willingness to learn in an interaction with a practitioner of the Jewish faith	Demonstrate sensitivity to Jewish attitudes when relating with a Jewish practitioner	Sympathetically cross over into the perspective and thought-world of Judaism

Schedule:

January 31: Introduction and orientation.

Continuities and differences between Christianity and Judaism: Is there a “Judeo-Christian tradition” or are they two religions with different scriptures and different theologies? Anti-Semitism: the defining Jewish experience? Why Christian churches should seek good relations with Judaism.

READ:

- Carroll, pp. 1-63
- The Jerusalem Declaration, May 18, 2003
<http://www.tparents.org/library/unification/topics/declrtns/JerusalemDeclaration-080513.htm>
- Comparing and Contrasting Judaism and Christianity. [See file in Populi.](#)

February 7: Jewish beliefs about the Law, Scripture, God, evil, sin and salvation, and the Messiah. Jewish views of Jesus and Paul.

WATCH:

- “Why Jews Believe Jesus Was Not the Messiah”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YzFUXKk2B4I>
- “Why Jews don't Believe in Christ as Messiah,”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=obz_cU6GMYQ

READ:

- “What Do Jews Believe About Jesus?” My Jewish Learning.
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/what-do-jews-believe-about-jesus/>
- Judaism's view of Jesus (Wikipedia)
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism%27s_view_of_Jesus
- Louis Jacobs, “Historic Jewish Views on Christianity.” [See file in Populi.](#)
- Peter Kreeft, “Comparing Christianity and Judaism.”
<https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/apologetics/comparing-christianity-amp-judaism.html>
- David S. Ariel, *What Do Jews Believe?* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995)

DISCUSS:

- Identify some of the common teachings of Judaism and Christianity
- What do Jews think of Jesus?
- Why don't Jews accept Jesus as the Messiah?

ASSIGNMENT: Interview a rabbi, having prepared in advance a list of questions to ask him or her about Judaism and its relationship with Christianity. Then make a 15 to 20-minute class presentation about your experience, and follow up with written report (5 pages). The presentation should include your questions, the rabbi's answers, and your personal reflections. *Presentations due February 14-March 21.*

February 14: The common roots of Judaism and Christianity and the situation of Jewish-Christians in the early church. James the just. The pivotal role of St. Paul, who many Jews believe was the founder of Christianity, and whose opposition to the Law was a major factor in the split with Pharisaic Judaism.

WATCH:

- Abramson, "Judaism in the Year Zero,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0O4fK0Xwh0>
- Abramson, "Judaism and Early Christianity,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ng7D4beNmeA>
- Roland Deines, "Why Study James of Jerusalem?"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Mws588AA6A>

READ:

- Ami-Jill Levine, "Christianity's Historical Context." Shows the some of the roots of Christianity in Hellenistic Judaism. [File in Populi.](#)
- NT readings on the issue of the Jewish Law: Matt. 5:17-20; 10:17-25; Acts 15; Gal. 1-5, 2 Cor. 3:7-18, 11:1-6; James 2:14-26
- "Paul the Apostle and Jewish Christianity," Wikipedia.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle_and_Jewish_Christianity
- "Judaizers," Wikipedia. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaizers>
- Daniel Harrington on Paul: Jerusalem Lecture (2010). [See file in Populi.](#)
- Carroll, pp. 135-143

DISCUSS:

- Who were the Jewish-Christians who opposed the Apostle Paul?
- Why did Paul's teaching about the Law contribute to the split between Judaism and Christianity?

February 21: Significance of the downfall of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple, for Jews and for Christians. Parting of the ways between Judaism and Christianity. Impact on the writing of the Gospels.

WATCH:

- Abramson, "The Roman Jewish Wars,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2obtCz2JuM>
- "The Man Who Killed Jesus" Absolute History
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rn3zzDxXkFY>

READ:

- Matthew 22:1-10, 23:29-39; 27:11-26; Mark 4:10-12; 15:1-15; John 9
- Lawrence Schiffman, "How Jewish Christians Became Christians." [File in Populi.](#)
- Lawrence Schiffman, "The Benediction against the Minim." [File in Populi.](#)
- *Birkat HaMinim*. [See file in Populi.](#)
- Carroll, pp. 71-134.

DISCUSS:

- How did the Roman-Jewish War and the fall of Jerusalem affect Judaism? Christianity? The growing split between Christianity and Judaism?
- Why did the relationship between Jews and Christians become so caustic?
- Why did the rabbis institute the *Birkat HaMinim*?
- Explain the history and chronology of the writing of the Gospels by

Christians in relation to the Roman-Jewish War, the fall of Jerusalem, and the expulsion of Christians from the synagogue

ASSIGNMENT: Choose one of the New Testament passages listed above and discuss: (1) how its writing may have been influenced by the events of 70 A.D. and (2) its impact on Jewish-Christian relations ever since.

February 28: Mishnah and Talmud, and the life-ways (*halachah*) of traditional Judaism.

WATCH:

- Abramson, "The Mishnah,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qQmZxCwl7zU>
- Abramson, "The Talmud,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvbLdCBW4Mc>

READ:

- Mishnah and Talmud: Readings. [See file in Populi](#).
- Matt. 12:1-13; 15:1-20; 19:3-9.

DISCUSS:

- Why did the writing of the Mishnah preserve Judaism?
- What is the Oral Torah?
- What were some of the principles by which the Oral Torah interpreted the commandments given in the Bible?
- In the days of Jesus, what sect of Jews was promoting the Oral Torah?
- What was Jesus' view of the Oral Torah?
- How did the Mishnah and Talmud shape Jewish life and beliefs in the Diaspora?

March 7: Oppression of the Jews in the Christian World after Constantine. Augustine's defense of Jewish rights. Roots of antisemitism in the New Testament. The charge of "deicide." Collective guilt. Jewish "unbelief" as a scandal to the proclamation of the Gospel. The "stiff-necked Jew" as an affront to the Christian faith. The fate of the Jews as God's just punishment and the fulfillment of prophecy.

READ:

- Carroll, pp. 165-228.
- Hertzberg, pp. 79-98.

WATCH:

- "The Ancient Roots of anti-Judaism." Facing History and Ourselves, 2016.
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/ancient-roots-anti-judaism>
- One for Israel Ministry, "Who Really Killed Jesus?"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=seGnAucSuUQ>

DISCUSS:

- Are the Jews responsible for killing Jesus?
- Is Jewish suffering the result of the crucifixion?
- Is the New Testament antisemitic?
- Can Christianity ever stop denigrating Judaism as long as Jews refuse to accept Jesus as the Messiah?
- What counsel did Augustine give regarding the Jews? What did he believe

the Jews disclosed about God's redeeming providence?

- If the Unification Church becomes the dominant world religion someday, will it take a similar stance towards unbelieving Christianity?

March 14: Jews in the Middle Ages. Stereotypes, marginalization. Jews' role as moneylenders. Jews under Islam.

READ: • Carroll, pp. 155-245, 429-30.

WATCH: • Abramson, "Jews in the Medieval Economy,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmkP5IIclpY>
• Abramson, "Jews in the Early Islamic Period,"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_yXWbbVTt8

DISCUSS:

- What is the origin of the stereotype of Jews as money-grubbing shylocks?
- How did the Jewish position as moneylenders protect them and create hazards and animus against them?
- What were some of the occupations of Jews in the Middle Ages, and how did this differ from Christians?
- Why did the Jews have a better position in the Islamic world?

March 21: Medieval persecution; the Crusades, expulsions, and the Inquisition. Medieval antisemitism – essentially religious. The blood libel. Martin Luther and German antisemitism.

READ: • Carroll, pp. 246-390
• Cecil Adams, "Does Martin Luther Bear Some Responsibility for the Holocaust?" *Washington City Paper*, December 21, 2016.
<https://www.washingtoncitypaper.com/columns/straight-dope/article/20847401/does-martin-luther-bear-some-responsibility-for-the-holocaust>

WATCH: • Abramson, "Medieval Antisemitism,"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-yEMdrOAS0>
• Review the last 5 minutes of "The Ancient Roots of anti-Judaism."
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/ancient-roots-anti-judaism>

DISCUSS:

- Can you identify elements of the New Testament that fed into the antisemitism of the Middle Ages?
- Why did Luther write so harshly about the Jews?
- Has Christian Antisemitism in the Middle Ages persisted to the present day?

March 28: The Enlightenment and Democracy, and emancipation of the Jews. Jewish efforts to assimilate. Jewish vitality in 19th and 20th centuries. False hope that antisemitism was a thing of the past.

Varieties of Jews, and the complex Jewish soul. The Jew as the Chosen and the Outsider; the Militant, the Mystic and the Freethinker. Jews as capitalists

(Rothschild), Communists (Marx and Trotsky), Psychologists (Freud & Adler) and Zionists (Herzl) – and Christian/Enlightenment stereotypes around all of them. Irving Berlin and the holiday season.

READ:

- Carroll, pp. 401-425
- Hertzberg, pp. 13-78, 98-104, 117-144, 163-207, and 216-239.

DISCUSS:

- How did the Enlightenment try to end religious bigotry? Did it succeed?
- Why did communism resonate with the hopes of so many Jews?
- Why are so many psychiatrists and psychologists Jewish?
- Why are Jews predominantly in the Democratic Party?
- How have Jews in the entertainment field worked to dechristianize and universalize American culture?
- Why have Jews been at the forefront of new intellectual trends at the cutting edge of Western civilization? What sort of trends?

April 4: 19th-20th century antisemitism: racism and conspiracy theories. Association of Jews with communism. Jewish bankers and conspiracy theories. The Dreyfus Affair and the attitude of the Catholic Church. Protocols of the Elders of Zion: the original fake news. Racial anti-Semitism and Nazi ideology.

WATCH:

- Abramson, "Modern Antisemitism,"
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hb_G62BgaM
- Jeffrey Mehlman, "The Dreyfus Affair and the Shock of Anti-Semitism."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utpgiqclrpU>

READ:

- Carroll, pp. 426-471
- *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. [See file in Populi](#).
- Danny Keren, "The Protocols as a Forgery." [See file in Populi](#).

DISCUSS:

- How did Darwin's theory spawn 19th and 20th century racism?
- The persistence of conspiracy theories, either outright or coded, in current political messages. How does one discern if the message is antisemitic or simply political speech?

ASSIGNMENT: Find an example of antisemitism on the Internet and present it to the class. What political or social purpose does the antisemitism serve?

April 11-15: *Easter Break*

April 18: The Holocaust. The German Church Struggle during the Nazi Era.

WATCH:

- Abramson, "The Holocaust."
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xBfZeRwiQwE>
- "Hearts Divided: Baptism and the Jews in Nazi Germany".
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igdIoXYVQ_k

- “Many Jews Resentful of the Vatican Response to the Holocaust.”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4ZUapOQjSY>
- Israeli Holocaust survivor describes rescue as a child by a righteous gentile.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGT8lkxJF3Q>

READ:

- Carroll, pp. 475-535.
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Holocaust Encyclopedia*.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/dietrich-bonhoeffer>
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* - Rackcdn.com
- “Martin Niemöller,” *Holocaust Encyclopedia*.
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/martin-niemoeller-first-they-came-for-the-socialists>

DISCUSS:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Niemöller and other courageous Christians of the Confessing Church risked their lives to oppose the Nazis. What should the church be doing today to honor their example? How does the church reckon with its mixed record of complicity and resistance in those dark times? Righteous gentiles: ordinary people who saved Jews.

April 25:

The Church’s changing attitude towards the Jews; Reassessment, repentance, continued ambivalence. The issues of supersessionism and proselytizing. Questions of salvation and righteousness before God. Jewish-Christian dialogues. Evangelicals and Jews for Jesus.

READ:

- Carroll, pp. 536-543.
- Stephen Englund, “What Our Church Has Inflicted on Judaism,” (2014). [See file in Populi](#).
- Christians Coming to Terms with Antisemitism. [See file in Populi](#).
- Richard J. Mouw, “The Chosen People Puzzle,” *Christianity Today*, March 5, 2001). [See file in Populi](#).
- Sun Myung Moon, “Three Brothers” (1976). [See file in Populi](#).
- “Is ‘Jews for Jesus’ Jewish or Christian?” *Jews for Judaism*
<https://jewsforjudaism.org/knowledge/articles/is-qjews-for-jesusq-jewish-or-christian/>
- Tamar Fox, “Who Are Messianic ‘Jews’?” *My Jewish Learning*.
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/messianic-judaism/>
- Tara Isabella Burton, “Messianic Jews and Jews for Jesus Explained,” *Vox*, October 31, 2018. <https://www.vox.com/2018/10/31/18042506/jew-for-jesus-messianic-jews-loren-jacobs-mike-pence>

DISCUSS:

- Are the Jews still the chosen people?
- Do Jews have salvation/a living relationship with God/ apart from Jesus?
- Should the Church evangelize Jews? What form should Christian witness to Jews take?

- What do you think of Jews for Jesus and Messianic Jews? Why do most Jews take offense at them?

May 2: Modern Christian statements on the Jews (and Jewish statements on Christians).

ASSIGNMENT: Select one of these statements, study it and present it in class. Discuss how it supports or hinders Jewish-Christian relations, also your opinion about the statement as a guide for Christian relations with Jews:

- Vatican Notes: “On the correct way to present the Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church” (June 1985)
https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/catholic/Vatican_Notes.htm
- Guidelines for Christian-Jewish Relations for Use in the Episcopal Church, General Convention of the Episcopal Church, July, 1988.
https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/protestant/Episcopal_Guidelines.htm
- Guidelines for Lutheran-Jewish Relations (1998)
http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Guidelines_For_Lutheran_Jewish_Relations_1998.pdf
- The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization (LCWE), “The Willowbank Declaration on the Christian Gospel and the Jewish People.” (1989)
<http://www.lcje.net/Willowbank.html>
- Guidelines for Members of the Unification Church in Relations with the Jewish People (1989). [See file in Populi](#).
- “Dabru Emet: A Jewish Statement on Christians and Christianity” *First Things*, September 2000. <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2000/11/dabru-emet-a-jewish-statement-on-christians-and-christianity>
- Orthodox Rabbinic Statement on Christianity (2015)
<http://cjcuc.org/2015/12/03/orthodox-rabbinic-statement-on-christianity/>

May 9: Zionism and the State of Israel. The Israeli viewpoint.

READ: Dan Cohn-Sherbock and Dawoud El-Alami, *The Palestine-Israeli Conflict: A Beginner's Guide*, pp. 1-102.

WATCH:

- Theodor Herzl and the birth of political Zionism.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8sxNa-E-H0>
- Zionism and the Holocaust: A Survivor's viewpoint:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnPZVuWbAXo>
- Abramson, “The Borders of Israel.”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkVBchMoF3c>

- “Armageddon Now: Why Evangelical Christians Love Israel,”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fo77sTGpngQ>

DISCUSS:

- What is the significance of the State of Israel for Jews?
- What is the significance of the State of Israel for Christians? for God’s providence?
- How does memory of the Holocaust continue to function in the Jewish psyche?
- Is Israel justified in its behavior towards the Palestinians based on the doctrines of Just War and self-defense?
- Why do Israelis fear that granting the Palestinians a state would empower Israel’s enemies to press on towards Israel’s destruction? Are those fears justified?

May 16:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: The Palestinian viewpoint.

READ:

Cohn-Sherbock and El-Alami, pp. 103-216.

DISCUSS:

- Read and discuss the debate on pp. 197-216.
- Summarize the Palestinian case for their own state within the historic land of Palestine.
- What conditions will have to be met for Jews and Palestinians to live in peace?
- Do Christians have a prophetic duty to admonish Israel on its treatment of Palestinians?
- What about the option of a binational state?
- What would you propose to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

May 23

FINAL PAPERS ARE DUE

Academic Integrity

Plagiarism is a form of dishonesty that occurs when a student passes off someone else's work as their own. This can range from failing to cite an author for ideas incorporated into a student’s paper, to cutting and pasting paragraphs from different websites, to handing in a paper downloaded from the Internet. This includes buying or submitting a paper written by a third party. All are considered forms of “plagiarism” and a violation of the Seminary’s academic integrity policy. Instances of plagiarism may be reported to the Vice President of Academic Affairs for disciplinary action. Possible disciplinary actions include probation, suspension or withdrawal.

The first instance of plagiarism in this course, the student must repeat the assignment. If the student plagiarizes again, the student will receive an “F” for the course.

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Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew* (New York: Schocken, 1965).

Gertrude Selznick and Stephen Steinberg, *The Tenacity of Prejudice: Anti-Semitism in Contemporary America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

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Anti-Semitism and Christian Theology

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Jules Isaac, *Has Anti-Semitism Roots in Christianity?* (New York: NCCJ, 1961).

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Howard Clark Kee, *Removing Anti-Judaism from the Pulpit* (Philadelphia: American Interfaith Institute, 1996).

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The Holocaust and Dialogue

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