

History of Judaism

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
FALL 2024 – 3 Credit
JST 3930 sec HL24 28592
ANT 3930 - Junior Topics Class
REL 3938 - Spec Topics in Relig
Period 3
Turlington Hall 120K

Howard Lidsky
Phone: (352) 514-4033
Email: howardlidsky@ufl.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Smathers Library (East) or by appt.]

MEETING TIME: **Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays at 9:35 AM until 10:25 AM**

LOCATION: TUR 1120K

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

The course surveys the development of the beliefs of the Jewish religion. What do Jews believe as Jews and how have these beliefs evolved and manifest over their three thousand plus year existence? The course explores Jewish beliefs in God and the Divine, in Apocalypticism and Messianism, in Jewish Exile and Return, in Penitence. These beliefs will frequently bring great disasters upon the Jewish community such as failed rebellions against the Roman Empire and the failed Messiahship of Sabbatai Sevi. However, these beliefs will also preserve the Jews for thousands of years in an often hostile world. Over the course, the class reads Gershom Scholem's classic biography of Sabbatai Sevi. The assigned readings in Scholem's book do not correspond with the subject of the class lectures.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, students will have:
A comprehensive instruction in Jewish beliefs
Read a long and major historical work
Improved writing and historical analysis

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:

Course packet
Gershom Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah
Robert Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought,

Please be sure to register for the Canvas course and have any required materials with you in print or easily accessible electronic form in class. You are responsible for checking your Canvas page and the e-mail connected to the page on a regular basis for any class announcements or adjustments.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated based upon three in-class exams (40%), a final exam (30%), two essays (25%) and class attendance (5%)..

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance in class is required. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Students are allowed 6 absences during the course of the semester before loss of credit. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are not recorded as absent if they come in late. A student who fails to meet the attendance requirement more than 12 times will be dropped from the course.

COMPLIANCE WITH UF HONOR CODE:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Honor Code located here, [UF Honor Code](#).

The UF Honor Code also prohibits use of artificial intelligence, including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and Harvey, to assist in completing quizzes, exams, papers, or other assessments unless expressly authorized by the professor to do so.

INFORMATION ON GRADING POLICIES:

The following chart describes the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent in place:

A 94-100	C 74-77
A- 90-93	C- 70-73
B+ 88-89	D+ 68-69
B 84-87	D 64-67
B- 80-83	D- 60-63
C+ 78-79	E below 60

Exams and the final exam are subject to a class curve.

Grading

- A. Midterm exams Sept. 16th (10%), Oct. 18th (15%), Nov. 20th (15%)**
- B. Final exam at AM Dec. 12th at 12:30 PM(30%)**
- C. Essay I (10%) due October 2nd, Essay II (15%) due Dec. 4th**
- D. Class Participation (5%) Students are expected to prepare for class and answer questions during class. Attendance taken.

- Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 199-325**
- 15 9/27 **Israel's Assyrian Exile and Judah's Babylonian Exile and Persian Return**
 Reading: 2 Kings 17 and 18, 2 Kings 24 and 25, Jeremiah 29, Jeremiah 31.1-22,
 Letters from Elephantine, Nehemiah 1 and 2, Ezra 1-2.2.
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 199-325
- 16 9/30 **Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 327-460**
- 17 10/2 Longing for Zion Reading: Psalm 137
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 327-460
 Essay I due
- 18 10/4 The Maccabean Revolt and the Birth of Rabbinic Judaism
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 171-194
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 327-460
- 19 10/7 Why Do the Righteous Perish?
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 195-242
- 20 10/9 The Problem of Penitence: Forgiveness as a Jew and the Jewish People
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 195-242
- 21 10/11 Yom Kippur
- 22 10/14 Avodah: Working towards Nearness to God, First and Second Temple Offerings
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 461-602
- 23 10/16 Prayer Instead: Tish B' Av, Rosh Hashanna, Yom Kippur,
 the Annual Jewish Petition for Forgiveness.
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 462-602
- 24 10/18 Exam II
- 25 10/21 Dead Sea Scrolls and the Qumran sect
 Reading: War Scroll, Community Rule
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 462-602
- 26 10/23 Mishnaic Rabbinical Judaism
 Reading Pirkei Avot 1.1, 1.2, 6.9 Menachot 29a
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 603-686
- 27 10/25 **Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 603-686**
- 28 10/28 Early History of the God of Israel
 Reading Judges 5, Exodus 15, Numbers 10.35-36, 2 Samuel 7.5-7, Psalm 89.6-19,
 Psalm 24.7-10, Deuteronomy 32.7-9
- 29 10/30 Ugaritic Texts
 Readings: Selections from Ugaritic texts
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 7-24

- 30 11/1 Ugarit cont. Baal and Israel
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 24-34
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 687-820
 Psalm 29
- 31 11/4 First Temple Period Theology
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 687-820
- 32 11/6 King Josiah and Deuteronomy
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 34-46
- 33 11/8 Early Monotheism and King Josiah and its Assyrian Context
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 821-929
- 34 11/11 Veteran's Day
- 35 11/13 Does God walk on Earth? The Relation of God to Man from Early Israel to late Antiquity
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 821-929
- 36 11/15 The God of Philosophy. Moses Ben Maimon (d.1204)
 Reading: Guide for the Perplexed 2.30
Reading: Scholem, Sabbatai Sevi The Mystical Messiah pgs. 821-929
- 37 11/18 Baal Shem Tov (d. 1760) and Vilna Gaon (d. 1797)
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 482-496
- 38 11/20 Exam III
- 39 11/22 Jews and the Enlightenment
Reading: Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pgs. 547-579)
- 40 12/2
- 41 12/4 Menachem Mendal Schneerson (d. 1994)
 Essay II due

Final Exam December 12th at 12:30 PM

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

UF Law respects students' observance of religious holidays. Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

EXAM DELAYS AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students are expected to take exams as scheduled in class. In the event that a student will have an exam schedule conflict the student must arrange at least five days prior to the exam an alternate exam date with the instructor. In the event of an emergency that results in a student missing an exam, the student must notify the instructor within 48 hours of the missed exam date to arrange an alternate exam date. Failure to take the exam as scheduled or otherwise in compliance with this rule shall result in loss of credit.

STATEMENT RELATED TO ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and may complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.

RECORDINGS OF CLASS

All classes will be recorded via Mediasite in case students must miss class for health reasons. The Office of Student Affairs will work with faculty to determine when students may have access to these recordings, and the recordings will be password protected. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible after an absence.

COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This syllabus is offered as a guide to the direction of the course. Our pace will depend in part on the level of interest and the level of difficulty of each section and is subject to change.