

Modern Jewish Religious Movements

Religion 251**Classroom:** 105 Comenius Hall**Class times:** TTh 10:20-11:30am**E-mail:** radine@moravian.edu**Professor:** Jason Radine**Office:** 108 Comenius Hall, x1314**Office Hours:** TTh 2:30-3:30pm
and by appointment

Course Content

Modern Judaism exists in a wide spectrum of beliefs and practices, from ultra-traditional to secular humanist. This course will explore both the making of modern Judaism and the religious “map” of Jewish life today. Topics will include Hasidic Judaism, Zionism, and contemporary North American trends in Judaism.

Goals of the Course

This course will provide an in-depth study of Jewish life as it is lived today. As will be seen, the diversity of Jewish religious practice and belief is not simply a matter of degrees of commitment, but of divergent ideological and theological positions. This course will explore the Jewish responses to modernity, and the varied attempts to resist or embrace cultural assimilation. The phenomenon of “Jewishness” vs. Judaism will be examined, and the issue of how secularism and Jewish identity can coexist.

Assignments and Grading

1) Grading will be based on four essay examinations and two research papers as well (see the Student Handbook for the academic honesty policy). The exams and papers are weighted equally, and the course grade will be based on an average of all of these assignments. Plagiarized papers will receive F grades, and will result in a one-letter grade reduction for your course grade overall at least, and a failing grade in the class at most. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Mr. Joe Kempfer, Assistant Director of Learning Services for Disability Support, 1307 Main Street (extension 1510). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the office of Learning Services.

3) Active, in-class participation. Cell phones must be silenced in class, and texting is not allowed.

4) Readings, which should be done by the day on which they appear on the syllabus; that is, before class.

5) Attendance. After two unexcused absences, each further unexcused absence will reduce your overall course grade by one third of a letter. Two times late unexcused counts as one unexcused absence. This is not a passive-learning course; we will be actively studying and discussing the texts and other material in class.

Sample Paper Topics:

Modernity and Inter-marriage
Modern Kabbalism
Changes in Ritual Practice
Religious Anti-Zionism: Neturei Karta and Satmar
“Messianic Judaism”: Jews for Jesus

Required Reading:

Jacob Neusner, *Judaism in Modern Times: An Introduction and Reader*, Blackwell, 1995.
Patai, Raphael and Goldsmith, Emanuel (eds.), *Events and Movements in Modern Judaism*, Paragon: 1995.
Borowitz, Eugene, *Choices in Modern Jewish Thought: A Partisan Guide*, 2nd edition, Behrman House, 1995.
Levenson, Alan, *An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thinkers*, Rowman and Littlefield, 2006.
Fishkoff, Sue, *The Rebbe’s Army: Inside the World of Lubavitch-Chabad*. Schocken: 2005.
Handouts

Course Schedule

Overview

Overview of Judaism, Part 1	August 30 th
Overview of Judaism, Part 2	September 1 st
Judaism and the Challenge of Modernity <i>Readings:</i> Neusner 1, Borowitz 1	September 6 th

Early Responses

Baruch Spinoza, pioneer heretic <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 1, Borowitz Appendix	September 8 th
Moses Mendelssohn and the “Jewish Enlightenment” <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 2	September 13 th
Early Hasidism <i>Readings:</i> Handout	September 15 th

Major Modern Movements

Reform Judaism: Abraham Geiger <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 4, Borowitz 3	September 20 th
Reform Judaism <i>Readings:</i> Neusner 2, Patai 9	September 22 nd
Samson Raphael Hirsch and Rav Kook <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 3, 11, Patai 6	September 27 th
Modern Orthodox Judaism <i>Readings:</i> Neusner 3, Borowitz 10, Patai 7-8	September 29 th
Conservative Judaism <i>Readings:</i> Neusner 4, Patai 5	October 4 th
Reconstructionist Judaism <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 9, Borowitz 5, Patai 10	October 6 th

Jewish Existentialism

Franz Rosenzweig <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 6, Borowitz 6	October 13 th
Martin Buber <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 5, Borowitz 7	October 18 th
Abraham Joshua Heschel <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 13, Borowitz 8	October 20 th
Musar <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 10	October 25 th

Zionism and Holocaust

Zionism, Part 1 <i>Readings:</i> Levenson 7, 8, Neusner 6	October 27 th
Zionism, Part 2 <i>Readings:</i> Borowitz 4, Patai 11	November 1 st
Holocaust <i>Readings:</i> Borowitz 9, Patai 2	November 3 rd

State of Israel <i>Readings: Neusner 6</i>		November 8 th
State of Israel II <i>Readings: Patai 12-13</i>		November 10 th
Recent Developments		
Chabad <i>Readings: Fishkoff</i>		November 15 th
Jewish Feminism <i>Readings: Borowitz 13, Patai 16-17</i>		November 17 th
New Movements <i>Readings: Borowitz 12</i>		November 29 th
New Movements, continued <i>Readings: Borowitz 14</i>		December 1 st
Conclusion <i>Readings: TBA</i>		December 6 th
Final Exam	1:30pm	December 13 th