

HIS/JS 518: Antisemitism

SPRING 2019 – TUESDAYS AND THURSDAYS 9:30-10:45 AM IN 2111 HUMANITIES

Professor Amos Bitzan

abitzan@wisc.edu

608-263-1812

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 2:15-3:15 PM

4134 Humanities

IMAGE (right): A Soviet propaganda poster (1927-1930) asks, "Who is an antisemite?" SOURCE: [YIVO](#).



Although once considered dormant in the United States, political movements and individual actors espousing antisemitism have made headlines here in the past two years, most notably after the October 27, 2018 shooting attack on the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, which claimed the lives of eleven people. The perpetrator had made antisemitic statements on social media before the attack. Globally, some commentators have observed a resurgence of antisemitism over the past two decades.

Attempts by policy-makers and activists to identify and combat antisemitism, whether on the streets of urban centers, across social media spaces, or in college dormitories, are often hobbled by a lack of knowledge about the history of the phenomenon. Academic scholarship by historians, on the other hand, sometimes suffers from a lack of attention to its contemporary manifestations. This seminar therefore aims to help you build a rigorous, conception of antisemitism as a set of strangely persistent ideas, with attention to both ancient and present-day forms of antisemitism.

Merriam-Webster's *Third New International Dictionary* (1961) defines antisemitism as "hostility toward Jews as a racial or religious minority group." We will ask, what more specifically is/has been the content of this hostility?

REQUIREMENTS

Response Paper due Feb 7 in class (1 p)	10%
Paper 1 due March 12 in class (7-8 pp)	30%
Paper 2 due May 2 in class (8-10 pp)	30%
Participation	30%

Course Objectives

By reading both classic and recent scholarship devoted to the phenomenon in multiple contexts (geographic, chronological, cultural) as well as several canonical antisemitic texts, we will seek to understand the origins, major themes, continuities and changes, and surprising endurance of antisemitism. You will:

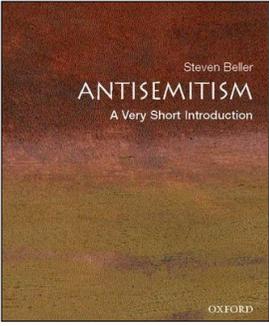
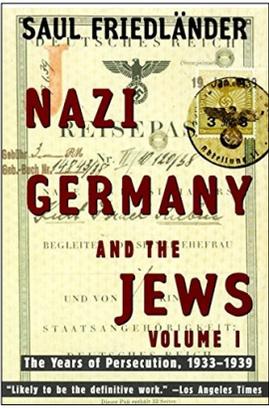
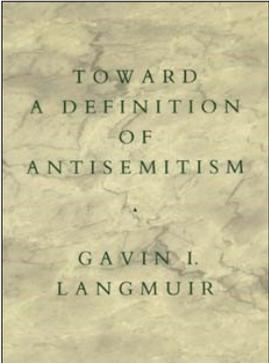
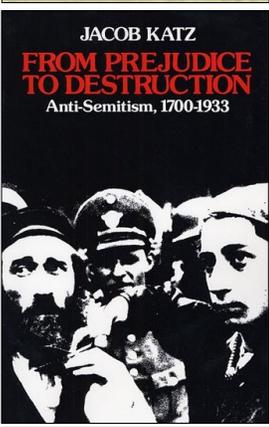
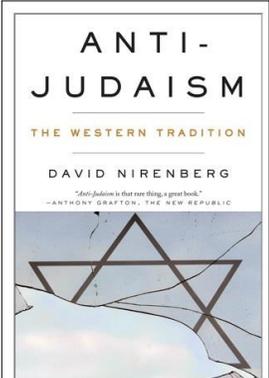
- Learn to use historical thinking to address contemporary issues with nuance
- Practice reading difficult works of scholarship
- Gain mastery over a historical problem

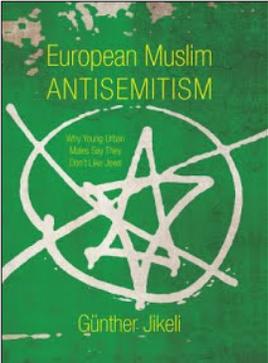
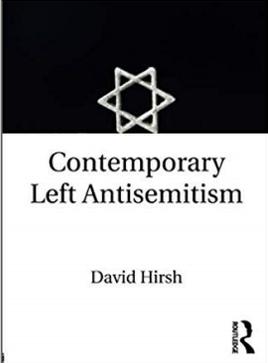
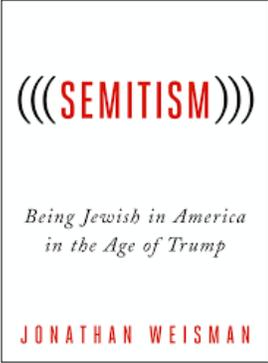
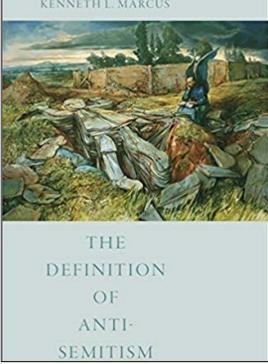
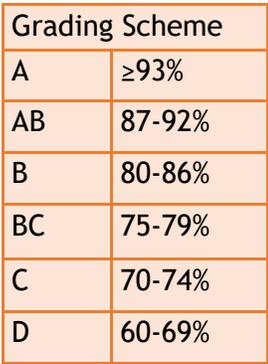
Please purchase (cheapest, used edition you can):

1. Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Harvard, 1980).
2. David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (Norton, 2013).
3. David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (Routledge, 2017).
4. Jonathan Weisman, *(((Semitism))) : Being Jewish in America in the Age of Trump* (St. Martin's, 2018).
5. Kenneth L. Marcus, *The Definition of Anti-Semitism* (Oxford, 2015).

All other readings will be available as ebooks via our library's catalog or as PDFs. All titles available in our system will be on reserve at the College Library. For ease of use, I recommend buying the printed edition of this title, which is available as an ebook:

6. Günther Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism* (Indiana, 2015).

	<h2>Unit I: Modern Antisemitism and its Origins</h2>
<p>WEEK 1 Tu 1/22 Th 1/24</p>	<p>ANTISEMITES IN THEIR OWN WORDS Course Introduction Wilhelm Marr, The Victory of Judaism over Germandom. (Canvas) Protocols of the Elders of Zion. (Canvas)</p>
<p>WEEK 2 Tu 1/29 Th 1/31</p>	<p>NAZI ANTISEMITISM Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, “Chapter XI: Volk und Rasse.” (Canvas) Saul Friedländer, Nazi Germany and the Jews, Vol. 1, “Chapter 3: Redemptive Antisemitism.” (Canvas)</p>
	<p>WEEK 3 Tu 2/5 Th 2/7</p> <p>WHY NINETEENTH-CENTURY CENTRAL EUROPE? Steven Beller, Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction, Chapters 1-4. Ebook. https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9911042869802121.</p> <p>Response to Beller due in class (printed copy):</p> <p>Do you agree with the claims in Beller’s last chapter (“Ch. 8: After Auschwitz”), especially in the final section on pp. 113-118? Explain your reasoning (350 words).</p> <p>Beller, Chapters 5-8.</p>
	<h2>Unit II: The Argument for Earlier Origins</h2>
<p>WEEK 4 Tu 2/12 Th 2/14</p>	<p>THE MIDDLE AGES AS ORIGIN POINT Langmuir, Toward a Definition of Antisemitism, 55-99, 301-310. Ebook. https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9912274998502121. Langmuir, Ch. 14.</p>
<p>WEEK 5 Tu 2/19 Th 2/21</p>	<p>THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIAN ANTI-JUDAISM TO MODERN ANTISEMITISM Jacob Katz, From Prejudice to Destruction, 1-22, 34-104. Katz, 245-327.</p>
	<p>WEEK 6 Tu 2/26 Th 2/28</p> <p>A NEW APPROACH TO ANTI-JUDAISM David Nirenberg, Anti-Judaism, Introduction, Ch. 1-3. Nirenberg, Ch. 4-5.</p>
<p>WEEK 7 Tu 3/5 Th 3/7</p>	<p>ANTI-JUDAISM WITHOUT JEWS Nirenberg, Ch. 6-7. Nirenberg, Ch. 8-9</p>
	<p>WEEK 8 Tu 3/12 Th 3/14</p> <p>EXPLAINING ANTI-JUDAISM’S PERSISTENCE INTO MODERNITY Nirenberg, Ch. 10-11</p> <p>Paper 1 due in class (printed copy, 7-8 double-spaced pages):</p> <p>Drawing on everything you have read thus far, take a position on the following statement: The <i>ideas</i> of modern antisemitism were inherently more dangerous than those of earlier forms of anti-Judaism and/or antisemitism.</p> <p>Nirenberg, Ch. 13 and Epilogue</p>
<p>WEEK 9</p>	<p>SPRING BREAK</p>

		Unit III: Contemporary Antisemitism
	WEEK 10	MUSLIM ANTISEMITISM IN EUROPE
	Tu 3/26 Th 3/28	Günther Jikeli, <i>European Muslim Antisemitism</i> , 1-131. Ebook . https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/9911120844202121 Jikeli, 132-285.
	WEEK 11	LEFT-WING ANTISEMITISM
	Tu 4/2 Th 4/4	David Hirsh, <i>Contemporary Left Antisemitism</i> , 1-134. Hirsh, 135-280.
	WEEK 12	AMERICAN WHITE SUPREMACIST ANTISEMITISM
	Tu 4/9 Th 4/11	Jonathan Weisman, <i>Semitism: Being Jewish in the Age of Trump</i> , 1-96. Kevin MacDonald, <i>Understanding Jewish Influence</i> , 1-49. (Canvas) Weisman, 97-224. David Duke, <i>Jewish Supremacism</i> , 1-54. (Canvas) PEW Study Summary, “How Americans Feel about Religious Groups.” (Canvas)
	WEEK 13	THE QUEST FOR A DEFINITION
	Tu 4/16 Th 4/18	Kenneth Marcus, <i>The Definition of Anti-Semitism</i> , 1-105. Marcus, 106-215.
	WEEK 14	ACADEMIC CRITIQUES OF THE TERM “ANTISEMITISM”
	Tu 4/23 Th 4/25	Labendz, “Does Germany Need ‘Antisemitism?’” (2016). (Canvas) Judaken, “Introduction to American Historical Review Roundtable on Anti-Semitism,” (October 2018). (Canvas) POP CULTURE ANTISEMITISM Tom Reiss, “Laugh Riots,” <i>The New Yorker</i> , November 2007. (Canvas) Links to videos by Dieudonné. (Canvas) Compilation of Quenelle Photographs . (Canvas).
Grading Scheme	WEEK 15	ANTI-JEWISH SENTIMENT—THE EMPIRICAL DATA
	Tu 4/30 Th 5/2	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights Survey 2018. (Canvas) Antisemitism in Europe—CNN/ComRes Poll 2018. (Canvas) Paper 2 due in class (printed copy, 8-10 pages): Do the works of Jikeli, Hirsh, and Weisman, the surveys on antisemitism we read, and the instances of twenty-first-century anti-Jewish hate we discussed (e.g., Dieudonné) vindicate the definition of antisemitism advanced by Marcus? In explaining your answer (yes or no), give specific examples from the aforementioned texts and be sure to engage with the arguments made by Labendz and Judaken.
A	≥93%	
AB	87-92%	
B	80-86%	
BC	75-79%	
C	70-74%	
D	60-69%	
F	≤59	

Goals of the History Major

The goal of the history major is to offer students the knowledge and skills they need to gain a critical perspective on the past. Students will learn to define important historical questions, analyze relevant evidence with rigor and creativity, and present convincing arguments and conclusions based on original research in a manner that contributes to academic and public discussions. In History, as in other humanistic disciplines, students will practice resourceful inquiry and careful reading. They will advance their writing and public speaking skills to engage historical and contemporary issues.

To ensure that students gain exposure to some of the great diversity of topics, methodologies, and philosophical concerns that inform the study of history, the department requires a combination of courses that offers breadth, depth, and variety of exposition. Through those courses, students should develop:

1. Broad acquaintance with several geographic areas of the world and with both the pre-modern and modern eras.
2. Familiarity with the range of sources and modes through which historical information can be found and expressed. Sources may include textual, oral, physical, and visual materials. The data within them may be qualitative or quantitative, and they may be available in printed, digital, or other formats. Modes of expression may include textbooks, monographs, scholarly articles, essays, literary works, or digital presentations.
3. In-depth understanding of a topic of their choice through original or creative research.
4. The ability to identify the skills developed in the history major and to articulate the applicability of those skills to a variety of endeavors and career paths beyond the professional practice of history.

Skills Developed in the History Major

DEFINE IMPORTANT HISTORICAL QUESTIONS

1. Pose a historical question and explain its academic and public implications.
2. Using appropriate research procedures and aids, find the secondary resources in history and other disciplines available to answer a historical question.
3. Evaluate the evidentiary and theoretical bases of pertinent historical conversations in order to highlight opportunities for further investigation.

COLLECT AND ANALYZE EVIDENCE

1. Identify the range and limitations of primary sources available to engage the historical problem under investigation.
2. Examine the context in which sources were created, search for chronological and other relationships among them, and assess the sources in light of that knowledge.
3. Employ and, if necessary, modify appropriate theoretical frameworks to examine sources and develop arguments.

PRESENT ORIGINAL CONCLUSIONS

1. Present original and coherent findings through clearly written, persuasive arguments and narratives.
2. Orally convey persuasive arguments, whether in formal presentations or informal discussions.
3. Use appropriate presentation formats and platforms to share information with academic and public audiences.

CONTRIBUTE TO ONGOING DISCUSSIONS

1. Extend insights from research to analysis of other historical problems.
2. Demonstrate the relevance of a historical perspective to contemporary issues.
3. Recognize, challenge, and avoid false analogies, overgeneralizations, anachronisms, and other logical fallacies.

Note on HIS 518 Credit Hours and Workload:

This 3-credit course has 3 hours of group meetings per week (each lecture counts as 1.5 hours according to UW-Madison's credit hour policy). The course also carries the expectation that you will spend an average of at least 2 hours outside of class for every hour in the classroom. In other words, in addition to class time, plan to allot an average of at least 6 hours per week for reading, writing, preparing for discussions, and/or studying for quizzes and exams for this class.

Participation Rubric

I will use the following rubric to grade participation.

	Deficient (0-6)	Competent (7-8)	Excellent (9-10)
Preparation (20) Reading /10 Argument /10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Insufficient attention to reading •Little evidence of attempts to formulate questions on your own 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Close reading of most of the material •You have some questions about the reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You have read the materials critically and actively, with a pen and highlighter in hand and important passages underlined •You have prepared for the seminar by identifying a central question that you want to discuss and you have formulated some provisional responses to it
Listening (20) Reflection /10 Engagement /10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Not actively listening •Little engagement with peers. Unclear whether your contributions to discussion take into account what has already been said. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You listen carefully to the instructor's comments •You respond to questions when asked 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You constantly grapple with arguments and questions by other seminar participants •You engage with your peers by responding to their ideas and recasting them
Speaking (40) Discussion /10 Questioning /10 Focus /10 Reflective /10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Occasional comments, directed mainly toward instructor •Rarely asks questions about seminar discussion or readings •Contributions to seminar are not embedded in discussion •Seldom articulate the larger goals of the discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Frequent contributions •Questions for instructor •Contributions are focused •Some attempts to articulate connections between different viewpoints expressed in seminar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shares thoughts, reactions, thinking process by engaging others directly, speaking to peers •Question unstated assumptions and ask peers and instructors for clarification if something is unclear •Contributions are on point or explain why you are picking up older thread / starting a new one •Evaluate how other people's arguments and observations relate to your own question or hypothesis
Leadership (20) Initiative /10 Collaborative /10		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You help the flow of the discussion along •You are respectful toward others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •You actively orient the discussion to help the seminar reach new insights •You help create a scholarly community with your engagement and consideration for others