

**PURDUE UNIVERSITY**  
*School of Interdisciplinary Studies*  
*Jewish Studies*

**INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH STUDIES**  
**JWST 330 / HIST 302 / POL 493**  
**SPRING 2021**

Olga Lyanda-Geller

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T/TH 10:30-11:45 am, STEW 302

Instructional Modality: Face-to-Face

Office hours: WebEx, by appt.

<https://purdue.webex.com/join/okogan> | 641 799 408

**Course Objectives:** This interdisciplinary course surveys Jewish experience from antiquity to the present. It explores different aspects of intellectual, social, philosophical, political and religious life of the Jewish people. We will also discuss the vibrant and rich history of Jewish culture, language, literature, music and cinema.

**Learning Outcomes:** students will be able to:

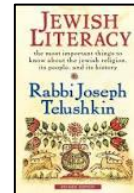
- discuss the history, texts, beliefs, and practices of the Jewish people;
- develop their critical awareness of the complexity of Jewish societies and cultures over the ages;
- discover the power of critical, inter-disciplinary scholarship to comprehend the circumstances and motives shaping Jewish life in the past and in contemporary times.

**Textbooks for the course:**

**Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy: The Most Important Things to Know About the Jewish Religion, Its People, and Its History.***

William Morrow; Revised edition (June 17, 2008) [JL]

ISBN-10: 0061374989, ISBN-13: 978-0061374982.

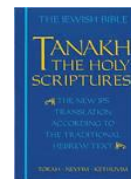


***Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures*** -- The New JPS Translation

According to the Traditional Hebrew Text.

Jewish Publication Society; 1st edition (November 1, 1985). [T]

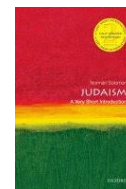
ISBN-10: 0827603665, ISBN-13: 978-0827603660.



**Norman Solomon, *Judaism: A Very Short Introduction.***

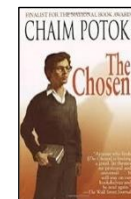
Oxford University Press; 2 edition (September 1, 2014). [J]

ISBN-10: 0199687358, ISBN-13: 978-0199687350



**Chaim Potok, *The Chosen.*** Fawcett (April 12, 1987). [C]

ISBN-10: 0449213447, ISBN-13: 978-0449213445.



**Handouts (available on Brightspace) [H]**

## COURSE POLICIES

**Grading policy:** The grade for the course will be calculated on the following basis:

- 15% – class participation
- 20% – midterm (multiple choice questions + essay)
- 15% – two short quizzes
- 20% – essay (movie / book / own choice – to be discussed with the instructor(s))
- 30% – final examination (multiple choice questions + essay)

### Grading Scale

A+: 97-100	B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D: 60-69
A: 93-96	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	F: 59 or below
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	

**Brightspace postings:** Included in your class participation grade is the requirement to contribute FIVE paragraph-length postings to our Brightspace discussion board ([mycourses.purdue.edu](http://mycourses.purdue.edu)). These may take the form of a comment on the reading, a question, or an idea you want to try out. Basically, this is just a way to continue our discussion outside of the classroom, and to give everyone an opportunity to express their ideas on our works. To receive full credit, you should make your post by 10 p.m. on Monday or Wednesday, and your post should concern the reading(s) to be discussed during the upcoming class.

**Tests and quizzes:** Two quizzes, a midterm and a final exam provide the opportunity for the student to demonstrate the learning of the material and serve as stimuli to keep up with the course. During the course of the semester there will be a midterm and two short quizzes, as indicated on the syllabus. At the end of the course there will be a comprehensive final exam.

**Essay:** There will be a 7-8 page take-home essay written on a topic related to the movie, *Fiddler on the Roof*, or Chaim Potok's book *The Chosen*. You may also write on a topic of your choice related to Jewish Studies; in this case, please discuss your topic with the instructor(s). You are also encouraged to consider submitting your essay for the 2020-2021 *Edward Simon Essay Prize in Jewish Studies* competition <https://cla.purdue.edu/academic/sis/p/jewish-studies/events/barzillaiprize.html>. If you choose doing so, your essay should aim at 9-10 pages.

**Academic Guidance in the Event a Student is Quarantined/Isolated:** If you become quarantined or isolated at any point in time during the semester, in addition to support from the Protect Purdue Health Center, you will also have access to an Academic Case Manager who can provide you academic support during this time. Your Academic Case Manager can be reached at [acmq@purdue.edu](mailto:acmq@purdue.edu) and will provide you with general guidelines/resources around communicating with your instructors, be available for academic support, and offer suggestions for how to be successful when learning remotely. Importantly, if you find yourself too sick to progress in the course, notify your academic case manager and notify me via email or Brightspace. We will make arrangements based on your particular situation. The Office of the Dean of Students ([odos@purdue.edu](mailto:odos@purdue.edu)) is also available to support you should this situation occur.

**Policy on attendance:** Students should stay home and contact the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO) if they feel ill, have any symptoms associated with COVID-19, or suspect they have been exposed to the virus. In the current context of COVID-19, in-person attendance will not be a factor in the final grades, but the student still needs to inform the instructor of any conflict that can

be anticipated and will affect the submission of an assignment or the ability to take an exam. Only the instructor can excuse a student from a course requirement or responsibility.

**Classroom Guidance Regarding Protect Purdue:** The [Protect Purdue Plan](#), which includes the [Protect Purdue Pledge](#), is campus policy and as such all members of the Purdue community must comply with the required health and safety guidelines. Required behaviors in this class include:

- staying home and contacting the Protect Purdue Health Center (496-INFO) if you feel ill or know you have been exposed to the virus,
- wearing a mask [in classrooms and campus building](#), at all times (e.g., no eating/drinking in the classroom),
- wearing face masks and face shields when close proximity work is required, i.e. during conversation with a partner or small group activities (see <https://www.purdue.edu/ehps/rem/worker/covid19/faceshields.html>)
- disinfecting desk/workspace prior to and after use,
- maintaining proper social distancing with peers and instructors (including when entering/exiting classrooms),
- refraining from moving furniture,
- avoiding shared use of personal items,
- maintaining robust hygiene (e.g., handwashing, disposal of tissues) prior to, during and after class,
- and following all safety directions from the instructor.

Students who are not engaging in these behaviors (e.g., wearing a mask) will be offered the opportunity to comply. If non-compliance continues, possible results include instructors asking the student to leave class and instructors dismissing the whole class. Students who do not comply with the required health behaviors are violating the University Code of Conduct and will be reported to the Dean of Students Office with sanctions ranging from educational requirements to dismissal from the university.

Any student who has substantial reason to believe that another person in a campus room (e.g., classroom) is threatening the safety of others by not complying (e.g., not wearing a mask) may leave the room without consequence. The student is encouraged to report the behavior to and discuss next steps with their instructor. Students also have the option of reporting the behavior to the [Office of the Student Rights and Responsibilities](#). See also [Purdue University Bill of Student Rights](#).

**Academic dishonesty:** It is assumed that all students will adhere to the codes of honor and academic ethics as set forth in the University Regulations. Any violation of these codes may result in a failing grade for the course. You can find **Purdue Honor Pledge** at <https://www.purdue.edu/provost/teachinglearning/honor-pledge.html>

**Academic integrity:** Purdue University adheres to the highest standards of academic conduct and intellectual integrity. Make sure you are familiar with Purdue's student guide for academic integrity: <http://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html>

**Nondiscrimination Statement:** Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community which recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and encourages each individual to strive to reach his or her own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. [You can find Purdue's nondiscrimination policy statement at https://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea\\_eou\\_statement.php.](https://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.php)

**Accessibility and Accommodations:** Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You are also encouraged to contact the Disability Resource Center at: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247. More details are available on our course Brightspace under Accessibility Information.

**Mental Health Statement:** Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available.

- If you find yourself beginning **to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try [WellTrack](#)**. Sign in and find information and tools at your fingertips, available to you at any time.
- **If you need support and information about options and resources**, please see the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) for drop-in hours (M-F, 8 am- 5 pm).
- **If you're struggling and need mental health services:** Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) at 765-494-6995 during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

**Campus emergency:** In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances beyond my control. In order to get information about changes in this course, contact me by e-mail: [okogan@purdue.edu](mailto:okogan@purdue.edu). Please review the Emergency Preparedness website for additional information:  
[http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency\\_preparedness/index.html](http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/index.html)

**Incompletes:** The grade of Incomplete may be assigned if the student for reasons of health or family emergency is unable to take the final examination as scheduled. The grade of Incomplete cannot be assigned because the student may fail the examination or because of unsatisfactory performance to the final examination.

**Note to students with disabilities:** If you have special needs related to a disability which may affect your performance in this course, please talk to the instructor privately to discuss your needs.

**College of Liberal Arts Classroom Civility Statement:** Purdue University is committed to fostering diversity and inclusion and welcomes individuals of all ages, religions, sex, sexual orientations, races, nationalities, languages, military experience, disabilities, family statuses, gender identities and expressions, political views, and socioeconomic statuses. Please respect the different experiences, beliefs and values expressed by everyone in this course. Behaviors that threaten, harass, discriminate or that are disrespectful of others will not be tolerated. Inappropriate behaviors will be addressed with disciplinary action, which may include being referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. Purdue's nondiscrimination policy can be found at: [http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea\\_eou\\_statement.html](http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html)

## Tentative Syllabus

### WEEK 1

- January 19 Introduction to Course
- January 21 Jews and Judaism: Identity and Self-Definition  
Reading assignment [R]: **J** 7-54

### WEEK 2

- January 26 Calendar, Practices and Traditions  
R: **J** 55-98
- January 28 Judaism and Modernity  
R: **J** 99-136

### WEEK 3

- February 2 Ancient History  
*Genesis*  
R: **JL** 6-17; **T** 3-40
- February 4 *Genesis*  
R: **JL** 17-28; **T** 40-84

### WEEK 4

- February 9 *Exodus*  
The Early Prophets  
R: **JL** 28-46, 59-62, 70-73, 79-81;
- February 11 The Later Prophets  
R: **JL** 82-87; **T** 85-151, 1405-1417

### WEEK 5

- February 16 **Quiz 1**  
*Job*  
R: **JL** 95-96; **T** 1339-1403
- February 18 *Ecclesiastes*  
R: **JL** 98-100; **T** 1441-1456

**WEEK 6**

February 23 The Second Commonwealth  
R: **JL** 109-144

February 25 Medieval History  
Early Medieval Period  
R: **JL** 171-178, 192-199; Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed* (excerpts) [**H**]

**WEEK 7**

March 2 Late Medieval Period  
R: **JL** 203-232; Spinoza, *Theological-Political Treatise* (excerpts) [**H**]  
Review

March 4 **MIDTERM**

**WEEK 8**

March 9 Modern Period  
R: **JL** 239-249

March 11 Western and Eastern Europe  
R: **JL** 250-263; Buber, *I and Thou* (excerpts) [**H**]

**WEEK 9**

March 16 Israel  
R: **JL** 274-310

March 18 **Reading Day, no class**

**WEEK 10**

March 23 Memory and History  
R: **JL** 383-418

March 25 American-Jewish Life  
R: **JL** 449-481

**WEEK 11**

March 30 East European and Russian Jewry  
R: **JL** 501-512

April 1 Jewish Ethics  
R: **JL** 553-628

**WEEK 12** **Movie screening** this week

April 6 Jewish Cinema  
R: Whitfield, "Fiddling with Sholem Aleichem: A History of *Fiddler on the Roof*"  
[**H**]

April 8           **Quiz 2**  
Movie *Fiddler on the Roof*  
R: C, Chapters 1-9

**WEEK 13**

April 13           **Reading Day, no class**

April 15           **Essay due**  
Chaim Potok, *The Chosen*  
R: C, Chapters 10-18

**WEEK 14**

April 20           Potok

April 22           History of Language  
Jewish Texts  
R: **JL** 3-5, 533-550

**WEEK 15**

April 27           Jewish Humor  
R: Telushkin, *Jewish Humor: What the Best Jewish Jokes Say About the Jews* [**H**]

April 29           Jewish Holidays  
R: **JL**, pp. 631-680  
Review

**May 3-8           Final Exams Week**  
**Good luck on your exams!**