

Oakland University/College of Arts and Sciences/Religious Studies Program

Introduction to Judaism -- REL 1200 -- Fall 2018

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**Joseph Klein is Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Emanu-El (Oak Park) having retired after 16 years as the congregation's Senior Rabbi. He has served congregations in Chattanooga TN, Terre Haute IN and St. Louis, and taught as adjunct professor at Indiana State University, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology and the University of Tennessee/Chattanooga. Rabbi Klein is also Adjunct Professor in the Religion Departments of Rochester College.**

**Religious Studies Mission Statement**

In keeping with the institutional goals of Oakland University to nurture student success, foster an environment for creative endeavors and engage with the general public, Religious Studies undertakes the interdisciplinary exploration of the world's religious traditions, beliefs and practices to develop critical thinking concerning the role of religion and spirituality in human affairs, and to cultivate cross-cultural competencies among students and the broader community.

**Learning Goals for Religious Studies**

Through an interdisciplinary exploration of religion and spirituality, students will enhance their understanding of the histories, peoples, doctrines, rituals, institutions and values associated with various religious traditions. Students will also sharpen their critical thinking skills and better appreciate the ways religion and spirituality shape and are shaped by culture, politics, economics and society. Utilizing an academic approach to the study of religious traditions, cross-cultural competencies will be cultivated enabling students to negotiate increasingly diverse societies and workplaces and a progressively interlinked world.

*Course catalog description:*

Religious beliefs, practices and philosophies embedded within the major historical experiences (Biblical and Diasporic) of Jewish people including main institutional branches of Judaism, central characteristics of Jewish culture, and their relationship with non-Jewish groups and societies. Satisfies the university general education requirement in the global perspective knowledge exploration area. Satisfies the university general education requirement for a writing intensive course in general education. Prerequisite for writing intensive: completion of the university writing foundation requirement. 4.000 Credits (Formerly REL 102)

General Education Learning Outcomes:

Knowledge of the societies and religions of one or more regions outside the United States and awareness of the transnational flow of ideas and values.

Knowledge of the role that different cultural heritages, past and present, play in forming values in another part of the world, enabling the student to function within a more global context.

Cross-Cutting Capacities involved in this course:

1. Effective Communication is promoted through a variety of writing exercises and oral discussions.
2. Critical Thinking is developed through text analysis and various interpretations.
3. Social Awareness in this course is elevated by examining core concepts as they developed over time within the tradition of Judaism. Students are exposed to social and cultural norms of Jews and Judaism that have historical and contemporary relevance for modern problems, matters of difference in the workplace and society, and religious literacy.

*If you do not identify with the name that is listed with the registrar, please notify me so that I may appropriately amend my records. In addition, if you prefer to go by a different pronoun, please inform me.*

*Rabbi Klein does not have a university office, but is available to meet with students on campus by appointment.*

*Students with Disabilities: Students who require special arrangements due to disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Support Services, 103A North Foundation Hall, (248) 370-3266, which acts as an advocate for students with disabilities. For more information, visit <http://www.oakland.edu/dss>*

*Oakland University Writing Center: Students are encouraged to seek assistance from the university writing center, 212 Kresge Library (<https://www.oakland.edu/ouwc/>). Tutoring assistance may be found at the Tutoring Center, 103 North Foundation Hall (<https://www.oakland.edu/tutoring/>).*

Course Objectives:

- Distinguish between and understand America's major Jewish Movements.
- Connect the narrative of Biblical and post-Biblical Jewish history through the 1<sup>st</sup> C CE.
- Be familiar with the texts and development of Rabbinic Judaism from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> C. CE.
- Appreciate the challenge of Theodicy and God's Omnipresence, and the development of the theological concepts of sin, atonement, redemption, salvation, afterlife and messiah.
- Appreciate the Jewish perspective of the "Parting of the Ways" (separation of the Early Christian Church and Rabbinic Judaism.) Develop a general understanding of Jewish/Judaism's interaction with Muslims and Islam, Christians and Christianity.
- Understand the Jewish calendar, the history and current practice of the Jewish Festivals.
- Be familiar with traditional and modern Jewish rites, rituals, and birth to death life-cycle events.

TEXTS:

*Settings of Silver*, Stephen M. Wylen

*Jews, God and History*, Max I. Dimont

*I Asked for Wonder*, Abraham Joshua Heschel

(Recommended *Ancient Israel* (3rd Edition), edited Hershel Shanks)

EXAMS: In-class mid-exam and final exam.

PAPERS:

There will be **three papers** (minimum 1500 words) assigned in the areas of Theology/Philosophy; History; Customs/Ceremonies, due at the completion of each topic.

There will be a **longer research essay** (minimum 2000 words) due near the end of the semester from suggested topics or student's choice, to be turned in for an ungraded initial evaluation of style, grammar and content. The draft will be returned with comments. After revisions it will be resubmitted for final grading.

There will be announced, ungraded, in-class quizzes at the completion of each unit.

*Submitting written work not your own without author attribution is plagiarism. If I suspect plagiarism I will turn the material over to the Dean's Office (as is school policy). If you are found guilty you will fail this class.*

GRADING:

20% for each exam,

30% Papers (10% each)

20% research essay

10% class participation

LETTER GRADES:

A	93-100%	B-	80-82.9%	D+	67-69.9%
A-	90-92.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D	63-66.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C	73-76.9%	F	0-59.9%
B	83-86.9%	C-	70-72.9%		

**Week 1 UNIT ONE: INTRODUCTION**

The “Star of Redemption” SILVER: 1-4  
“Hebrew Scriptures” vs. “Old Testament”  
The Modern Jewish World SILVER: 20  
Orthodox (Traditional), Reform (non-Traditional/Liberal), Conservative, and Reconstructionist Judaism

**Week 2 UNIT TWO: GOD AND THEOLOGY** HESCHEL

God's “Name” and the Knowable Nature of God  
Theodicy and God's Omnipotence

**Week 3**

Sin, Atonement, Punishment  
Redemption, Salvation, Afterlife, Messiah SILVER: 7  
*Quiz #1*

**Week 4 UNIT THREE: HISTORICAL HERITAGE**

*Biblical Period (c. 2000 - 400 BCE)*

Patriarchal Age DIMONT: I; SHANKS: 1-3  
Priestly Age SHANKS: 4  
Confederacy  
Kingdoms SHANKS: 5  
Exile SHANKS: 6  
Restoration  
*Quiz #2*

*Post-Exilic Period (400 BCE - 70 CE)*

**Week 5**

Hellenism DIMONT: II, III; SILVER: 12; SHANKS: 7  
Maccabees and Hasmonians  
Herod the Great and Roman Rule SILVER: 13, SHANKS: 8  
Pharisees and Sadducees

**Week 6**

Life and Death of Jesus  
Mission of Paul  
*Quiz #3*

*Rabbinic Period (70 - 640 CE)*

**Week 7**

Destruction of the Temple SILVER: 14; DIMONT: IV  
Rebuilding of Judaism

**Week 8**

Talmud: Mishnah/G'morrah, Midrash  
*Quiz #4*

**UNIT FOUR: HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS**

Luach (The Jewish Calendar)  
Shabbat (Sabbath) SILVER 8  
Pesach (Passover) SILVER: 10

**Week 9**

Sukkot (Booths)  
Shavuote (Weeks)

SILVER: 11  
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**Week 10**

Rosh Hashana /Yom Kippur  
Chanukah  
Purim

SILVER: 9  
SILVER: 11  
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***Quiz #5*****Week 11 UNIT FIVE: LIFE-CYCLE EVENTS**

Birth  
Bar/Bat Mitzvah  
Marriage  
Conversion

SILVER: 5

**Week 12**

Divorce and Women's Status  
Death, Burial and Mourning

***Quiz #6*****Week 13 UNIT SIX: PERSONAL MITZVOTE AND JEWISH MOVEMENTS**

Kashrute  
Tallit, T'fillin, Kipa, M'zuzza  
The Siddur (Prayerbook)

SILVER: 5  
SILVER: 6

***Quiz #7*****Week 14 UNIT SEVEN: “HOT-BUTTON ISSUES”**

Homosexuality  
Abortion  
Zionism and the State of Israel  
Judaism in the Jewish State  
Anti-Semitism and Interfaith Relations

SILVER: 22  
SILVER: 21