

Antisemitism: A History
JUDS 0063/RELS 0060D
Fall 2024
CRN: 16762

Antisemitism is sometimes called the "longest hatred," and today it is on the rise. This class examines both the how and the why. We will examine the origin and history of the major antisemitic tropes, including the Jew as rapacious capitalist; Christ-killer; socialist; parasite; and White colonialist. Our goal is to explore not only how and why those tropes came to be, but also where and why today some of them endure.

This is an RRP designated course. If I gave "trigger warnings," this class might best come with one. We will be reading many disturbing primary texts, really for almost every class.

Goals

By the end of the semester, you should:

1. Know where, when, and why the major antisemitic tropes arose;
2. Know the basic theories of why antisemitism has endured so long and continues to be endemic;
3. Know how antisemitism has changed in response to historical conditions and how it manifests today;
4. Have developed your analytic, reading, presentation, and writing skills

Instructor

Professor Michael Satlow, Religious Studies and Judaic Studies.

I strongly advise you see me early in the semester, even if you think that you have nothing to discuss. You will be more engaged in the course and I will be more effective if we have had at least one private conversation. If you are uncomfortable meeting with your professors, don't be! You might want to read this article about getting the most out of college: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/17/opinion/college-students.html>.

I seek to cultivate a classroom of mutual respect, seriousness, and inclusiveness. Should you need accommodations, or if there is anything else that I can do to help you to thrive in this class, please talk to me early in the semester.

Resources

We will read three books more or less in their entirety. You should purchase them from the Brown Bookstore or wherever you buy your books. They are:

1. David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (W. W. Norton, 2014), ISBN: 978-0393347913
2. William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (Folger Shakespeare Library, 2009), ISBN: 978-0743477567.
3. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate* (rev. ed. Schocken, 1995). ISBN: 978-0805210477.

Other readings are available through the Library Course Reserve System (linked to our Canvas page) and/or through direct links found in the appropriate Canvas page.

Requirements and Evaluation

Attendance, preparation, and participation. Much of your learning will occur in class, in dialogue with me and your peers. Through discussion you will work out your own ideas about the readings; synthesize ideas; and help your classmates learn. This is why it is so important that you attend class, prepared. You are expected to come to every class prepared and to participate. More than two unexcused absences, coming to class repeatedly unprepared, or misbehavior (e.g., texting during class) could result in loss of up to a grade.

Paper (30%). This paper will be about 2,000 words on a choice of prompts. Due October 10.

Midterm (30%). This is take-home and open book, due November 15.

Final Group Project (30%). This is normally a research paper, although I am open to other suggestions (e.g., develop a podcast) if they would better serve your educational needs. This is due December 17.

Wikipedia modifications (10%). You will improve or add one Wikipedia page entry on antisemitism. Due December 9.

Attendance Policy

There are times when you can, or even should, miss class. If you are sick, I don't want you in class. If you have a family emergency, by all means attend to it – it should take precedence. Maybe you'll have a conflict (rare, I hope) that simply cannot be avoided.

If you miss a class, I will normally not want to see a dean's or health note (I will let you know if I want to see one). Instead, you will have the option to take the class as an "excused" or "unexcused" absence. For an "unexcused" absence, do nothing. You should have no more than two of these for the semester. For an "excused" absence, you must submit, via email, an essay (750-1000 words) that synthesizes the readings for that week and makes an argument. This paper is due 72 hours after class (i.e., if you miss a Tuesday, it is by 10:30 AM on Friday; for a Thursday absence it is due 10:30 AM on Sunday).

Time Expectations

The following “good faith” estimate of time expectations is required on all Brown syllabi by the Dean of the College:

Our accrediting agency requires an expectation of 180 hours of coursework in order to receive four credit hours. This figure will be reached in this class through the following expectations:

- (1) Class meeting: 36 hours;*
- (2) Reading for class (6 hours/week * 12 weeks): 72 hours*
- (3) Writing and projects: 72 hours*

Accessibility and Wellness

If you are sick, take care of yourself, do not come to class, and follow the attendance policies noted above.

I believe strongly that this should be a space accessible to all. We seek to cultivate an atmosphere that is fully inclusive and open to all kinds of diverse viewpoints; it should be both safe and challenging. If anything, at any time, is hindering your learning, please let us know immediately and we will seek to make whatever adjustments are required.

Brown University is committed to full inclusion of all students. Please inform me early in the term if you may require accommodations or modification of any of course procedures. You may speak with me after class, during office hours, or by appointment. If you need accommodations around online learning or in classroom accommodations, please be sure to reach out to Student Accessibility Services (SAS) for their assistance (seas@brown.edu , 401-863-9588).

Undergraduates in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact an academic dean in the College by emailing college@brown.edu.

Academic Integrity

"A student's name on any exercise (e.g., a theme, report, notebook, performance, computer program, course paper, quiz, or examination) is regarded as assurance that the exercise is the result of the student's own thoughts and study, stated in his or her own words, and produced without assistance, except as quotation marks, references, and footnotes acknowledge the use of printed sources or other outside help." (*Academic Code*, p. 5).

I have no tolerance for academic dishonesty (including use of AI). Any violations whatsoever will result in an automatic NC for the course and a referral to the Dean of the College for further disciplinary action.

Tentative Schedule

I reserve the right to modify this schedule as necessary. Assignments are explained in more detail on our Canvas site. In the case of conflict between the syllabus and Canvas, Canvas

always take precedence unless I say otherwise. Note that we will meet (at least once) during Reading Week.

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| September 5 | Introduction |
| September 10 | <p>Antisemitism Today What does modern antisemitism look like today?</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. https://www.ajc.org/the-state-of-antisemitism-in-america-2023-insights-and-analysis 2. Deborah Lipstadt, <i>Antisemitism: Here and Now</i>, pp. 7-25 3. E. Hersh, “Antisemitic Attitudes across the Ideological Spectrum,” <i>Political Research Quarterly</i> 76 (2023): 697-711 4. “Six Key Moments: Hearing on Antisemitism on College Campuses”: https://waysandmeans.house.gov/2024/06/18/six-key-moments-hearing-on-antisemitism-on-college-campuses/ 5. Dara Horn, <i>People Love Dead Jews</i>, 1-14 6. “5 of Kanye West’s Antisemitic Remarks, Explained” (September 27, 2023): https://www.ajc.org/news/5-of-kanye-wests-antisemitic-remarks-explained. |
| September 12 | <p>Defining Antisemitism and What’s at Stake “Antisemitism,” like “racism” and related terms, can be difficult to define. Definitions must be understood contextually and with an eye to the “work” that they are meant to do.</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. U.S. Department of State Definition of Anti-Semitism: https://www.state.gov/defining-anti-semitism/ 2. “Handbook for the Practical Use of the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism” 3. Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism: https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/ 4. Hannah Rosenthal, "Remarks" ("the fifth trend" on p. 2 is the most important paragraph for this class), found here. 5. Elder of Ziyon Definition: https://elderofziyon.blogspot.com/2022/10/a-plea-to-adl-and-others-read-my-paper.html 6. David Feldman, “Toward a History of the Term Anti-Semitism,” <i>American Historical Review</i> 123:4 (2018): 1139-1150 |
| September 17 | <p>Theoretical Approaches to Antisemitism (1) Scholarship on antisemitism exploded after WWII. Today we examine one influential theory of antisemitism.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| | <p><i>Reading:</i> Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Anti-Semite and Jew</i></p> |
| September 19 | <p>Theoretical Approaches to Antisemitism (2) To supplement Sartre, we look at three other theoretical approaches to antisemitism.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H. Arendt, <i>The Origins of Totalitarianism</i>, selections 2. D. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, 1-12 |
| September 24 | <p>The Foundations of Anti-Judaism Texts that express hostility to Jews predate the New Testament. Those that are preserved in the NT, though, have been consequential for the development of antisemitism in the West.</p> <p><i>Reading:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, pp. 13-86 2. Peter Schäfer, <i>Judeophobia</i>, pp. 163-179 3. J. G. Dunn, “The Question of Anti-semitism in the New Testament Writings of the Period,” in J. G. Dunn, ed., <i>Jews and Christians</i>, pp. 177-212 4. Mark 15; Matthew 21-24, 27, 28:13-15; Luke 16:1-18; John 7-8; 2 Corinthians 3:13-15; Galatians 3; 1 Thessalonians 2:14-16; Revelation 3:9 |
| September 26 | <p>Jews in Early Christian Thought</p> <p>From the second century CE on, Christian writers (sometimes called the Church Fathers) elaborated on the role of Jews and Judaism in Christian thought and society.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i> 2. Melito of Sardis (selections) 3. Justin Martyr (selections) 4. Augustine, <i>Faustus</i> 12-13; Exposition of Psalm 59 (selections: https://www.laits.utexas.edu/bodian/la-augustine.html) 5. Ralph Mathisen, “The Citizenship and Legal Status of Jews in Roman Law during Late Antiquity (ca. 300-540 CE),” in <i>Jews in Early Christian Law</i>, ed. John Tolan et al., 2014, 35-53. |
| October 1 | <p>Jews in the American Colonies Guest lecture, readings TBA. [This is, of course, out of chronological order but was necessary for logistical reasons]</p> |

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <p>October 3</p> | <p>Class Canceled: Rosh Hashanah</p> |
| <p>October 8</p> | <p>Ritual Murder and the Blood Libel Two of the most pernicious antisemitic tropes, ritual murder and blood libel, were developed by Christians in the Middle Ages. What are they and how do they work?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, pp. 163-216 2. Irving M. Resnick, "Cruentation, Medieval Anti-Jewish Polemic, and Ritual Murder," <i>Antisemitism Studies</i> 3:1 (2019): 95-131 3. Miri Rubin, <i>Gentile Tales</i>, pp. 7-39 4. Magda Teter, <i>Blood Libel: On the Trail of an Antisemitic Myth</i>, "Introduction," "The Death of Little Simon" (Chapter 2), "Epilogue" 5. Grimm tales (selection) 6. Sara Lipton, "The Words that Killed Medieval Jews," <i>New York Times</i>, December 11, 2015: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/13/opinion/the-words-that-killed-medieval-jews.html |
| <p>October 10</p> | <p>Jews and Money The association of Jews with money is heavily engrained in modern antisemitic discourse. Where did it come from?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> 2. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, pp. 269-299 3. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Prioress's Tale" 4. Theater Review, "The Merchant of Venice": https://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/14/theater/reviews/14merchant.html |
| <p>October 15</p> | <p>Islam and the Jews Islam, like Christianity, has a complicated relationship with Judaism and Jews. Here we look at some foundational texts and issues.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, pp. 135-182 2. M. Bar-Asher, <i>Jews and the Qur'an</i> (Princeton, 2022), chapters 2 and 5 3. Jane Gerber, "Anti-Semitism in the Muslim World," in David Berger, ed., <i>History and Hate: The Dimensions of Anti-Semitism</i> (JPS, 1986), 72-92 4. Qur'an extracts |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| | |
| October 17 | Class Canceled: Sukkot |
| October 22 | <p>The Reformation and Enlightenment Views of Jews and Judaism were reshaped during the Reformation and the Enlightenment, although not always in better ways. We begin to see here the transformation of the motif of how Jews are considered “primitive.”</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, pp. 246-360 2. Martin Luther, “On the Jews and Their Lies” (selections) 3. Statement of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: https://lutheranreformation.org/history/luther-and-the-jews/ |
| October 24 | Canceled: Sukkot |
| October 29 | <p>The Nineteenth Century: Europe and America Where did Jews fit in secular societies of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, pp. 361-459 2. <i>General Order No. 11</i> (1862) and texts dealing with it, in Jacob Rader Marcus, <i>The Jew in the American World: A Source Book</i> (Wayne State University Press, 1996), 196-202 3. Robert S. Wistrich, <i>A Lethal Obsession: Anti-semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad</i>, pp. 318-361 4. Excerpts on the Dreyfus Affair, in Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, <i>Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology</i> (Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 90-103 |
| October 31 | <p>Capitalists or Communists? How is it that Jews become smeared by capitalists on the one hand and communists on the other?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jerry Muller, <i>Capitalism and the Jews</i>, pp. 72-188 2. Karl Marx, “On the Jewish Question” |
| November 5 | <p>Protocols of the Elders of Zion The “Protocols of the Elders of Zion”, a counterfeit document probably made by the Russian police in the early twentieth century, has had a profound impact. What is it and what does it say? How was it read in the early twentieth century?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>The Protocols of the Elders of Zion</i> 2. Excerpts from <i>The International Jew</i>, in <i>Antisemitic Myths</i>, pp. 144-147 3. Vincent Curcio, <i>Henry Ford</i> (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 131-158 4. Richard Frankel, "One Crisis Behind? Rethinking Antisemitic Exceptionalism in the United States and Germany," <i>American Jewish History</i> 97 (2013): 235-258 <p>Note that we do not meet this day due to the Election. There will, however, be an online assignment.</p> |
| November 7 | <p>Fascism Guest lecturer, readings TBA</p> |
| November 12 | <p>Modern Right-Wing Antisemitism Is there a distinctive quality to right-wing antisemitism? How does one define it?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ashley Reichelman, et al., "The Perpetual Scapegoat" (available here) 2. Savvas Zannettou, et al., "A Quantitative Approach to Understanding Online Antisemitism" (available here) 3. Rachel Kranson, "Rethinking the Historiography of American Antisemitism in Wake of the Pittsburgh Shooting" (available here) 4. Watch the video lecture on "Antisemitism and White Supremacy" available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbURoLaDw4I <p>Try to listen to one of the episodes produced by David Duke on this page. Be forewarned that these are pretty vile, but they can serve as an example of primary source material.</p> |
| November 14 | <p>Antisemitism, Gender, and Race One confusing aspect about antisemitism relates to how we categorize "Judaism" and "Jewishness". Religion, race, ethnicity, all, or none? Why does it matter?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Étienne Balibar, "Racism and Nationalism," in Étienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, <i>Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities</i> (trans. Chris Turner; Verso, 1991), 37-67 2. Walter Laqueur, <i>The Changing Face of Antisemitism: From Ancient Times to the Present Day</i> (Oxford University Press, 2006), |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| | <p>91-106</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Judith Weisenfeld, "On Not Being Jewish...and Other Lies: Reflections on <i>Racial Fever</i>," <i>Soundings</i> 96 (2013): 3-11 <i>Joshua Bonadona v. Louisiana College et al.</i>, U.S. Dist. Court civil action no. 18-cv-0224 |
| November 19 | <p>Antisemitism and the Left</p> <p>Left-wing antisemitism has a different set of characteristics from that on the right. What is it? Over the next few classes we will go into some of the issues associated with this kind of antisemitism.</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Jerry Muller, <i>Capitalism and the Jews</i>, 189-218 Sina Arnold, "From Occupation to Occupy: Antisemitism and the Contemporary Left in the United States," in Alvin Rosenfeld, ed., <i>Deciphering the New Antisemitism</i> (Indiana University Press, 2015), 375-404 Bari Weiss, <i>How to Fight Antisemitism</i> (Crown, 2019), 84-130 Blake Flayton, "On the Frontlines of Progressive Anti-Semitism," <i>New York Times</i>, November 14, 2019: https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/14/opinion/college-israel-anti-semitism.html |
| November 21 | <p>Blacks and Jews</p> <p>Blacks and Jews in the United States have a complicated history driven by race and the concept of "whiteness." Are Jews "White"? What's at stake? Guest lecture</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> T. Johnson and J. Berlinerblau, <i>Blacks and Jews in America: An Invitation to Dialogue</i> (Georgetown UP, 2022), 1-55 James Baldwin, "Negroes are Anti-Semitic Because They're Anti-White," <i>New York Times</i> (April 9, 1967) Excerpts on the Nation of Islam, in Marvin Perry and Frederick M. Schweitzer, <i>Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology</i> (Indiana University Press, 2008), pp. 291-306 |
| November 26 | <p>Feminism</p> <p>Feminist circles have sometimes been hostile to Jewish women (and not just Jews who support Israel). Where does this come from?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "Gender and the Politics of Anti-Semitism," <i>American Historical Review</i> 123:4 (2018): 1210-1222 S. Gollance and K. Wallach, "Introduction: When Feminism and |

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| | <p>Antisemitism Collide,” <i>Feminist German Studies</i> 39(1):2023, 1-23.</p> <p>3. K. Pollitt, “Why Have Feminists Been So Slow to Condemn the Hamas Rapes?” <i>The Nation</i>, December 15, 2023: https://www.thenation.com/article/world/feminists-hamas-rapes/</p> |
| December 3 | <p>Islamist Antisemitism</p> <p>Antisemitism has been a notable feature of modern Islamist movements. Where did it come from and what are its features?</p> <p><i>Readings:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i>, pp. 135-182 2. Rivka Yadlin, “Anti-Jewish Imagery in the Contemporary Arab-Muslim World,” in <i>Demonizing the Other</i>, pp. 309-321 3. Esther Webman, “From the Damascus Blood Libel to the ‘Arab Spring’” 4. J. Herf, <i>Three Faces of Antisemitism</i> (Routledge, 2024), pp. 203-210. |
| December 5 | <p>Antisemitism, Antizionism, and College Campuses</p> <p>Guest lecturer, readings TBA</p> |
| December 10 | <p>Antisemitism, Antizionism, and College Campuses</p> <p>Guest lecturer, readings TBA</p> |
| December 12 | <p>Presentations and Conclusions</p> |