

Attention!

This is a representative syllabus. The syllabus for the course you are enrolled in will likely be different.

Please refer to your instructor's syllabus for more information on specific requirements for a given semester.

NELC7880/ History 7881
Judaism in the Greco-Roman World

When the Greeks conquered the land of Israel (Judea) in 333 BCE, human history was changed forever. The centuries that followed saw the growth of apocalyptic communities, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jewish philosophers who synthesized biblical teaching with Greek thought, the life of Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity, the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple, and the rise of the Rabbis as Jewish leaders. This course will be a historical seminar on the sources and events that shaped ancient Judaism in this crucial place and time. We will pay particular attention to the Greco-Roman environment in which ancient Judaism flourished.

Our study of Judaism in the Greco-Roman world will proceed along three lines: (1) the study of the historical circumstances surrounding the development of Judaism in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods; (2) the literary sources created during these periods, ranging from the philosophical works of Philo of Alexandria to the Babylonian Talmud; and (3) the varieties of religion and culture that constituted Judaism in this environment. This will allow us to use several disciplines in our study, such as history, archaeology, literary studies, and religious and cultural studies.

I. Texts:

- A. These required texts are available at the Student Book Exchange (SBX) on High Street and will be placed on reserve in the Main Library:
1. Peter Schäfer, *The History of the Jews in the Greco-Roman World*. A concise, reliable historical survey.
 2. Lawrence H. Schiffman, (ed.), *Texts and Traditions* (=TT in this syllabus). An anthology of ancient texts in translation from Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin relating to the course material. Please bring this book to class when it is assigned.
 3. Lee I, Levine, *Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* A survey of the evidence for Hellenism and its effects in the Jewish world in antiquity.
 4. Lawrence H. Schiffman, *The Eschatological Community of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. An excellent portrait of the Qumran community's organization and messianic ideology.
 5. A few assigned readings are from e-books available at the OSU library **online**; these are designated as such in the syllabus. You can read them by logging on to OSCAR and following the link in the catalog entry for the book from which the reading is assigned and clicking on the link to the book
 6. Chapters from *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, especially volumes 3 and 4, will be assigned (=CHJ3 or CHJ4 in this syllabus). These are also available online through OSCAR. Search for *The Cambridge History of Judaism* and it should yield a link to the Cambridge Histories Online:
<http://library.ohio-state.edu/record=b7126823~S7>

Hardback copies of all volumes are also available in the Grand Reading Room of the Thompson Library and the Law Library. These volumes are excellent resources for further reading, presentations, or research papers.

7. A modern, accurate **Bible translation** containing the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), the New Testament, and the Apocrypha. Recommended translations: *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*, *Oxford Study Bible*, and *The Jerusalem Bible* (published by Doubleday). *Tanakh* (Jewish Publication Society) is an excellent translation of the Hebrew Bible, but you will have to have a separate translation including the New Testament and Apocrypha.

The following translations are not acceptable for this course: *The Good News Bible*; *New International Version*; *The Living Translation*, the King James version (also called the Authorized Version); and paraphrases such as *The Book* and the *Reader's Digest Condensed Bible*. Please consult with me if you have any questions.

- B. Articles and excerpts will be made available on the **CARMEN** website for this course (listed under NELC 7880). Readings available on Carmen are marked with an asterisk (*). Please print out any primary sources and bring them to class.

II. Class requirements

- A. **Preparation of assigned readings and participation in class discussion will be an essential part of this course.** Much of the class time will be spent discussing issues raised by the readings, by the instructor, and by fellow members of the seminar. The extent to which you take part in informed discussion will be a significant indicator of your success in this class. (20% of the grade).

There are no language requirements for this course. However, each student will be expected to bring his or her expertise in language and other disciplines to the discussion and seminar presentations.

- B. **Two brief seminar presentations**, each to be delivered in class and accompanied by a summary 2-3 pages long. The paper should be presented extemporaneously and will last 15-20 minutes plus 10 minutes for discussion. One is to be given in the first half of the quarter and the second one in the second half. **Each topic and a date must be agreed upon by the student and instructor in advance.** Topics will be listed in the syllabus, but students may select another topic in advance with the instructor's approval. Students should meet with me at office hours to discuss the topic and bibliography. (20% each paper):

- a. **One short book report** on a work of scholarship (secondary literature) relevant to the class session. This report is not meant to be a major investigative paper or a comprehensive account but is meant to provide the class with a summary or overview of the book. Sometimes the report will be a fuller account of a book or text which the class will read in excerpts.

OR

One short presentation on a primary text agreed upon by the student and instructor in advance. Like the book report, it is not meant to be a major investigative paper or a comprehensive account but is meant to provide the class with a guide to the main critical issues involved in reading the primary source. Usually the presentation will be on a text read in full or in excerpts by the class.

- b. **One position paper**, to be presented in class. In this paper you are to select a historical or cultural issue relating to Judaism in the Greco-Roman world, define the problem and the main terms of the debate, and suggest a position on the problem.
- C. At every class session, students will be asked alternately to **start off the discussion** of a particular reading by offering a few comments and questions. There is no formal presentation or writing component to this assignment and the frequency will depend on the size of the class and the nature of the readings. You will simply be asked at least a week in advance to be responsible for initiating the class discussion of one of the articles or sources. (20%)
- D. **One term paper** 10-15 pages in length. This paper is to be an examination of a topic on a historical or cultural topic relating to Judaism in the Greco-Roman world and should be based on current scholarship. This paper is due at the NELC department office (Hagerty 300) on **Tuesday, April 30, at 12:00 noon**. A topic, preliminary bibliography, and approach must be approved by the instructor by the seventh week of class. (20%). Graduate students who are writing a thesis this semester may request to be exempt from this requirement and do an in-class report instead.
- E. As the Departments of Comparative Studies, History, Classics, Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, and other units schedule **lectures by visiting faculty** on topics related to religious studies and the ancient world, you may be asked to attend a lecture from time to time and to be prepared to discuss it in class. You will be notified well in advance.

III. PLEASE NOTE:

- A. **University policy regarding academic misconduct such as cheating and plagiarism will be strictly enforced.** It is important that you understand what constitutes plagiarism and academic misconduct. Please review the University's rules and definitions at http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp
- B. This course is designed so that much of our learning will take place in the classroom. Therefore, **your attendance at classes will be critical to your success in the course.** You are responsible for information and assignments

given in class, whether you were present or not. Late papers and exams will not be accepted.

IV. Class Schedule

This schedule is subject to change; you will be notified in advance. In this schedule, every Arabic numeral (such as 1) designates a week of class and a single class session. Please note: You are responsible for information and assignments given in class, whether you were present or not.

1. Judaism in History and Culture
 - In-class readings

2. The Bible, the Second Temple, and the origins of Judaism
 - *Jaffee, *Early Judaism*, ch. 1
 - Schäfer, chs. 1-2
 - *Safrai, “The Temple”
 - TT ch. 3
 - Bible: Genesis 1-3, Exodus 1-23, Leviticus 1-16

Position Papers:

 - Temples outside Jerusalem
 - Bezalel Porten, *Archives from Elephantine; The Life of an Ancient Jewish Military Colony*; Alan D. Crown, *The Samaritans*
 - The Function and Status of the Priesthood in the Second-Temple Period
 - Background: James C Vanderkam, *From Joshua to Caiaphas : High Priests after the Exile*; Seth Schwartz *Josephus and Judean Politics*; Robert A. Kugler, *From Patriarch to Priest: the Levi-Priestly Tradition from Aramaic Levi to Testament of Levi*

3. Hellenism and Judaism
 - Schäfer, chs. 3-4
 - TT ch. 4
 - Levine, ch. 1
 - Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom* (available online at OSCAR), chs. 1, 4 and 5.

Reports:

- Arnaldo Momigliano, *Alien Wisdom*
- Elias Bickerman, *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees*
- 1 Maccabees
- Apocrypha: Ecclesiasticus (also known as Sirach or the Wisdom of Ben Sira)

Position papers:

- What caused the Maccabean Revolution?
- Hellenism as a Culture in the Mediterranean

4. The Diaspora
- TT, ch 5
 - Shaye J. D Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (available online at OSCAR) Chapter 2 (pp. 25-68).
 - CHJ3, Smallwood, “The Diaspora in the Roman period before ce 70.”
 - CHJ4, Linder, “The Legal Status of the Jews in the Roman Empire”
 -

Reports

- John Gager, *The Origins of Anti-Semitism*
- Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness*
- Letter of Aristeas
- Philo, On the Migration of Abraham

Position papers

- Philo as a Philosopher
 - Background: Samuel Sandmel, *Philo of Alexandria: An Introduction*; David Winston, *Logos and mystical theology in Philo of Alexandria*; David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria: An Annotated Bibliography 1987-1996*
- The legal status of Jews in the Roman World
 - Background: Mary Smallwood, *Jews under Roman Rule*, Philo, *Legatio ad Gaium* (ed. Smallwood).

5. Sectarianism in the Second Commonwealth

- Schäfer, chs. 5-6
- TT pp. 266-99
- *Albert Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era* chs. 1, 4
- *Jacob Neusner, *From Politics to Piety*, chs. 1 and 5

Reports:

- Morton Smith, *Palestinian Parties and Politics that Shaped the Old Testament*
- Albert Baumgarten, *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era*
- Josephus, *Against Apion*
- The Halakhic Letter from Qumran (4QMMT)

Position papers:

- Who were the Pharisees?
 - Background: Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees*; Saldarini, *Pharisees, Scribes and Sadducees*; Rivkin, *A Hidden Revolution*

- The value of Josephus as a historian
 - Background: Tessa Rajak, *Josephus, the Historian and His Society*; Shaye Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*; Seth Schwartz, *Josephus and Judean Politics*

6. The Dead Sea Scrolls and Apocalyptic Judaism

- TT pp. 306-7, 336-67
- Schiffman, *Eschatological Community*
- *Schiffman and Vanderkam, in Shanks, *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*
- *Jonathan Z. Smith, “Wisdom and Apocalyptic”
- *1 Enoch (selections)

Reports:

- John J. Collins (ed.), *Apocalypse: Morphology of a Genre* (= *Semeia* vol. 14 [1979])
- John Kampen and Moshe J. Bernstein (eds.), *Reading 4QMMT*
- The War Scroll (1QM)
- 1 Enoch

Position papers:

- Who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?
 - Background: Lawrence Schiffman, *Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls*; E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ* (ed. Vermes, 1973), vol. 2 pp. 555-74; James Vanderkam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* and references cited there.
- Jewish Messianism in the Second Temple Period
 - Background: Gershom Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, ch. 1; James H. Charlesworth, Hermann Lichtenberger and Gerbern S. Oegema (eds.), *Qumran-Messianism: Studies on the Messianic Expectations in the Dead Sea Scrolls*; Baumgarten, *Flourishing of Sects in the Maccabean Period*

7. Judaism and the Origins of Christianity

- TT ch. 8
- Bible: Mark
- *Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*
- TBA

Reports

- Boyarin, *The Jewish Gospels*
- The Letters of Paul
- The Gospel of Thomas

Position papers

- The Search for the Historical Jesus

- Background: Marvin Meyer and Charles Hughes, eds., *Jesus Then & Now: Images of Jesus in History and Christology* chs. 1-7; Robert W. Funk et al, *The Five Gospels: the Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, Introduction; James M. Robinson, *A New Quest of the Historical Jesus and Other Essays*; Geza Vermes, *Jesus the Jew*
 - The Synoptic Gospels and Q
8. Destruction and Restoration
- TT ch. 9
 - Schäfer, chs. 7-9
 - Levine, ch. 2
 - CHJ3, Shaye J. D. Cohen, “The Rabbi in Second-Century Jewish Society”

Reports

- Francis Schmidt, *How the Temple Thinks*
- The Temple Scroll

Position papers

- The Causes of the First Jewish Revolt
 - Background: Richard A. Horsley. *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs*; Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman (eds.), *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*; Josephus, *The Jewish War*
- The Bar Kokhba Rebellion
 - Background: Yigal Yadin, *Bar Kokhba*; Peter Schäfer (ed.), *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered*, Hanan Eshel, “The Bar Kochba Revolt, 132–135,” CHJ3.

9. Rabbinic Society and Culture

- Schäfer, ch. 10
- TT, ch. 10
- Levine, ch. 3
- *Neusner, “Map without Territory”
- *S. Schwartz, “The Political Geography of Rabbinic Texts”
- *Swartz, “Scholasticism as a Comparative Category and the Study of Judaism”

Reports

- Seth Schwartz, *Judaism and Imperial Society*
- Catherine Hezser, *The Social Structure of the Rabbinic Movement in Roman Palestine*

Position papers

- Is there History in Rabbinic Literature?

- Background: Jacob Neusner, *Development of a Legend*; W. S. Green, “William Scott Green, "What's in a Name?—The Problematic of Rabbinic 'Biography',” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*,”
 - Orality and Rabbinic Literature
 - Martin Jaffee, *Torah in the Mouth*; Y. Elman, *Authority and Tradition*; Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*
10. Rabbis and Christians
- TT pp.414-27
 - *Shaye J.D. Cohen, “The Significance of Yavneh”
 - *Boyarin, *Border Lines*, chs. 2-3
 - *Schiffman, “At the Crossroads: Tannaitic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism”
- Reports
- Daniel Boyarin, *Border Lines*
 - Schiffman, *Who Was a Jew?*
 - Mishnah Avot
 - The Gospel of Thomas
11. Mishnah and Jewish Law
- TT, pp. 619-632
 - *Mishnah Yoma, Shabbat (selections)
- Reports:
- Jonathan Schofer, *The Making of a Sage: A Study in Rabbinic Ethics*
 - James Kugel, *In Potiphar's House*
 - Mishnah Yoma
- Position papers
- Talmudic Logic
 - Background: Louis Jacobs, *Studies in Talmudic Logic*; H. Eilberg-Schwartz, “Myth, Inference, and the Relativism of Reason,” in F. Reynolds and D. Tracy, *Myth and Philosophy*; N. Janowitz, “Rabbinic Methods of Inference and the Rationality Debate,” *Journal of Religion* 72 (1992) 491-511.
 - Women in Rabbinic law and civilization
 - Judith Romney Wegner, *Chattel or Person?: The Status of Women in the Mishnah*; Judith Hauptman, *Rereading the Rabbis*; Tal Ilan, *History of Jewish Women in Late Antiquity*; Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine*
12. Midrash and Aggadah
- *Judah Goldin, *The Song at the Sea*

- *James Kugel, “Two Introductions to Midrash”

Position papers

- Midrash and Literary Theory
 - Background: G. Hartman and S. Budick, *Midrash and Literature*; D. Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*; David Stern, *Midrash and Theory*

13. Judaism in Babylonia

- TT, pp. 633-670
- *Robert Goldenberg, “Talmud”
- CHJ4, Gafni, “The Political, Social, and Economic History of Babylonian Jewry”
- *Elman, “Acculturation to Elite Persian Norms and Modes of Thought in the Babylonian Jewish Community of Late Antiquity”

Position Papers

- The Talmudic Academy: Institution, household, or both?
 - David Goodblatt, *Rabbinic Instruction in Sasanian Babylonia*; I. Gafni, “Political, Social, and Economic History,” R. Brody, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture*, R. Kalmin, *Sages, Stories, Authors and Editors in Rabbinic Babylonia*; J. L. Rubinstein, “The Rise of the Babylonian Rabbinic Academy: A Re-examination of the Talmudic Evidence,” *Jewish Studies, an Internet Journal* 1 (2001), <http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/jsij1.html>
- Judaism and Zoroastrianism
 - Background, Y. Elman, “Acculturation;” Neusner, *Judaism, Christianity, and Zoroastrianism in Talmudic Babylonia*; Shaked, “Zoroastrian Polemics against Jews in the Sasanian and Early Islamic Period, *Irano-Judaica* 2(1990), 85-104.

14. The Synagogue and Its Literature

- TT, pp. 657-670, ch. 13
- Levine, ch. 4, Epilogue
- Yahalom, “Piyyut as Poetry”
- *piyyut (selections)

Reports

- Baruch Bokser, *The Origins of the Seder*
- Steven Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World*
- *Sepher Ha-Razim* (trans. Michael Morgan)
- The synagogue at Sepphoris

Position papers

- The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Synagogue
 - Background: Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years*; Steven Fine, *This Holy Place; Art and Ancient Judaism*; R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*

15. Magic and Mysticism

- *Swartz, “Jewish Magic in Late Antiquity,” “Jewish Visionary Tradition”
- *Hekhalot Rabbati (selections)
- *Sefer ha-Razim (selections)

Position Papers

- Jewish Elements in Greco-Roman Magic
 - Background: Gideon Bohak, *Ancient Jewish Magic*; Morton Smith, *Studies in the Cult of Yahweh*; Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkavah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*
- The Babylonian Magical Bowls
 - Background: Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts*; Naveh and Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls; Magic Spells and Formulae*; D. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls*

Reports

- Boustán, *From Martyr to Mystic: Rabbinic Martyrology and the Making of Merkavah Mysticism*
- Sefer Yetsirah (the Book of Formation)
- *Sefer Ha-Razim* (Trans. M. Morgan)