



HISTORY 283/500 & JEWISH STUDIES 431

FALL 2015

# What is Antisemitism?

Professor Amos Bitzan

THURSDAYS 8:50-10:45 AM

5245 MOSSE HUMANITIES

IMAGE: A Soviet propaganda poster (1927-1930) asks, "Who is an antisemite?" The answer: "Capitalists, the bourgeoisie, and tsarists." SOURCE: [yivo](http://yivo.org).

Fears of a global resurgence of antisemitic speech and violence have made international headlines over the past decade. In 2015, the *New York Times* [reported](#) on these fears in the wake of a hostage-taking at a Paris kosher supermarket by a terrorist who targeted Jewish shoppers in order to express support for the *Charlie Hebdo* killings.<sup>1</sup> Closer to home, some students and outside observers have expressed alarm about antisemitism on college campuses, which they link to a rise in activism targeted at the state of Israel (see for example this account of a 2015 [case](#) at UCLA).<sup>2</sup> Others

have denied that antisemitism is on the rise.

Unfortunately, contemporary debates rarely define the term or consider the history of antisemitism. Our seminar will pursue the following questions:

1. What have been the origins, causes, and motivations of antisemitism in history?
2. What are its connections to religion and to secular ideologies?
3. How (if at all) does antisemitism differ from racism or other forms of prejudice?

## Course Requirements

Intense <a href="#">discussion</a>	25%
Three <a href="#">Short Papers</a> 250-350 words each	30%
<a href="#">Long Paper</a> 1800-2400 words	20%
<a href="#">Peer Review Report</a> 600 words	5%
<a href="#">Rewrite of Long Paper</a> 1500-2400 words	20%

## Office Hours

Tuesdays 2:30-4:30 PM

4116 Mosse Humanities

[abitzan@wisc.edu](mailto:abitzan@wisc.edu)

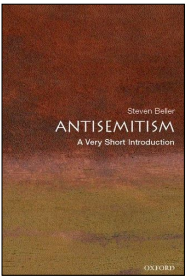
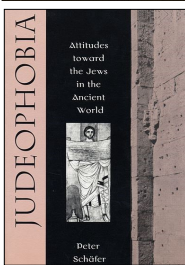
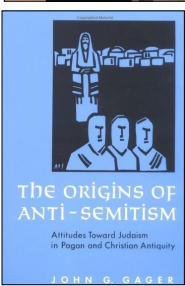
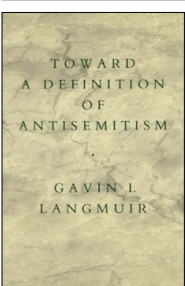
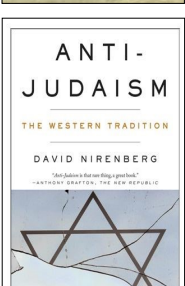
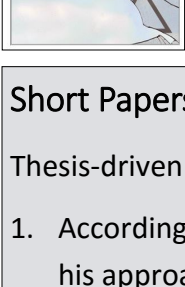
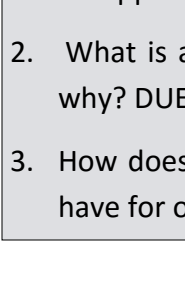

608.263.1812

1. Dan Bilefsky, "Fear on Rise, Jews in France Weigh an Exit," *New York Times*, January 12, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1y7mf9w>.

2. Adam Nagourney, "In U.C.L.A. Debate Over Jewish Student, Echoes on Campus of Old Biases," *New York Times*, March 5, 2015, <http://nyti.ms/1A2Hnen>.

## Course Objectives (See also: [Goals of the History Major](#))

- Practice making rigorous arguments that take seriously opposing positions
- Use historical thinking to address contemporary issues with nuance
- Learn to read difficult works of scholarship with an eye for the argument
- Gain mastery over a historical problem by constructing, dismantling, and rebuilding narratives about it

	1	9/3	<b>Seminar Introduction</b>
	2		<b>Opening Argument</b>
		9/10	Steven Beller, <i>Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). <a href="#">9780192892775</a>
	3		<b>Ancient Origins I</b>
	4		Peter Schäfer, <i>Judeophobia: Attitudes toward the Jews in the Ancient World</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997). <a href="#">9780674487772</a>
	5		<b>Ancient Origins II</b>
	6	9/24	John Gager, <i>The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity</i> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983). <a href="#">9780195033168</a>
	7	10/1	<b>Medieval Europe</b>
	8		Gavin I. Langmuir, <i>Toward a Definition of Antisemitism</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). <a href="#">9780520908512</a>
	9		Part 2: Anti-Judaism (55-134), Part 4: Irrational Fantasies (195-298), and Part 5: Antisemitism (299-352).
	10	10/8	<b>Anti-Judaism I</b>
	11		David Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition</i> (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2013). <a href="#">9780393058246</a> . Introduction to Chapter 6 (1-216).
	12		SHORT PAPER #3 DUE
	13	10/15	<b>Anti-Judaism II</b>
	14		Nirenberg, <i>Anti-Judaism</i> . Chapter 7 to Chapter 11 (217-386).

### Short Papers (see [Guidelines](#) on p. 4)

Thesis-driven essays of 250-350 words each; submit at beginning of seminar in which they are due.

1. According to Beller, what is antisemitism and how did it come about? What is a significant shortcoming of his approach? DUE 9/10
2. What is a significant point of disagreement between Gager and Schäfer? Who is more persuasive and why? DUE 9/24
3. How does Nirenberg differ in his approach from other scholars? What implications does this difference have for our understanding of antisemitism? DUE 10/8

	8	10/22	<b>Modernity</b> Jacob Katz, <i>From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933</i> (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). <a href="#">9780674325074</a>
	9	10/29	<b>Political Antisemitism</b> Peter Pulzer, <i>The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). <a href="#">9780674771666</a>
	10	11/5	<b>Nazi Antisemitism</b> Jeffrey Herf, <i>The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda during World War II and the Holocaust</i> (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008). <a href="#">9780674027381</a>
	11	11/12	<b>Racism</b> Francisco Bethencourt, <i>Racisms: From the Crusades to the Twentieth Century</i> (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2014). <a href="#">9780691155265</a>
	12	11/19	<b>Peer Review Workshop</b> Long Paper (1800-2400 words = 6-8 pages) DUE
	13	11/26	No Seminar (Thanksgiving)
	14	12/3	<b>Contemporary Antisemitism I</b> Alvin Rosenfeld, ed., <i>Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives</i> (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013). <a href="#">9780253008787</a> Chapters 1-2: Antisemitism and Anti-Zionism; 3: Britain; 4: Spain; 5: France; 10: European Muslims
	15	12/10	<b>Contemporary Antisemitism II</b> <i>Resurgent Antisemitism</i> . Chapters 8-9: Eastern Europe; 11: Turkey; 12: Iran; 13: Israel; 14: Roots of Antisemitism in the Middle East
	16	12/17	No Seminar. Long Paper Rewrite (3000-4500 words = 10-15 pages) DUE

**Long Paper** (See [Guidelines](#) p. 5)

1800-2400 words = 6-8 pages DUE 11/19 in class

Draw on your short papers, the readings, and discussions of the semester to develop your own argument about ONE of the following:

1. the origins, causes, and motives of antisemitism
2. the definition of antisemitism
3. whether a contemporary case (such as [the incident at UCLA](#)) constitutes antisemitism
4. how anti-Zionism or anti-Israel activism might or might not be antisemitic (refer to specific cases).

Those enrolled in 500 should aim for the upper word limit.

**Peer Review Report** (See [Guidelines](#) p. 7)

600-900 words = 2-3 pages DUE 12/3 in class

Write a detailed assessment of a fellow seminar participant's paper, focusing on the thesis and the evidence used to support it. Suggest what readings and discussions over the course of the semester might contradict the paper's claims.

**Long Paper Rewrite** (See [Guidelines](#) p. 7)

3000-4500 words = 10-15 pages DUE 12/17

Using the peer review report and my feedback as a starting point, rewrite your paper. Be sure to incorporate the new material discussed in the last weeks of the course.

# Guidelines for Short Papers

In this handout, we will work through the building blocks for a short paper that tackles a sample question similar to the ones assigned in this course:

According to Cohen, why did anti-Jewish views change in the medieval period? Suggest one critique of his argument.

## Introduction

The introduction for a short paper like this should invoke the question explicitly and clearly communicate your thesis as an answer. Construct your thesis using the components below.

#	COMPONENT	PURPOSE	EXAMPLE
1	Descriptive Claim	Tell the reader something significant but not obvious that you noticed in the book's approach: for example, the work deals primarily with one type of source.	In <i>The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism</i> (1982), Jeremy Cohen focuses on the increased emphasis on transubstantiation in Christian theology, [...]
2	Interpretive Claim	Explain the reasons for what you noticed and summarized in the descriptive claim: for example, how does it fit into the author's argument? Be sure to frame your claim in the terms of the question.	[...] in order to explain why medieval attitudes toward Jews changed so dramatically in the 12th century. Cohen argues that a shift in religious ideas about the body of Christ led to a new wave of aggressive anti-Jewish agitation in the 13th century.
3	Roadmap	Orient your reader very briefly by outlining the flow of your argument.	In the following essay, I will analyze Cohen's argument in greater detail by concentrating on his use of discourses by learned Churchmen. I will then suggest one way in which Cohen's own evidence seems to contradict his claims. <sup>1</sup>
4	Stakes Claim	Present a brief critique of some aspect of the author's argument or suggest how the book revises our understanding of related questions.	Descriptions of popular practices by clerical elites cited by Cohen seem to suggest that ordinary people rather than elite scholars spearheaded the rise of new anti-Jewish ideas.

Note: Question 2 asks you to explain how two works disagree. In this case, your descriptive claim will contain two linked observations—one about Schäfer's book and one about Gager's. Your interpretive claim will contain your explanation of how those observations reflect a disagreement between the two authors.

## The Body

Provide one more specific, well-chosen example(s) from the book(s) and analyze it to demonstrate your thesis to your reader. Use topic sentences to link each paragraph to your thesis. For the purpose of this essay, short in-text parenthetical citations are sufficient. Format: "According to Cohen, the preaching of Dominican and Franciscan friars undermined the Augustinian model (Cohen 15)."

## Conclusion

Instead of ending with a conclusion, your paper's last paragraph should argue for your "Stakes Claim" and answer the second part of the assignment question, e.g., by critiquing the author's argument.

<sup>1</sup>This description of Cohen's argument is actually incorrect. I have provided it here only as an example of how a thesis could look.

### Evaluation Criteria

To evaluate your short papers, I will use a rubric similar to the one used for the Long Paper ([see p. 6](#)) but modified slightly to reflect the smaller scale and more limited expectations. Note that the short papers can use in-text parenthetical references rather than footnotes.

# Guidelines for Long Paper

## The Introduction

1	Descriptive Claim	Tell the reader some significant pattern, set of ideas, or particular points that you noticed in our seminar's study of antisemitism (in the readings, your short papers, and our discussions) and which you believe useful for answering the question you have
2	Interpretive Claim	Interpret the pattern/ideas/points you noticed and then summarized in the descriptive claim. Your interpretation should be an intriguing and arguable response to the question you have selected.
3	Roadmap	Outline the major points you will make to support your thesis, so that your reader can quickly grasp the flow of your argument.
4	Stakes Claim	Answer the question, "So what?" You can do this in a number of ways. For example, you can suggest how your argument challenges existing theories of antisemitism. Or you can draw out the implications for our understanding of a contemporary issue.

## The Body

Present all the evidence you need to argue for your thesis in a systematic and coherent fashion. Each paragraph of the body should be devoted to one point of the argument.

### TOPIC SENTENCES

Begin every paragraph with a sentence that immediately establishes the point you want to make and the role of this particular point in your overall argument.

### EVIDENCE: GIVE IT AND ANALYZE IT!

Provide specific quotations or paraphrases from passages in your sources for every point you are making. Use Chicago Style footnotes to document your citations. No quotation, paraphrase, or event speaks for itself, so interpret every piece of evidence for your reader and explain exactly how it

contributes toward your larger argument.

### ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS

Be sure to give full justice to potential counter-arguments to yours. You will by necessity have to engage the theories and accounts of antisemitism that you have read in the class. If they disagree with your argument, you will have to explain how your argument is analytically superior.

### FOCUS

Stay on point: stick to analyzing evidence that goes directly toward your argument.

### PROSE

Concision through revision! Test sentences by reading out loud: by the end of a sentence, can you remember what the beginning was about? Do the paragraphs contain one coherent point?

## The Conclusion

Very briefly summarize your argument again and this time focus especially on the implications of your argument (your stakes claim). Suggest a new question or line of inquiry that your paper opens up.

November 2015						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DUE 11/19 in Seminar

LATE POLICY: 1/2 GRADE DEDUCTED PER DAY.

1800-2400 WORDS

20% OF GRADE

# Rubric for Long Paper

	Deficient (0-6)	Competent (7-8)	Excellent (9-10)
<b>Introduction: Thesis (40)</b> Descriptive claim /10 Interpretive claim /10 Roadmap /10 Stakes claim /10	Introduction contains material irrelevant to argument. Descriptive claim is inaccurate or poorly selected. Interpretive claim not arguable or not a good match for descriptive claim. Roadmap is vague or inaccurate. Stakes claim is not persuasive or is a platitude.	Descriptive claim is accurate. Interpretive claim lacks originality but is potentially controversial. Roadmap outlines the argument. Stakes claim suggests some interesting implications.	Your descriptive claim expertly selects and summarizes interesting aspect of sources. Your interpretive claim is linked to the descriptive claim, original, supportable but arguable. Roadmap is concise and provides specific preview of argument. Stakes claim opens up the thesis and communicates implications.
<b>Body: Argument (40)</b> Documentation /10 Analysis /10 Focus /10 Nuance /10	Assertions are not supported with specific references. Passages are quoted without sufficient analysis to help the reader understand. Passages and their analysis are not explicitly linked to the thesis; hard to see the connection. Forced reading of evidence; even objections mentioned in lecture, discussion, and readings are ignored. Obvious points of contradiction in the source are ignored.	Most assertions are supported with passages or paraphrases. Analysis sometimes fails to establish the passage's relevance to the argument or does not succeed. Most points support the thesis. Some objections anticipated, but more subtle points of contradiction in the source are insufficiently addressed.	All points are supported with superbly chosen passages, quoted or paraphrased as appropriate. Every quotation and paraphrase is exhaustively analyzed, leaving readers with more knowledge of the source than they had before. Every point supports the thesis or contributes to the argument You anticipate potential objections and engage them honestly but confidently.
<b>Style and Structure (20)</b> Diction /10 Sentence- and paragraph-level prose /10	Unfortunate word choices. Unclear, lengthy, confusing sentences. Paragraphs lack consistent use of topic sentences.	Prose is competent. Topic sentences present but do not always make the connection to argument explicit enough.	Words are carefully selected. Sentences and paragraphs are organized to best articulate your argument, using superb topic sentences, which cohesively link paragraphs.
	<b>Poor (-10 to -5)</b>	<b>Needs Improvement (-5 to -1)</b>	<b>Excellent (0)</b>
<b>Demerits (-10 to 0)</b> Proofreading Footnotes	Lots of proofreading mistakes Missing footnotes or footnotes do not use Chicago Style correctly.	Occasional proofreading mistakes. Some incorrect use of footnotes.	Flawless execution. Footnotes like a professional scholar. Uses <a href="#">Zotero</a> or other bibliographic 

# Peer Review Report

Look over the instructions and evaluation criteria for the Long Paper. Read your classmate’s paper carefully, focusing especially on the clarity of the thesis and the overall strength of the argument. Find every single area that needs improvement. Think of counter-examples to the paper’s claims from the sources you have read, including sources not cited in your classmate’s paper, as well from our discussions over the course of the semester. Write a 600-900-word report efficiently outlining all your suggestions for improvement. Begin with the most substantial comments and work your way down from there.

You will be evaluated on the thoroughness of your report and the clarity of your suggestions.

Email the peer review report to your classmate and submit in class on 12/3/2015.



600-900 WORDS      DUE 12/3/2015      5% OF GRADE

## Getting Started With Writing & Revising

If you need help getting started or you really want to push your long paper’s argumentation to the next level, make an appointment TODAY at the [Writing Center](#) or at our very own [History Lab](#). Instructors there will help you answer the following tough questions about your draft:

- Have I proven my argument?
- Are my main points clear?
- Is my draft effectively organized?
- Have I responded to the assignment?

**HISTORY LAB: 4255 HUMANITIES**  
 Enter street-level doors on the right, go to 4th floor, go through door on left, continue to Room 4255. Book an appointment on the web site! (608) 890-3309 or [uwhistorylab@gmail.com](mailto:uwhistorylab@gmail.com)



### The Writing Center

Call the [Writing Center](#)’s friendly telephone staff at **608.263.1992** or visit [6171 Helen C. White Hall](#) to make appointments.

## Rewrite of Long Paper

Rewrite your Paper 2 submission based on the feedback you received from your instructor and classmate. I highly recommend that you make an appointment at the [History Lab](#) or [Writing Center](#) to discuss either the original Long Paper submission or your rewrite.

Append a document outlining the changes you have made in response to feedback and summarizing any revisions you have made on your own. You do not have to accept every correction, but be sure to explain any feedback that you have not adopted. If you disagree with a critique by a reviewer, you must make an argument to that effect.

You will be evaluated on the thoroughness of your revisions and the success of the resulting final product.

Submit by 9 pm on 12/17/15 via [Learn@UW](#)



Dropbox Folders  
Long Paper Rewrite

3000-4500

WORDS



20% OF GRADE

December 2015						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19

WORD FORMAT. NO COVER PAGES.



**LATE POLICY: 1/2 GRADE DEDUCTED PER DAY.**

# Seminar Participation

Participation in our weekly seminar discussion is the single most important and demanding requirement of this course. It requires consistent and intensive preparation each week. The seminar room is where we test our understanding of what we have read and discussed so far. Participating in scholarly discussion, as you will do each week, is a skill that is the basis of all inquiry. It is also something we can get better at continually through frequent practice. To that end, we will sometimes take risks and try out ideas that may not withstand scrutiny later. I will use the rubric below to evaluate your participation.

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



# 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.