

ANTISEMITISM IN EUROPEAN CULTURE

Course Overview and Objectives

Although antisemitism was once considered dormant, individuals and political movements espousing antisemitism have made headlines in both the US and Europe in recent years. They include the perpetrators of the murderous assault on Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life Synagogue in 2018, which the Anti-Defamation League described as “the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in the history of the United States”; the gruesome murder of Holocaust survivor Mireille Knoll in Paris in 2018; and the deadly armed assault on the synagogue in Halle, Germany, in 2019. Globally, some commentators have observed a resurgence of antisemitism over the past two decades.

On the one hand, attempts by policymakers and activists to identify and combat antisemitism, whether in city streets, social media spaces, or college dormitories, are often hobbled by a lack of knowledge about the history of the phenomenon. On the other hand, academic scholarship by historians sometimes suffers from a lack of attention to its contemporary manifestations. Guided by John Dewey’s view that history is “vital” and valuable insofar as “it is treated as a matter of analysis of existing social relations,” this course provides a critical and interdisciplinary review of the history and major theories of modern antisemitism, with attention to both past and present-day forms of this phenomenon.

By reading both classic and recent scholarship on antisemitism in multiple contexts (geographic, chronological, cultural) as well as several canonical antisemitic texts, we will seek to understand the origins, major themes, continuities and changes, and surprising endurance of antisemitism. You will learn to use historical thinking to address contemporary issues with nuance, practice reading difficult works of scholarship, and gain mastery over a historical problem.

Undergraduate Requirements

Reading assignments: You are required to complete about 61 pages of reading for each class meeting, or 122 pages per week, on average. *If you are unable or unwilling to do this much reading consistently, you should drop the course now.* Please complete all required reading assignments before the class meeting for which they are assigned.

Attendance and participation: Class time will be devoted to a mix of lecturing and discussion. Regular attendance and participation in class discussions are obligatory. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the day’s reading assignments. Good participation includes listening (taking notes, engaging with or building on the contributions of others), asking questions and/or suggesting answers (you may email questions to the instructor ahead of time if you prefer), and the quality of your contributions (the degree to which your remarks are relevant, constructive, informed, and well supported). Meeting with me outside of class, though not required, counts as participation.

Four writing assignments: You are expected to submit three response papers and a midterm paper during the semester. The details of each assignment are provided on Canvas. Please submit the papers via Canvas and bring a printed copy to class by 11:00 am on the due date. All written work must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and paginated. Please do not exceed word limits; I will stop reading beyond these limits. Response paper #1 is graded on a credit/no credit basis. All other papers will be graded on the basis of how well you support your position, not the position you take.

Your overall grade for the semester will be calculated on a 100-point scale as follows:

Attendance and participation	20%	Response paper #2 (due Nov. 14)	20%
Response paper #1 (due Sep. 12)	15%	Response paper #3 (due Dec. 12)	15%
Midterm paper (due Oct. 24)	30%		

A = 93-100, AB = 88-92, B = 83-87, BC = 78-82, C = 70-77, D = 60-69, F = 59 or below.

Late policy: Grades will be reduced by 10% for each day a paper is submitted late, and papers more than 3 days late will not be accepted, unless you received an extension in writing in advance of the due date.

If you are taking the course for **honors credit**, please see the instructor about additional requirements.

Graduate-Level Requirements

Reading assignments: same as above.

Attendance and participation: same as above.

Class presentation: Each graduate student is required to make a presentation on the required readings for one class meeting. The presentation should be about 10–15 minutes. The purpose of the presentation is not to provide a summary of the reading—you should assume that everyone has carefully read the material in advance—but to open the discussion by (a) relating the assigned readings to each other and to texts we have previously discussed, e.g., by noting similarities and differences in the positions of different authors; (b) identifying what you see as the key issues raised by the assigned readings; and (c) raising questions/lines of discussion. Among the types of questions you might raise are *exploratory* questions that probe evidence; *challenge* questions that examine assumptions and conclusions; *relational* questions that ask for comparisons of themes, ideas, or issues; *interpretive* questions that probe motives or meanings of social action; *cause-and-effect* questions that ask about causal relationships among ideas, actions, and events; *counterfactual* questions that pose a hypothetical change in the facts; *priority* questions that seek to identify the most important issue; and *summary* questions that elicit syntheses. After the presentation, you will be expected to facilitate the discussion together with the instructor.

A 1–2 page **prospectus** for a term paper, emailed to the instructor no later than Nov. 28 at 11:00 am. The term paper is a textual analysis paper, not an empirical research paper. It should address build upon and engage relevant assigned readings to address a particular question, issue, or controversy covered during the semester. The prospectus must indicate the question your paper will address, your thesis (i.e., answer to the question), sources of textual evidence you will likely use, and how you plan to organize the paper.

A **term paper**, following the plan of an approved prospectus, emailed to the instructor no later than 11:00 am on Dec. 14. Your paper may not exceed 8,000 words maximum, including references and endnotes. I will stop reading beyond 8,000 words.

All written work must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, paginated, and submitted via Canvas.

Your overall grade for the semester will be calculated on a 100-point scale as follows:

Attendance and participation:	30%	Prospectus (due Nov. 28):	15%
Presentation (date TBD):	20%	Term paper (due Dec. 14):	35%

A = 93-100, AB = 88-92, B = 83-87, BC = 78-82, C = 70-77, D = 60-69, F = 59 or below.

Late policy: Grades for the prospectus and term paper will be reduced by 10% for each day the assignment is submitted late, and assignments more than three days late will not be accepted, unless you have received an extension in writing in advance of the due date.

Academic Policies

Accommodations: Accommodations may be provided for students who qualify for disability services through the [McBurney Center](#). Religious observances will be accommodated if you make a timely request early in the term; see [here](#) for details.

Academic honesty: You are expected to follow the university's rules pertaining to academic honesty and integrity, which are outlined by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. For a description of misconduct as well as disciplinary penalties and procedures, please see [here](#). If you have questions about the university's rules pertaining to academic honesty and integrity, please ask the instructor. You are expected to be familiar with these rules before you submit any written work. Lack of familiarity with these rules does not constitute an excuse for acts of misconduct.

Reading Assignments

Please purchase (new or used):

1. David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* (Norton, 2013).
2. Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Harvard, 1980).
3. David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (Routledge, 2017).

All titles below with hyperlinks are available online from UW–Madison libraries. All other readings will be available via Canvas. All required titles will be on reserve at College Library.

Antisemitism can only be understood in relation to its changing historical context. If you want to brush up on modern Jewish history, I recommend Lloyd P. Gartner, [History of the Jews in Modern Times](#) (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), especially chapters 8 and 9.

Sep. 7 – Introduction

General introduction. Overview of historiographical debates and theories of antisemitism.

Recommended:

- Werner Bergmann, "Psychological and Sociological Theories of Antisemitism," *Patterns of Prejudice* 26, nos. 1 & 2 (1992): 37–47.
- Kenneth L. Marcus, "The Definition of Antisemitism," in [Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity, vol. 1](#), ed. Charles Asher Small (New York: ISGAP, 2013), 99–111.
- Jonathan Judaken, "Rethinking Anti-Semitism: AHR Roundtable Introduction," *American Historical Review* 123, no. 4 (Oct. 2018): 1122–1138.
- Jonathan Judaken, "Anti-Semitism (Historiography)," in [Key Concepts in the Study of Antisemitism](#), eds. Sol Goldberg, Scott Ury, and Kalman Weiser (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 25–38.

I. THE LONG SHADOW OF ANTI-JUDAISM

Sep. 12 – Anti-Judaism and its origins

Response paper #1 due (300–400 words)

Steven Beller, [Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction](#) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1–8, 11–22.

David Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 1–12, 48–86. Recommended: 13–47.

Sep. 14 – Anti-Judaism from the early church to the Middle Ages

Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 87–134, 183–216.

Sep. 19 – The Middle Ages

Gavin I. Langmuir, chapters 3, 4, and 13 in [Toward a Definition of Antisemitism](#) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 57–62, 63–99, 301–310.

Sep. 21 – The Middle Ages (cont'd)

Langmuir, chap. 14 in [Toward a Definition of Antisemitism](#), 311–352.

Sep. 26 – The Middle Ages (cont'd)

Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1943), Preface (xiii–xvi), 1–7, 11–31, 124–139, 188–194, 217–220. Recommended: 32–52, 97–108, 109–123.

Sep. 28 – The psychoanalytic perspective on anti-Judaism

Instructor's preface to Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* (available on Canvas).

Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, trans. K. Jones (New York: Random House, 1939), 72–117.

Recommended:

Otto Fenichel, "Psychoanalysis of Antisemitism," *American Imago* 1, no. 2 (March 1940): 24–39.

Otto Fenichel, "Elements of a Psychoanalytic Theory of Antisemitism," in *Anti-Semitism, a Social Disease*, ed. Ernst Simmel (New York: International Universities Press, 1946), 11–32.

II. MODERN ANTISEMITISM

Oct. 3 – Anti-Judaism in the Spanish expulsion, Reformation, and Enlightenment

Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 217–245, 246–268, 343–355.

Oct. 5 – The French Revolution

Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism*, 361–386, 461–472.

Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 1–11, 338–368.

Oct. 10 – Is antisemitism irrational and antimodern, or rational and modern?

Beller, chapters 3–5 in [Antisemitism](#), 23–73.

Wilhelm Marr, *The Victory of Jewry over Germandom* (1879), in *Antisemitism in the Modern World: An Anthology of Texts*, ed. Richard S. Levy (Lexington: D.C. Heath, 1991), 76–93.

Recommended: Norbert Elias, "On the Sociology of German Anti-Semitism," *Journal of Classical Sociology* 1, no. 2 (2001): 219–225. First published in Dec. 1929. See also introduction by Eric Dunning et al., pp. 213–217.

Oct. 12 – Arendt on the origins of modern antisemitism

Hannah Arendt, [The Origins of Totalitarianism](#) (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1968), 3–53. The rest of Part One (pp. 54–120) is recommended.

Oct. 17 – The importance of Christian anti-Judaism to modern antisemitism

Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700–1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 1–10, 13–22, 34–47, 51–62, 245–259, 260–272, 303–317, and especially 318–327.

Oct. 19 – Theories of *fin-de-siècle* antisemitism

Shulamit Volkov, "Antisemitism as a Cultural Code: Reflections on the History and Historiography of Antisemitism in Imperial Germany," *Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook* 23, no. 1 (1978): 25–46.

Chad Alan Goldberg, introduction to and translation of Émile Durkheim's "Antisémitisme et crise sociale," *Sociological Theory* 26, no. 4 (Dec. 2008): 299–314, 321–323 (the rest is recommended).

William I. Brustein and Ryan D. King, "Anti-Semitism in Europe before the Holocaust," *International Political Science Review* 25, no. 1 (Jan. 2004): 35–53.

Recommended:

William Brustein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe Before the Holocaust* (New York: Cambridge, 2003).
Jeffrey C. Alexander, "The Jewish Question," in *The Civil Sphere* (New York: Oxford, 2006), 459–502.
Chad Alan Goldberg, "The Jews, the Revolution, and the Old Regime in French Anti-Semitism and Durkheim's Sociology," *Sociological Theory* 29, no. 4 (Dec. 2011): 248–271.
Nirenberg, "Modernity Thinks with Judaism," *Anti-Judaism*, 423–459.
Chad Alan Goldberg, "The German Tradition: Capitalism and the Jews," in *Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), 43–75.

Oct. 24 – Antisemitism in the Russia Empire

Midterm paper due (1,000 to 1,700 words)

Heinz-Dietrich Löwe, "Antisemitism in Russia and the Soviet Union," in *Antisemitism: A History*, eds. Albert S. Lindemann and Richard S. Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 166–179.
The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. M. Perry and F. M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 139–144.
Jeffrey Veidlinger, *In the Midst of Civilized Europe: The 1918–1921 Pogroms in Ukraine and the Onset of the Holocaust* (New York: Henry Holt, 2021), 1–18, 373–376.

Recommended: Norman Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World-Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1967), especially 15–19, 60–76, 251–268.

Oct. 26 – Nazi antisemitism

Beller, "Concatenations" and "Consequences," *Antisemitism*, 74–99.
Talcott Parsons, "The Sociology of Modern Anti-Semitism," in *Jews in a Gentile World: The Problem of Anti-Semitism*, ed. Isaac Graeber (New York: Macmillan, 1942), 101–122.

Recommended: Talcott Parsons, "Postscript to 'The Sociology of Modern Anti-Semitism,'" *Contemporary Jewry* 5, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1980): 31–38.

Oct. 31 – Redemptive antisemitism

Saul Friedländer, "Redemptive Anti-Semitism," chap. 3 in *Nazi Germany and the Jews*, Vol. 1: *The Years of Persecution, 1933–1939* (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 73–112.
The Worldview of Adolf Hitler ("Why Are We Antisemites?" [1920] and *Mein Kampf* [1924]) in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. M. Perry and F. M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 161–173.

Recommended: George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), 1–10, 126–145, 294–311.

Nov. 2 – The existentialist perspective on antisemitism

Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken, [1948] 1976), 7–54. The rest of the book is recommended.

Nov. 7 – Enlightenment and antisemitism

Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, "Elements of Anti-Semitism," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, [1947] 2020), 137–172.

Recommended:

David M. Seymour, "Critical Theories of Antisemitism" (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 1999), 12–17, 99–116, 154–164.
Jack Jacobs, *The Frankfurt School, Jewish Lives, and Antisemitism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

Nov. 9 – Modernity and the Holocaust

Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 1–30.
Zygmunt Bauman, “‘Antisemitism’ Reassessed,” in *Life in Fragments: Essays in Postmodern Morality* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995), pp. 206–222.

Nov. 14 – Antisemitism in the Soviet Union

Response paper #2 due (350–700 words)

Löwe, “Antisemitism in Russia and the Soviet Union,” in *Antisemitism: A History*, 179–193.
Andrew Sloin, “Theorizing Soviet Antisemitism: Value, Crisis, and Stalinist ‘Modernity,’” *Critical Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 249–281.
Izabella Tabarovsky, “Demonization Blueprints: Soviet Conspiracist Antizionism in Contemporary Left-Wing Discourse,” *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1–20.

Recommended: Moishe Postone, “Anti-Semitism and National Socialism,” in *Germans and Jews since the Holocaust*, eds. Anson Rabinbach and Jack Zipes (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1986), 302–314.

III. CONTEMPORARY ANTISEMITISM

Nov. 16 – Antisemitism after the Holocaust

Beller, “After Auschwitz,” *Antisemitism*, 101–127.
Robert Fine and Philip Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left: On the Return of the Jewish Question* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 93–110.
Shalom Lappin, “The Re-Emergence of the Jewish Question,” *Journal of Contemporary Antisemitism* 2, no. 1 (July 2019): 29–46.

Recommended:

Jeffrey C. Alexander, “Answering the Jewish Question in America,” in *The Civil Sphere*, 503–547.
David M. Seymour, “‘New Europe,’ Holocaust Memory, and Antisemitism,” in *Global Antisemitism: A Crisis of Modernity, vol. 1*, ed. Charles Asher Small (New York: ISGAP, 2013), 19–25.
[The ADL-Hillel Campus Antisemitism Survey: 2021](#) (Oct. 26, 2021), pp. 1–12.
Anti-Defamation League, “[Antisemitic Attitudes in America: Topline Findings](#)” (Jan. 12, 2023).
Anti-Defamation League, “[Audit of Antisemitic Incidents 2022](#)” (March 23, 2023).
Jeffrey C. Alexander and Tracy Adams, “The Return of Antisemitism? Waves of Societalization and What Conditions Them,” *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 11, no. 2 (June 2023): 251–268.
Chad Alan Goldberg, “From Multiculturalism to Antisemitism? Revisiting the Jewish Question in America,” *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 11, no. 2 (June 2023): 269–292.
Maja Gildin Zuckerman and Jakob Egholm Feldt, “The Eternally Rescued: The Jews and the Boundaries of Danish Civility,” *American Journal of Cultural Sociology* 11, no. 2 (June 2023): 293–315.

Nov. 21 – Far-right and white-supremacist antisemitism

Anti-Defamation League, “[‘The Great Replacement’: An Explainer](#)” (April 19, 2021).
Thomas J. Main, *The Rise of the Alt-Right* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2018), 33–35, 65–78.
Eric K. Ward, “[Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism](#)” (2017), 1–11.
Magda Teter, *Christian Supremacy: Reckoning with the Roots of Antisemitism and Racism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023), 1–15. Recommended: 267–286.
George Hawley, *Making Sense of the Alt-Right* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 100–105.

Recommended: Anti-Defamation League, “[U.S. White Supremacist Propaganda Remained at Historic Levels in 2021, with 27 Percent Rise in Antisemitic Messaging](#)” (March 2, 2022), pp. 1–11.

***** THANKSGIVING RECESS, NOV. 23–26, 2023 *****

Nov. 28 – Left-wing antisemitism

Prospectus (for graduate students) due (1–2 pages)

David Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1–10, 135–153, 184–219.
Fine and Spencer, *Antisemitism and the Left*, 1–14, 111–129.

Recommended:

William Brustein, *The Socialism of Fools?: Leftist Origins of Modern Anti-Semitism* (New York: Cambridge, 2015).
Michele Battini, *Socialism of Fools: Capitalism and Modern Anti-Semitism*, trans. Noor Mazhar and Isabella Vergnano (New York: Columbia University Press, [2010] 2016).

[IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism](#) (2016).

Sina Arnold, *From Occupation to Occupy: Antisemitism and the Contemporary American Left*, trans. J. Blumenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, [2017] 2022).

Nov. 30 – Left-wing antisemitism (cont'd)

Hirsh, *Contemporary Left Antisemitism*, 40–94.

Sina Arnold, “From Occupation to Occupy: Antisemitism and the Contemporary Left in the United States,” in *Deciphering the New Antisemitism*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 375–404.

Dec. 5 – Muslim antisemitism in Europe

Günther Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism: Why Young Urban Males Say They Don't Like Jews* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015), 1–24, 32–55, 77–80. Recommended: 25–31.

Dec. 7 – Muslim antisemitism in Europe (cont'd)

Jikeli, *European Muslim Antisemitism*, 216–281. The rest of the book is recommended.

Recommended:

Muslim Antisemitism: Recycling Old Myths, in *Antisemitic Myths: A Historical and Contemporary Anthology*, eds. M. Perry and F. M. Schweitzer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 307–336.

Nirenberg, “Jewish Enmity in Islam,” *Anti-Judaism*, 135–182.

Sina Arnold, “Anti-Muslim Racism, Post-Migration, and Holocaust Memory: Contours of Antisemitism in Germany Today,” *Social Research* 88, no. 4 (Winter 2021): 867–893.

Dec. 12 – Is antisemitism exceptional or similar to other hatreds?

Response paper #3 due (300–400 words)

Karin Stögner, “[Intersectionality and Antisemitism: A New Approach](#),” *Fathom* (May 2020).

Glynis Cousin and Robert Fine, “A Common Cause: Reconnecting the Study of Racism and Antisemitism,” *European Societies* 14, no. 2 (2012): 166–185. The rest of the symposium on “Antisemitism, Racism, and Islamophobia” in this issue (pp. 186–294) is recommended.

Chad Alan Goldberg, *Modernity and the Jews in Western Social Thought* (University of Chicago Press, 2017), 104–106, 127–137. Recommended: 114–127.

Recommended: Claudine Attias-Donfut, Robert Fine, and Christine Achinger, “Introduction to the Special Issue on Racism, Antisemitism, and Islamophobia,” *European Societies* 14, no. 3 (2012): 467–469.

Term paper (for graduate students, 8,000 words max.) due Thursday, December 14, at 11:00 am.

Grading deadline Dec. 24, 2023