

## **A Short History of Antisemitism**

### **SPERTUS INSTITUTE OF JEWISH STUDIES March 2007 Seminar**

**Time:** Sunday, March 11, 7:00pm-9:30pm; Monday, March 12-Wednesday, March 14, 6:30pm-9:00pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Dean Bell

**Telephone:** 312-322-1791; **Email:** dbell@spertus.edu; **Fax:** 312-922-6406

#### **Course Description and Scope:**

This course analyzes the central arguments of antisemitic and anti-Jewish discourse as they have been expressed since antiquity, offering a detailed examination of the relationship between stock images of the antisemitic legacy and individual local contexts and social realities. Topics addressed include: anti-Judaism in the classical world and in the early Middle Ages; Crusades, expulsions and polemic in the Middle Ages; the tension between toleration and political and legal restrictions in the early modern period; and, the development of racial antisemitism in the nineteenth century.

#### **Course Objectives:**

To familiarize students with the variety of forms and manifestations of antisemitism, the context of antisemitic discourse, and the relationship between antisemitism and Jewish identity. Upon completing this course students will:

- understand the primary motives and expressions of antisemitism;
- isolate the historical development and transformation of antisemitic discourse and activity;
- contextualize the changes in largely European antisemitism and the historical conditions that helped shape those views;
- read both primary and secondary sources critically;
- express synthetic and analytic observations regarding the topic in an accurate, nuanced and detailed manner.

#### **Course Requirements, Evaluation and Grading:**

All students must complete the following course components:

Class Participation and Class Readings

Final Examination

#### **Required Texts:**

*A Xeroxed Reader of Primary and Secondary Sources*

Jacob Katz. *From Prejudice to Destruction*

**Policies**

With permission of the faculty member this course may be expanded, through the fulfillment of additional requirements, into a three-credit course. In addition to the requirements for the 1.5 credit course, students enrolling for 3 credits will write a review of a recent book treating some aspect of antisemitism, e.g., *Constantine's Sword*. The book must be pre-approved by the instructor.

**Session Topics and Readings:**

*Each session includes a list of topics to be addressed, background materials to be read prior to the seminar, and primary sources to be examined and discussed in the seminar.*

**SESSION I: INTRODUCTION AND THE ORIGINS OF ANTISEMITISM****A. Introduction to the Course: Theories, Interpretation and Scope****Topics:**

- The Nature of Antisemitism
- Antisemitism and Anti-Judaism
- Scholarly Approaches to the Study of Antisemitism
- Social History and Intellectual History
- The Use of Psychology
- Religious Motivations
- Social, Political and Economic Contexts
- Orientation to the Literature
- Periodization and Geographical Boundaries

**B. Antisemitism in Antiquity****Topics:**

- The Jews in Egypt
- Destruction of the Temple
- Persecution in the Diaspora
- The Roman Empire and Conflict with Hellenistic-Roman Culture
- The Jews in the Literature and Legislation of Antiquity

**Background Readings:**

- Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*, Volume 1, pp. 3-16 [Reader]
- Menahem Stern, "Antisemitism in Rome," pp. 13-25 [Reader]
- Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia*, 197-211, 15-65 [Reader]

**Primary Sources for Discussion:**

- Selections from Juvenal, Seneca, and Apion [In-class]

**SESSION II: THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN ANTI-JUDAISM****A. Christian Anti-Judaism****Topics:**

- Early Christianity
- The New Testament
- Church Fathers

**Background Readings:**

- Leon Poliakov, *The History of Anti-Semitism*, Volume 1, pp. 17-25 [Reader]
- David Rokeach, “The Church Fathers and the Jews in Writings Designed for Internal and External Use,” pp. 39-69 [Reader]

**Primary Sources for Discussion:**

- *Romans* [In-class]
- Selections from Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine [In-class]

**B. The Church, the State, and Anti-Judaism in the Early Middle Ages**

**Topics:**

- The Political Ramifications of Christianity: Between Constantine and the Visigoths
- The Jews and the Early Church
- Interactions with Early Islam

**Background Readings:**

- Albert, Bat-Sheva. “Isidore of Seville: His Attitude Towards Judaism and his Impact on Early Medieval Canon Law.” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 80, nos. 3-4 (January-April, 1990): 207-220 [Reader]
- Bernard Bacharach, *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe*, pp. 3-26 [Reader]

**Primary Sources for Discussion:**

- Early medieval legislation [In-class]
- Pact of Omar [In-class]

**SESSION III: SHIFTS IN CHRISTIAN ANTI-JUDAISM**

**A. Medieval Antisemitism**

**Topics:**

- Paradigm Shifts in the High Middle Ages
- The Crusades
- The Position of the Jew in Politics, Law, and Economics
- The Church, Christian Crystallization, and the Councils
- The Rise of Heresy and the Jews

**Background Readings:**

- Robert Chazan, *Medieval Stereotypes and Modern Antisemitism*, pp. 41-73, and 125-140 [Reader]
- Gavin Langmuir, *Toward a Definition of Antisemitism*, pp. 100-133 [Reader]
- Jeremy Cohen, *The Friars and the Jews*, pp. 242-264 [Reader]

**Primary Sources for Discussion:**

- Selections from Abelard, Aquinas, *Adversus Judaeos*, and Host Desecration Accusations [In-class]

**B. Between Reformation and Enlightenment****Topics:**

- Late Medieval Urban, Territorial, and Imperial Expulsions
- The Jews and the Reformation
- Protestant Philosemitism and Anti-Judaism
- Jewish Reintegration
- The Jews and the Thirty Years War: A Case Study
- The Enlightenment and Anti-Judaism

**Background Readings:**

- Thomas Kaufmann, "Luther and the Jews," pp. 69-104 [Reader]
- Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, pp. 13-47 [Book]

**Primary Sources for Discussion:**

- Selections from Luther, Eisenmenger, and Voltaire [In-class]

**SESSION IV: THE LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY****A. The French Revolution, the Nations-State and Antisemitism****Topics:**

- The Context of the French Revolution
- The Jews in France
- The Effects of the Revolution on the Position of the Jews
- Napoleon and the Jews
- Anti-Jewish Riots at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century
- Anti-Judaism and the Revolutions of the Nineteenth Century

**Background Readings:**

- Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, pp. 51-104, and 107-144 [Book]

**Primary Sources for Discussion:**

- French Revolution and Emancipation documents

**B. From Darwin to Marr: Origins of Racial Antisemitism****Topics:**

- The Origins and Development of Racial Antisemitism
- Secularization and New Directions in Anti-Judaism?
- Nationality and Global Conflict
- Imperialism and Race

**Background Readings:**

- Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction*, pp. 147-220 [Book]
- Xun Zhou, *Chinese Perceptions of the “Jews” and Judaism: A History of the Youtai*, pp. 39-65

**Primary Sources for Discussion:**

- Selections from Bauer, Marx, Wagner, Stoecker, and Marr [In-class]

**C. Conclusions**