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HRS 141

**Introduction to Judaism**

Spring 2007

Course Description:

Humanities 141, Introduction to Judaism, has two objectives:  
1. to survey the ideological and ritual matrix of Judaism; 2. to survey the history of Jewish thought from the Biblical period to the present. Particular emphasis will be placed on the interaction of Judaism with other cultures, both religious and secular, as well as on the evolution of often conflictive ideas of Jewish identity and religious practice.

Texts:

David Goldberg/John Rayner, **The Jewish People** [Penguin]  
Ben-Zion Bokser, **The Talmud: Selected Writings** [Paulist]

Reading Assignments:

Introduction to the study of Judaism [Jewish concepts of God] Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 233-258	Jan. 29
[Forms of Torah] Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 287-290;195-205 [the Mitzvot/Ritual Calendar] Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 293-313;345-364	Feb. 5
[Daily worship/Life cycle] Readings in the Siddur/Mahzor Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 314-344;366-382	Feb. 12
[Varieties of modern Judaism] Modern Judaism: Foundation Statements Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 144-156	Feb. 19

Biblical Israel Feb. 26  
Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 14-60

**Midterm Quiz: March 5**

[Judaism and Christianity; the Schism March 12  
Readings in the New Testament: Matthew, Romans, Galatians  
Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 73-87

[Beginnings of Rabbinic Judaism] March 19-April 9  
Talmud, pp. 219-236 [Tractate Avot]  
Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 88-95  
[Rabbinic Theology/Religious Practices]  
Talmud, pp.62-66; 71-72; 79-81; 105-107; 145-151;  
184-185; 206-209.

*Spring Recess: March 26-30*

[Philosophy and Mysticism:] April 16  
Judaism and Islam  
Readings in Philo, Saadia, Maimonides, Kabbalah]

[Haskalah, Hasidism, Antisemitism] April 23-30  
Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 126-143;157-162

[Zionism/Holocaust] May 7-14  
Goldberg/Rayner, pp. 163-186

**Final Exam: May 21**

Course Requirements:

Regular and punctual attendance (2 absences permitted)  
Term paper \* (minimum 8 pages; see term paper format)  
Midterm Quiz/Final Exam

Grading Policy:

Class Participation 5%  
Paper 30%  
Quiz 20%  
Final Exam 45%

## **Grading policy in Relation to Learning Outcomes**

### **Grade of A:**

The student is expected to have completed all of the required reading and to be able to analyze each examined text within a precise historical context. In addition, the student is expected to display an accurate knowledge of foundation concepts in Jewish theology and to have a thorough understanding of Judaic religious practices and of the denominational differences within modern Judaism. Finally, the student is expected to demonstrate mastery of these subjects in formal essays, written in error-free college-level English, through both the testing process (Midterm and Final Exams) and as an integral part of the research paper. All research performed in fulfillment of the latter assignment must be rigorously documented and skillfully integrated into the body of the research paper itself.

### **Grade of B:**

The student is expected to have completed all of the required readings and to be able to explain the historical significance of any text in question. In addition, the student is expected to demonstrate a reliable understanding of foundation concepts in Judaism and an equally reliable understanding of Judaic religious practices and denominational differences. Finally, the student is expected to display general literary competency on both exam essays and on the research paper, and the latter must be carefully documented and logically organized.

### **Grade of C:**

The student is expected to have completed most of the required readings and to have general familiarity with essential texts, both historical and liturgical. In addition, the student is expected to display some understanding of foundation concepts in Judaism and some familiarity with Judaic religious practices and denominational differences. Finally, both exams and research papers must demonstrate some degree of competency in English language skills and research techniques.

### **Grade of D:**

The student is seen to display little or no familiarity with essential texts and little or no understanding of foundation concepts, religious practices and denominational differences. The student also demonstrates marked deficits in language mechanics, organization of ideas and research skills.

### **Grade of F:**

The student shows no signs of having read assigned material, and no understanding of subjects and concepts discussed in class. The student has also either failed to complete assignments or demonstrated a failure to understand the learning objectives of the course.