

REL123
Judaism: Text and Tradition

Dr Meredith J C Warren
m.j.warren@sheffield.ac.uk

Office: Jessop West Building, Room 2.22 (English)
Office hours: Tuesdays, 10am–12pm

An introductory module for students of any subject to the origins and development of Judaism, from the Bible through medieval sages, to present practice and debates. This module explores the emergence and development of Judaism, placing its diversity of beliefs and practices in the broader context of world history and current events.

This module aims to provide an introduction to the religion of Judaism as well its historical development and place it within its social contexts. It will

- (1) introduce students to the major trends, beliefs, and rituals in Judaism;
- (2) develop critical thinking about Judaism and Jewish practitioners in political, social, historical, and religious contexts;
- (3) develop critical thinking, writing skills, and communication skills.

Required Texts

1. Please buy from Blackwell's (they have a price guarantee that will match Amazon's):
Segal, Eliezer. *Introducing Judaism*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2009.
2. Extracts available on MOLE: **Alexander**, Philip S. *Textual Sources for the Study of Judaism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Assessment

- 3 x 600 word papers 15% x 3 = 45%
- Final Exam 55%

The short papers should respond to the following questions in a concise and analytical way with reference to Alexander and Segal. Outside research is not expected. Introductory and concluding paragraphs are not expected. You must use footnotes to provide citations. You must refer to at least one primary source. You are forbidden to use the word “interesting” or any of its synonyms: tell me *why* something caught your attention instead.

Paper #1: Using one example from the Talmud, Midrash, or Responsa literature, analyse the relationship between oral and written tradition in Judaism.

Paper #2: Drawing on your experience visiting the United Synagogue *and* using one example from Segal and/or Alexander, analyse the role of sacred space in Judaism.

Paper #3: Read and respond critically to one of the following newspaper/magazine articles (NOTE: selection may be emended depending on current events):

- Ross Arbes, “How the Talmud Became a Best-Seller in South Korea,” *New Yorker*. 23 June 2015. Weblink: <http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/how-the-talmud-became-a-best-seller-in-south-korea>
- Peter Beaumont, “Prayer Rights Protest at Jerusalem’s Western Wall Erupts into Clashes,” *The Guardian*. 2 November 2015. Weblink: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/02/prayer-rights-protest-at-jerusalem-western-wall-erupts-into-clashes>
- Chava Shervington, “It’s Time to Confront Racism in the Orthodox Jewish Community,” *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*. 16 July 2015. Weblink: <http://www.jta.org/2015/07/16/news-opinion/united-states/op-ed-its-time-to-confront-racism-in-orthodox-jewish-community>
- Colin Moynihan, “About 20 Rabbis Arrested During Protest Over Trump Travel Ban,” *New York Times*. 6 February 2017. Weblink: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/06/nyregion/rabbis-arrested-protest-trump-muslim-ban.html?_r=0

Schedule & Readings

I. Jewish History

1. Biblical Legacy (Tu BiShvat / New Year of Trees: 11 February)

Read:

- Segal chs. 1-2

2. Talmud & Midrash

Read:

- Segal ch. 3
- Alexander ch. 2

3. Medieval Judaism: Philosophy, Science, Expulsions

Read:

- Segal chs. 4-6
- Alexander chs. 7–8; 11.1-3

+ Optional day trip to York (Friday 3 March/Week 4) for a Jewish History Walking Tour

4. Modern Era

NO CLASS ON 2 MARCH

- Instead of class on Thursday, students will attend a lecture on **MONDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2:00-3:30pm** by Dr Alana Vincent (University of Chester): “None is Still Too Many: Holocaust Memory and Historical Amnesia”

Read:

- Segal chs. 7–9
- Alexander ch. 9

***** PAPER #1 DUE: 12 noon, 3 March**

II. Jewish Beliefs & Customs

5. Calendar and Festivals (Purim: 11–12 March)

Read:

- Genesis 1:1–2:3 (weblink: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+1%3A1-2%3A3&version=NRSV>)
- Book of Esther (all chapters; weblink: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Esther+1&version=NRSV>)
- Alexander ch. 3 & 5.1.1-2
- Segal ch. 18

Watch:

- Kiddush (Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF5rFC0DQzE>)
- Mayim Bialik Explains Rosh Hashanah (Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0sKHcdjJPg>)
- How to Host a Seder (Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQIDfUEpk10>)

6. Places of Worship: Temple & Synagogue

Read:

- Segal ch. 15-16
- 1 Kings 6 (Weblink: <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Kings%206>)
- Bible Odyssey on the First and Second Temples (Weblinks: <http://bibleodyssey.org/places/related-articles/destruction-and-reconstruction-of-the-temple.aspx> **and** <http://bibleodyssey.org/tools/video-gallery/f/first-and-second-temples.aspx>)

***** MANDATORY VISIT TO SHEFFIELD UNITED SYNAGOGUE: Friday 17 March 9am**

7. Places of Worship: The Home

Read:

- Segal ch. 17
- Alexander ch. 5.2.2-3

Watch:

- Tour of a Jewish Mikvah (Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOtLygYE0Q4>)
- Soul Food: Keeping it Kosher (Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7qTatb6qHEM>)

8. Life Cycle Observances

Read:

- Segal chs. 11, 19

Watch:

- Israeli Ashkenazi Orthodox Wedding (Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UvD21XXFBI8>)

***** PAPER #2 DUE, 12 noon, 31 March**

(Passover: 10–18 April)

III. Issues in Contemporary Judaism

Note: For these last three weeks, we will also be reading literary and academic texts that synthesise some of the topics covered generally in the assigned textbooks.

These excerpts may be more challenging in language, topic, and ideas, so give yourself ample time to read and digest them.

9. Shoah (Yom HaShoah: 24 April)

Read:

- Alexander ch. 11.5
- Literary excerpts (on MOLE): Jacob Glatstein, *Without Jews*; Elie Wiesel, *Night*; Emil L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*.

10. Zionism (Israeli Independence Day: 2 May)

Read:

- Segal ch. 10
- Alexander ch. 10
- Silberstein, Laurence J. "Postzionism and Postmodern Theory: The Challenge to Jewish Studies." In *Modern Judaism and historical consciousness: identities, encounters, perspectives*, 445-471 (Leiden: Brill, 2007). On MOLE.

11. Gender

Read (all on MOLE):

- Tucker Lieberman, "Hearing Beneath the Surface: Crossing Gender Boundaries at the Ari Mikveh, pp. 102–107 in Noach Dzmura, ed. *Balancing on the Mechitza: Transgender in the Jewish Community* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010).
- Rachel Adler, "The Jew Who Wasn't There: Halakhah and the Jewish Woman"
- Judith Plaskow, "The Right Question is Theological."

Watch:

- *Trembling Before G-D* (2001) Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ts7bhOau0Wc>

***** PAPER #3 DUE, 12 noon, 11 May**

Further Reading

- Endelman, Todd M. *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Endelman, Todd M. *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. Top of Form
Bottom of Form
- Alderman, Geoffrey. *Controversy and Crisis: Studies in the History of the Jews in Modern Britain*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2008.
- Ariel, David S. *What Do Jews Believe? The Spiritual Foundations of Judaism*. Schocken Books, New York, 1995.
- Baskin, Judith Reesa. *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991.
- Batnitsky, Leora. *How Judaism Became a Religion*. Princeton Univ. Press, 2013.
- Biale, David ed. *The Norton Anthology of World Religions: Judaism*. Brill: Norton & Company, 2015.
- Biale, David. *Eros and the Jews. From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*. New York, Basic Books, 1992.
- Bitton-Jackson, Livia. *I Have Lived A Thousand Years: Growing Up in the Holocaust*. Simon Pulse, 1999.
- Boyarin, Daniel. *Carnal Israel*. University of California Press, repr. edition. 1995.
- Cohen, Arthur A. and Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.). *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought. Original Essays on Critical Concepts, Movements, and Beliefs*. New York: Scribner, 1987.
- Cohen, Shaye J. D. *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2014.
- Cohen, Shaye J. D. *The Beginnings of Jewishness*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.
- Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man*. University of California Press, 1997.
- Davies, W.D., and Finkelstein, L. (eds.), *The Cambridge history of Judaism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Dzmura, Noach. *Balancing on the Mechitza: Transgender in Jewish Community*. Berkeley, Calif: North Atlantic Books, 2010.
- Endelman, Todd M. *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.
- Erickson, Robert P. *Complicity in the Holocaust: Churches and Universities in Nazi Germany*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Frank, Daniel and Oliv Leaman eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2003.
- Friedlander, Albert H., and Jacob Landau. *Out of the Whirlwind: A Reader of Holocaust Literature*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968.
- Garland, R., *Religion and the Greeks*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1994, repr. 2003.
- Garrett, Don, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Press, 1995.

- Grabbe, L. L., *An Introduction to First Century Judaism: Jewish Religion and History in the Second Temple Period*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- Grabbe, L.L., *Judaic religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh*. London: Routledge, 2000.
- Grabbe, Lester L., *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian*, 2 vols. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991.
- Grossman, Susan, and Rivka Haut. *Daughters of the King: Women and the Synagogue : a Survey of History, Halakhah, and Contemporary Realities*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993.
- Halbertal, Moshe. *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*. Harvard University Press, 1997 .
- Heschel, A.J. *The Sabbath*. Harper Collins, 1979
- Horsley, Richard A. *Scribes, Visionaries, and the Politics of Second Temple Judea*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007.
- Irwin, Terence, *A History of Western Philosophy: Classical Thought*. Oxford: OUP, 1989.
- Kertzer, Morris N. *What is a Jew?* rev. ed. Revised by Lawrence A. Hoffman. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.
- Knohl, Israel. *The Divine Symphony: the Bible's Many Voices*. The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 2003.
- Kraemer, Joel L. *Maimonides: The Life and World of One of Civilization's Greatest Minds*. NY: Doubleday, 2008.
- Kraemer, Joel L. *Perspectives on Maimonides: Philosophical and Historical Studies*. Littman Libr of Jewish Civilization, 2007.
- Lefkowitz, Lori Hope. *In Scripture: The First Stories of Jewish Sexual Identities*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010
- Lowenthal, Marvin, trans. *Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln*. Schocken Books, 1977.
- McCready, Wayne O., and Adele Reinhartz (eds.) *Common Judaism: explorations in Second-Temple Judaism*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008.
- McDannell, Colleen and Lang, Bernhard, *Heaven: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.
- Morgan, Michael and Peter Gordon eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Philosophy*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007.
- Morgan, Michael L. *A Holocaust Reader: Responses to the Nazi Extermination*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Neusner, Jacob. *The Mishnah: An Introduction*. (Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1989.
- Nickelsburg, George W.E., *Jewish Literature between the Bible and the Mishnah: a historical and literary introduction*. London: SCM, 1981; revised 2009.
- Page, Judith W. *Imperfect Sympathies: Jews and Judaism in British Romantic Literature and Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Peskowitz, Miriam and Laura Levitt, eds. *Judaism Since Gender*. London: Routledge, 1997.
- Plaskow, Judith, and Donna Berman. *The Coming of Lilith: Essays on Feminism, Judaism, and Sexual Ethics, 1972-2003*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005.
- Plaskow, Judith. *Standing Again at Sinai: Judaism from a Feminist Perspective*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990.
- Robinson, George. *Essential Judaism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs, Customs, and Rituals*. New York: Pocket Books, 2000.
- Sanders, E.P., *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63 BCE – 66 CE*. London: SCM, 1992.

- Sasson, Jack M. (ed), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East, Vols. 1-4* . Peabody. MA: Hendrickson, 2000.
- Schiffman, L.H. and VanderKam, J.C. (eds.), *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York ; Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Schiffman, Lawrence H. *From Text to Tradition: A History of Second Temple and Rabbinic Judaism*. Hoboken, N.J.: Ktav Pub. House, 1991.
- Scholem, Gershom. *Kabbalah*. [New York]: Quadrangle/New York Times Book Co, 1974.
- Scholem, Gershom. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1961.
- Seidler, Victor. *Jewish Philosophy and Western Culture: A Modern Introduction*. London & NY: I.B.Tauris, 2008.
- Sered, Susan Starr. *Women As Ritual Experts: The Religious Lives of Elderly Jewish Women in Jerusalem*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Sirat, Colette. *A history of Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Spector, Sheila A. *Romanticism/Judaica: A Convergence of Cultures*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Pub. Co, 2011.
- Stein, Joshua B. *Claude Goldsmid Montefiore on the Ancient Rabbis: The Second Generation of Reform Judaism in Britain*. Missoula, Mont: Published by Scholars Press for Brown University, 1977.
- Stone, Michael E. (ed.), *Jewish writings of the Second Temple Period: Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, Qumran, Sectarian Writings, Philo, Josephus*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984.
- Strack, H. L. and G. Stemberger. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Fortress Press, 1996.
- Toorn, Karel van der, et al *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Trepp, Leo. *Judaism: Development and Life*. 4th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2000.
- Umansky, Ellen M., and Dianne Ashton. *Four Centuries of Jewish Women's Spirituality: A Sourcebook*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1992.
- Urbach, Efraim Elimelech. *The sages, their concepts and beliefs*. Cambridge, Maa: Harvard University Press, 1987.
- Valman, Nadia. *Jewish Women Writers in Britain*. Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2014.
- VanderKam, James C., *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. New York: Avon Books, 1969.