

COURSE SYLLABUS

RELI 3310: INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

Fall 2025 - University of Texas at Tyler

Instructor: Rabbi Neal Katz

Tuesday/Thursday 2:00pm-3:20pm & ONLINE

WT Brookshire Hall 136

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Available to meet by appointment

Course Description and Objectives: This class will focus on Jewish literature and Jewish thought, comprising a general introduction to Biblical, rabbinic, philosophic, and literary Jewish texts from its ancient beginning to the present with emphasis on hermeneutics (interpretation). The objective is to introduce students to the basic vocabulary of Judaism by studying texts, concepts, geography, and ritual objects.

Suggested Texts:

1. Basic Judaism by Milton Steinberg
2. Jewish Literacy by Joseph Telushkin
3. Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures by JPS (do not need to buy – can use Hebrew Bible or Old Testament)
4. In addition, the instructor may provide handouts that elaborate on one or more of the major themes at given points in the semester.

METHODS OF EVALUATION:

| | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Midterm Oral Exam (8-10 pages) - 20 pts | [due by October 16 th] |
| Class Attendance/Participation - 20 pts | |
| Movie Review (2-4 pages) - 15 pts | [due by November 13 th] |
| Worship Service Attendance & Review (2-3 pages) - 15 pts | [due by Dec. 1 st] |
| Final Oral Exam (8-10 Pages) - 30 pts | [due December 11 th] |

SYLLABUS UNDERSTANDING AND AGREEMENT

I have read through and understand the syllabus and the expectations of this course.

I understand that I will be responsible for:

- class attendance – in-person or watching all the videos online (for that section)
- a midterm and a final oral exam,
- a visit (in-person or online) to a Jewish worship service with a reaction paper,
- and a movie review of a Jewish-themed movie.

I am aware of the dates of submission for all of these items.

And I pledge to not use any AI generated materials for any submissions in the course.

SIGNED

COURSE OUTLINE

Fall Term 2025

(The topics below will be covered over a two-day period each week)

Week 1 (August 26, August 28) - **Fundamentals, Early History, and Biblical Texts**

- A. Who are the Jews? What is Judaism?
- B. Overview of Jewish History
- C. Focus on Biblical History
- D. Intro to Basic Jewish Texts, arrangements of those texts and historical developments of key works

Week 2 (September 2, September 4) - **Biblical History and Second Temple Judaism**

- A. Destruction of the First Temple and Building of Second Temple
- B. The Development of Diaspora Judaism
- C. Historical and Political Forces in the Second Temple Period
- D. Denominationalism/Sects
- E. Destruction and the Jewish Response

Week 3 (September 9, September 11) - **Rabbinic Judaism**

- A. Development/Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism
- B. Key Figures
- C. Key Texts

Week 4 (September 16, September 18) - **Concept of Messiah and Rabbinic texts**

- A. Jewish concept of Messiah
- B. Christian Concept of Messiah
- C. Historical Divergence of communities
- D. Rabbinic Text Study

Week 5 (September 25 * only) - **Under Islam & Christianity**

**** No Class on September 23**

- A. Golden Age of Spanish Jewry
- B. Maimonides
- C. Crusades
- D. Inquisition

Week 6 (September 30 * only) - **Jewish Calendar & Holidays**

**** No Class on October 2**

- A. Calendar System
- B. Holiday Cycle
- C. Shabbat

Week 7 (October 7, October 9) – **Beliefs & Jewish Denominations**

- A. 613 Commandments / 7 Noahide Laws
- B. Tzedekah / Charity
- C. Bio-ethical Issues
- D. Reform, Conservative, Orthodox
- E. Reconstructionist, Humanism

Week 8 (October 14, October 16) - **Jewish Life Cycle and Observances**

- A. Circumcision, Birth, Bar Mitzvah, Marriage, Divorce, Death
- B. Conversion
- C. Kosher

**** MID-TERM ORAL EXAMS DUE by October 16th @ 5pm – must schedule a session**

Week 9 (October 21 & October 23) - **Israel / Zionism**

- A. History of Zionism
- B. Basle, Herzl, Strains of Zionism
- C. Modern Israel Geography and Politics

Week 10 (October 28, October 30) - **American Judaism**

- A. History of American Jewish life
- B. Key figures in American Jewish history
- C. American Jewish political power
- D. American Jewish organizational structures

Week 11 (November 4, November 6) - **Jewish Worship**

- A. Torah
- B. Sanctuary / Architecture
- C. Prayers

Week 12 (November 11, November 13*) – **Modern Jewish History**

- A. Demographics
- B. Interfaith Relations & Diversity
- C. Modern Jewish Struggles

***** MOVIE REVIEW DUE BY November 13th @ 5PM VIA EMAIL OR IN CLASS**

Week 13 (November 18, November 20) - **Holocaust / Antisemitism**

- A. History of Antisemitism
- B. Antisemitic terminology
- C. Holocaust Studies

FALL/THANKSGIVING BREAK – No Class - November 25 & 27

**** TEMPLE SERVICE REVIEW DUE BY Monday, December 1st @ 5pm**

Week 14 (December 2, December 4*) - **Current Affairs**

- A. Current trends and issues in the Jewish community
- B. Inter-faith dialogue

**** FINAL ORAL EXAMS DUE by December 11th @ 5pm**

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS

UT Tyler Honor Code

Every member of the UT Tyler community joins together to embrace: Honor and integrity that will not allow me to lie, cheat, or steal, nor to accept the actions of those who do.

Students Rights and Responsibilities

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: <http://www.uttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php>

Campus Carry

We respect the right and privacy of students 21 and over who are duly licensed to carry concealed weapons in this class. License holders are expected to behave responsibly and keep a handgun secure and concealed. More information is available at <http://www.uttyler.edu/about/campus-carry/index.php>

UT Tyler a Tobacco-Free University

All forms of tobacco will not be permitted on the UT Tyler main campus, branch campuses, and any property owned by UT Tyler. This applies to all members of the University community, including students, faculty, staff, University affiliates, contractors, and visitors.

Forms of tobacco not permitted include cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes (hookah), bidis, kreteks, electronic cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, snuff, chewing tobacco, and all other tobacco products.

There are several cessation programs available to students looking to quit smoking, including counseling, quitlines, and group support. For more information on cessation programs please visit www.uttyler.edu/tobacco-free.

Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at <http://www.uttyler.edu/registrar>. Each semester's Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.

Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions of which students need to be aware. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a "W" grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy

Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date).

Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services

In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University of Texas at Tyler offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including a non-visible diagnosis such as a learning disorder, chronic illness, TBI, PTSD, ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment, you are encouraged to visit <https://hood.accessiblelearning.com/UTTyler> and fill out the New Student application. The Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR) office will contact you when your application has been submitted and an appointment with Cynthia Lowery, Assistant Director of Student Services/ADA Coordinator. For more information, including filling out an application for services, please visit the SAR webpage at <http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices>, the SAR office located in the University Center, # 3150 or call 903.566.7079.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance

Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities

If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement

It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation

Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor's directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.

Student Standards of Academic Conduct

Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

- i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:
 - copying from another student's test paper;
 - using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
 - failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
 - possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
 - using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
 - collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
 - discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
 - divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
 - substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;
 - paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
 - falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 - taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
 - misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
- ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.
- iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
- iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

UT Tyler Resources for Students

- [UT Tyler Writing Center](https://www.uttyler.edu/writingcenter) (903.565.5995), writingcenter@uttyler.edu
- [UT Tyler Tutoring Center](https://www.uttyler.edu/tutoring) (903.565.5964), tutoring@uttyler.edu
- The Mathematics Learning Center, RBN 4021, this is the open access computer lab for math students, with tutors on duty to assist students who are enrolled in early-career courses.
- [UT Tyler Counseling Center](https://www.uttyler.edu/counseling) (903.566.7254)

August

- 18 First Day for Faculty
- 22
 - Payment Deadline, 5:00PM CST
 - Opening Convocation
 - New Student Convocation
- 25 Classes begin for 15-Week session

September

- 1 Labor Day holiday; all offices closed; no classes held
 - 2 First drop for non-payment
 - 8 Census Date
 - 15
 - First Day to File for Summer 2026 Graduation
 - Deadline to Resolve Outstanding Items for Summer 2025 Graduation
-
- 17 Second drop for non-payment
 - 29 Mid-Term Grade Rosters Open

October

- 1 Final Filing Deadline for Fall 2025 Graduation
- 3 Textbook orders due from Faculty for Spring 2026
- 20 Last Day to enter Mid-Term Grades

November

- 3
 - Last Day to Withdraw from one or more 15-Week courses.
 - Registration for Spring 2026 begins for graduate/senior/Presidential Fellow/Honors/SI Leader/NCAA students
- 4 Registration for Spring 2026 begins for juniors
- 5 Registration for Spring 2026 begins for sophomores
- 6 Registration for Spring 2026 begins for freshmen
- 10 Last day to schedule thesis or dissertation defense for Fall 2025 Graduation
- 21 Last day to submit completed thesis or dissertation for Fall 2025 Graduation
- 24-28 Thanksgiving holidays for faculty and students
- 27-28 Thanksgiving holidays for staff, all offices closed

December

- 8-12 Final exams for all 15-Week session classes
- 9 Final grade roster open for 15-Week session
- 12-13 Fall Commencement
- 13 End of 15-Week session
- 15 Classes Begin for Winter Session
- 16 Final 15-Week grades due in Faculty Center by 12:00PM CST
- 22-31 Winter Break, all offices closed
- 23-31 Winter Break (refer to university website for updates)