

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: Modern Jewish Thought

Course Number and Section:

JEWISH

1250G 550

Instructor Name(s): Dr. Peter Sabo

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

How did it come about that there are so many different types of Jewish thought—so many different ways to imagine what it means to be Jewish? What are the origins of Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative Judaism? How did it come to be that Jews could define themselves as Jewish without being traditionally observant at all? What are the origins of Zionism and why are there so many different versions of it? This course will examine all these questions, since the short version of the answer is that such questions stem from the European Enlightenment and Jewish Haskalah movement. These movements occurred in the modern period (modern, in this sense, means 17th century forward and not “contemporary”) and forever changed Judaism and Jewish culture, since they led Jews to confront crucial issues surrounding tradition and law, reason and revelation, community and individuality, and so on.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will gain abilities in critical thinking, furthering their abilities to analyze complex and nuanced ideas, make considered decisions, and form coherent, reasoned and fact-based judgements.
2. Students will gain knowledge of representative thinkers and intellectual trends of modern Jewish thought.
3. Students will familiarize themselves with various Jewish thinkers reflections on the diversity of modern Judaism and Jewish culture.
4. Students will familiarize themselves with central events, concepts, and figures of modern Jewish history.
5. Students will learn to be clear and concise writers.
6. This course will prepare students for further courses in Jewish Studies and Religious Studies.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Alan T. Levenson, *An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thinkers* (2nd edition). Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2006.

- There is one required book purchase for this course. Here is the bookstore link: <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?>

campus=HC&term=W2024B&courses%5B0%5D=550_HC/JST1250G

- The total cost for the book (and thus the total cost for book purchases in the course) is \$63.50.
- It is mandatory and essential that you have a copy of this book for this course.

Methods Of Evaluation:

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Quizzes		50%
Homework		12.5%
Final Exam		25%
Preparation and Participation		12.5%

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.

Monday, January 27, 2025