

THE SOVIET JEWISH EXPERIENCE: CULTURE, MEMORY, IDENTITY

Spring 2022

Class meetings: Tues & Thurs 2:30-4:20 PM @ Savery 155

Office hours: Tues & Thurs 4:20-5 PM @ Savery 155 and by appt.

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“Kosher hedgehogs from the Jews of Odessa” (Photographed in Odessa, Ukraine, early March 2022)

This course offers an examination of the literature and cinema dealing with the experience of Jews from the end of the 19th century to the present, focusing on the late Imperial, the Soviet, and the post-Soviet periods; the experience of Jews in imperial-era and Soviet-era Ukraine will be particularly emphasized. We will study the cultural artifacts dealing with the challenges of co-existence of Jews and their neighbors in the Russian Empire; we will also consider experiences of and reflections on the Bolshevik Revolution, Stalinism, the Holocaust, the post-Stalin period; the place of Jews as individuals and members of a minority group within Russian and Soviet society, ideology, and culture; migration and emigration; everyday life in the Soviet Union, and among immigrant communities in America and elsewhere at the beginning of the 21st century.

Course materials:

A. Books (if possible, acquire **actual paper books**—not Kindle books or other electronic books—at the University Bookstore, or online; used copies are fine; bring texts to class on days we discuss them; if you decide to acquire electronic copies you will be responsible for figuring out how pagination lines up between the printed text and the electronic one—and you will also need to make sure that you can bring these to class on a device that is *not your smartphone*)

- Margarita Khemlin, [*Klotsvog*](#). Translated by Lisa C. Hayden (Columbia University Press, 2019)
- Yenta Mash, [*On the Landing*](#). Translated by Ellen Cassedy (Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 2018)
- Friedrich Gorenstein, [*Redemption*](#). Translated by Andrew Bromfield (Columbia Univ Press, 2018)

B. Course reader (marked **(R)** in the syllabus) -- you need to bring it to class on days we discuss items from it. On sale at Professional Copy, 4200 University Way NE, Seattle WA 98105; the reader can be ordered online [here](#) and printed on demand—order before you go to pick it up.

- Note: if you prefer to read on an electronic device that is *not your smart phone*, you don't have to acquire the course reader—I can make electronic copies available. However, if you decide to read these on an electronic reader of some kind, you must still bring these readings to class on whatever device you read them. This device *cannot be your smart phone*. Smart phone screens are too small to do in-depth reading and marking up of literary texts.
- Note: I highly encourage folks to acquire paper copies of the course reader from Professional Copy. What they now have available for on-demand printing is a compilation of the readings for the first half of the course (though April 28); it costs \$12+tax. The readings for the second half of the course (from May 3) will be available later and will cost around \$10. I divided these in half so the course reader doesn't get too heavy for you to carry.

C. Other readings, mostly for historical and cultural background, will be made available through Canvas. Some are listed on the syllabus as such. You do not need to bring these to class (and so they are not included in the course reader).

D. Films: available to stream (free) through Canvas.

E. *Jewish Currents*: a special issue on Soviet Jews (Winter-Spring 2022), copies will be available to each of you free of charge. You can view the table of contents [here](#). I will distribute these during the second week of the quarter, one copy per student; these will be on loan to you so please treat them kindly—I'll collect them at the end of the quarter so I can lend them out to future students (if you'd like to purchase your own copy, you can do so [here](#) but this is not required).

Schedule of classes and assignments:

Please complete all the reading, listening, and viewing assignments **by** the date listed below. This syllabus is subject to change. These changes, however, are highly unlikely; if they do take place, substitute texts will be similar in length to those they would be replacing.

Note: There may be additional readings, available online, that will be posted in Canvas in advance of most classes. these will be *brief* background readings, drawn primarily from various online encyclopedias (e.g. <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/>). The purpose of these additional readings will be to provide some context for the literary texts, films, graphic novels that we study in this course. In other words, these background readings will not themselves be the object of our class discussions as our class is focused on the study of creative expressions of the Russian Jewish experience (mainly literature and film), but they will provide you with helpful contextualization of the class material.

Tues, March 29 Intro: “Russian” Jews Between Imagination and Reality

- Read and discuss in class: Sholem Aleichem, “On Account of a Hat” (R)
- Music in class: Golem, “[A Train Across Ukraine](#)”

Thurs, March 31 Challenging Tradition

- Sholem Aleichem, “Tevye Strikes it Rich,” “Today’s Children” (R)
- Zvi Gitelman, “Creativity versus Repression: The Jews in Russia, 1881-1917,”
in *A Century of Ambivalence* (pp. 1-41) – posted in Canvas

Tues, April 5 Minority Idiom and the Humor of the Oppressed

- Sholem Aleichem, “Hodl,” “Chava” (R)
- Zvi Gitelman, “Creativity versus Repression: The Jews in Russia, 1881-1917,” in *A Century of Ambivalence* (pp. 42-58) – posted in Canvas

Thurs, April 7 The Aesthetics of Violence

- Isaac Babel, “The Story of My Dovecote” and “How It Was Done in Odessa” (R)
- Yuri Slezkine, “Mercury’s Sandals: Jews and other Nomads” from *The Jewish Century* (R)

Tues, April 12 Revolution and the Shtetl

- Isaac Babel, “Crossing the Zbrucz,” “Gedali,” “My First Goose,” “Rebbe,” “Rebbe’s Son” (R)
- Zvi Gitelman, “Revolution and the Ambiguities of Liberation” (pp. 59-87) – posted in Canvas

Thurs, April 14 The Bolshevik Madonna

- Watch before class: *Commissar* (stream through Canvas)

Tues, April 19 Soviet and Kosher

- Moyshe Kulbak, excerpts from *The Zelmenyaners: A Family Saga* (R)
- Anna Shternshis, “Antireligious Propaganda and the Transformation of Jewish Institutions and Traditions,” from *Soviet and Kosher* – posted in Canvas.

Thurs, April 21 Stalin’s Promised Land

- Watch before class: *Seekers of Happiness* (on Canvas)
- Zvi Gitelman, “Reaching for Utopia: Building Socialism and a New Jewish Culture,” in *A Century of Ambivalence* (pp. 88-114) – posted in Canvas

Tues, April 26 The Holocaust and the Soviet “Friendship of Peoples”

- Watch before class: *Ladies’ Tailor* (on Canvas)
- Zvi Gitelman, “The Holocaust,” in *A Century of Ambivalence* (pp. 115-143) – posted in Canvas

Thurs, April 28 The Implicated Subject: Victims, Perpetrators, Bystanders

- Friedrich Gorenstein, *Redemption* (read the whole novel, pp. 1-199)

❖ **Take-home Exam #1 will be made available by / on April 28.**

Tues, May 3 The Holocaust: Between Trauma and Memory

- David Bergelson, “A Witness” (R)
- Katja Petrowskaja, “Maybe Esther” (R)
- Finish the discussion of Gorenstein’s *Redemption* (as needed)
- Linda Kinstler, “The Many Oblivions of Babi Yar” (from *Jewish Currents*)

Thurs, May 5 In the Gulag

- Yenta Mash, *On the Landing* (selected stories)

❖ **Take-home Exam #1 will be due online on Monday, May 9, by 11:59 pm PST.**

Tues, May 10 Rootless Cosmopolitans

- Ludmila Ulitskaya, “March Second of *That Year*” (R)
- Zvi Gitelman, “The Black Years and the Gray, 1948-1967”
in *A Century of Ambivalence* (pp. 144-173) – posted in Canvas

Thurs, May 12 Between Post-war Kyiv and the Shtetl

- Margarita Khemlin, *Klotsvog* (pp. 1-110)
- Jeffrey Veidlinger, *In the Shadow of the Shtetl* (introduction, posted in Canvas)

Tues, May 17 The Double Burden

- Margarita Khemlin, *Klotsvog* (pp. 111-245)

Thurs, May 19 Returning Home

- Dina Kalinovskaya, “The Picture in the Teacup” (R)
- Margarita Khemlin, “Shady Business” (R)

Tues, May 24 Soviet Jews, Saved?

- Listen: RotFront, “[Vodka & Garlic](#)”
- David Bezmozgis, “Roman Berman, Massage Therapist” (R)
- Anya Ulinich, “Operation Exodus” from *Petropolis* (R); excerpt from *Lena Finkle’s Magic Barrel* (R)
- Essays on the Soviet Jewry Movement from *Jewish Currents*

Thurs, May 26 Is This the Promised Land?

- Listen: Daniel Kahn & The Painted Bird, “[Inner Emigration](#)”
- Watch before class: *Yana’s Friends* (stream on Canvas)
- Rotem Rozental, “Post-Soviet Realism” (from *Jewish Currents*)
- Zvi Gitelman, “The Paradoxes of Post-Soviet Jewry” (pp. 244-274) – posted in Canvas

❖ Take-home Exam #2 will be made available by / on May 27.

Tues, May 31 Family Stories

- Gary Shteyngart, excerpts from *Little Failure: A Memoir* (R)
- Personal essays on immigration by Julia Alekseyeva, Olga Mironova, Eginga Manachova, Bela Shayevich, and the Cheburashka collective (from *Jewish Currents*)

Thurs, June 2 Conclusion: Into the 21st Century

- Watch & discuss in class: *Welcome and Our Condolences* (dir. by Leon Prudovsky, 2014)
- No homework assigned: please focus on your take-home exams!

❖ Take-home Exam #2 will be due on June 7, by 6:30 pm, in Canvas

PLEASE REGULARLY MONITOR OUR COURSE WEBSITE IN CANVAS!

ALL UPDATES, SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ON ASSIGNMENTS, AND ALL KINDS OF OTHER COURSE INFORMATION WILL BE REGULARLY POSTED THERE.

(DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS A CANVAS APP? CHECK IT OUT)

OFFICE HOURS (PLEASE ATTEND THEM!)

Office hours tend to be the most under-utilized part of a university instructor's schedule, but it's really unwise for students not to take the faculty up on the offer to meet one-on-one: in office hours, students get to know their faculty better (and vice versa), they get to discuss material relevant to the class and other intellectual matters, and to forge relationships of mentorship that could be vital to one's success in college.

I will hold my regular office hours twice a week, for 30-40 minutes right after each class, right in our classroom. Most of you should be able to stay after class for these meetings. I can, if you have a time conflict, try to schedule a meeting at a different time, so ask (email me about meeting either in my office or on Zoom); however, this is not always possible. My hope is that the time right after class late in the day on Tuesdays and Thursdays means that there are not likely to be other classes that will conflict with my office hours.

Occasionally, I will need to cancel some of these hours, about which I'll inform you in advance.

You don't have to come talk to me about class-related topics or class-related questions alone; I'm more than happy to meet with students to talk about any questions they may have about their intellectual trajectory.

I really encourage all my students to always attend my office hours – and also office hours of your other professors.

Attending office hours for a substantial conversation at least once during the quarter does count toward your participation grade for this course!

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Before diving into details, a few words on my grading philosophy. I strongly dislike quantitative grading and, as a pedagogue, I would much prefer qualitative (e.g. extensive written evaluations of students' achievements instead of grades). However, we all have to play by the rules of the University of Washington, and that means coming up with the best possible way to produce a quantitative grade for each student at the end of the course. To this end, I try to approach my courses in the following manner:

- a) I believe that, in 2022, courses in the humanities can enormously enrich students' personal and professional lives—and their lives as citizens of a society, which is no small thing, especially these days—if they prioritize analytical thinking over rote memorization and regurgitation. As your professor in the age of readily available and internet-searchable answers to fact-oriented questions, my duty is to teach you to do things that Google and Wikipedia aren't good at: namely, the harder-to-define processes of critical and analytical thinking. Above all, I'd like to help you thrive as independent thinkers. Therefore, I approach my role as someone who is tasked not with teaching you content (or, anyway, not *only* content) but rather as someone who is genuinely and sincerely invested in using our class time and our class material to aid you in improving your critical skills in analytical thinking and concise, topical, precise expression. I design different course requirements based on this approach.
- b) I recognize that there are numerous learning styles and that no one measure of assessment will suit all students in the same way. For this reason, I aim to break down the composition of the final grade between different kinds of assignment so as to best play to as many of my students' strengths as possible.

- c) The intellectual heart of this course is in the in-class discussion. You will not be able to do well in the class—or even, possibly, to pass the course—if you do not prepare for and attend our class meetings. This includes both attending and participating in class discussions.

So, with this in mind, this is what we're working with:

Out of the total of 100 points, the final grade will consist of the following three parts

❖ Part 1. Quizzes: 38 points (2 pts per quiz, total of 19 quizzes)

These will take place prior to most class sessions (with some exceptions) starting with the second meeting of the class and all the way through the final class meeting of the quarter. You have to take these quizzes **online in Canvas** any time before each class, up to five minutes before the start of class (there will be an automatic cutoff time on their availability at 2:25 pm on the days we have class).

Quizzes will be available online, through Canvas; they will be timed—15 minutes from the moment you open one—but you will be able to take them at any moment you decide to and up to five minutes before the beginning of class. I generally give students 5 minutes on these quizzes when I used to give these in class; I tripled the amount of time just in case and, additionally, to comply with a number of specific individual requests for learning accommodations. A 15-minute window of time, on your own schedule, should provide equal access to everyone in class. (FWIW, Canvas gives me anonymized stats on how long students spend on quizzes – it is generally far less than 15 minutes.)

Quizzes cannot be made up if missed. As a matter of policy, I will drop the lowest two grades on your quizzes (including from a quiz/quizzes you might miss due to an illness or for any other reason – if you miss two quizzes for any reason, you don't need to tell me the reason or explain why you haven't taken the quiz, just know that it will automatically be dropped).

All quizzes are “open book”: you are more than welcome (and, indeed, you are encouraged!) to keep detailed notes on all the texts you read and all the films you watch, and to use these notes during quizzes. *Whatever notes you are planning to use, they must your notes (notes you actually took yourself – not stuff you look up on Wikipedia or other online sources).*

The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you *attentively* do all the ongoing homework on time, don't fall behind, and are always prepared to participate in class. These quizzes will be short. Most quizzes will contain four multiple-choice and true/false questions, with an occasional short write-in, for the total of 2 points per quiz. **Once in a while, I may substitute a quiz with a discussion question.**

I've relied on this method of assessment for several years now, and I tweaked and improved it based on my students' feedback. My students' consistent feedback has been as follows: though some students find that they would rather not have regular quizzes, most acknowledge that these quizzes allow them not to fall behind. The major upside to having these regular quizzes is that students in my courses *never* have to memorize or cram any material because my courses don't contain more typical cumulative in-class midterms or finals for which one has to study extensively. Basically, this part of the assessment is aimed solely at making sure you *stay on top of the course material* and are *actively engaged* in the learning process—I do not design these quizzes to trick you, I design them to aid your steadily-paced learning. Think of this as a very large percentage of the final grade for doing what you should be doing in the course to begin with: completing *all* regular homework assignments on time. This is all the more important given the constraints we face because of the partially remote / hybrid environment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Honor code for taking quizzes online: I trust that as independent adults, you will not solicit or provide outside help with these quizzes and will take them on your own, with the assistance only of notes you yourselves made.

❖ **Part 2. Occasional short online discussion posts + responses: 12 points**

Once in a while, the in-class discussion might get so enthusiastic and involved (which is great!) that we might feel like a continuation of it is needed. On those occasions, I will set up written discussion boards in Canvas, where you'll be asked to contribute some combination of original posts and responses to posts by your classmates (something like one original post + two responses to two separate classmates' posts). Depending on the case, we may pursue these as posts on specifically posed questions (e.g. some key questions come up but remain unresolved in the in-class discussion so we continue working on these after class in Canvas) or maintain a more loosely defined way of engaging with the material (e.g. students post on some specific issue related to the discussed text that is of interest to them).

You'll have a limited – but generous (2-3 days) – amount of time to participate in these discussion forums.

We'll use this exercise the minimum of three times (4 points per discussion) and the maximum of six times (2 points per discussion). And I'll explain in detail how this works each time we do this, based on the specific needs of the moment. These will not be long – something like 150 words per post/comment.

❖ **Part 3. Participation: 12 points**

Students are expected to be prepared for class and contribute to class discussions regularly, intelligently, and in a way informed by course assignments. All are expected to be active participants in group and partner activities, and in the discussions in the whole class. This emphasis on participation is based on the fact that a major goal of this course is to develop skills to talk and converse meaningfully on complex historical topics. Another fundamental goal of the course: literary texts and feature films are complicated cultural artifacts, and it takes the sharp engagement of many minds to tease out their nuances. My aim is for you to be blown away by how much you can learn from engaging with each other's ideas; as a professor, I also always learn from students and student-led discussions new ways of looking at texts that I think are familiar to me. Think of our class as a community of thinkers—and thinking is a process, which doesn't begin with certainties and “right answers.” It's an ongoing process.

Note: students will have multiple ways in which to show that they are engaged including occasional small-group work, in-class activities, and conversation / discussion. Those students who speak the most aren't necessarily the students who will be the “best” participants—sometimes the opposite is the case. However, in most cases, regular contribution to class discussions is a marker of good preparation and engagement. *In my experience, participation grades tend to be roughly similar to overall assignment averages*, as participation can only be as good as one's preparation and comprehension.

The following will typically cause the participation grade to bring the overall course grade *down*:

- Showing lack of respect for other students or the professor, including by interrupting or intimidating others, disrespectfully dominating class discussion, or making derogatory comments about individuals or groups on the basis of religion, race, class, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, gender, etc.
- Using a phone or other electronic device in class other than when required for class activities (see phone and laptop policy below).
- Consistently lacking engagement during class or during group work or class activities.

The following will typically cause the participation grade to bring the overall course grade *up*:

- Demonstrating through one's comments and class participation that one is learning from one's earlier errors or responding to feedback over the course of the quarter.
- Showing unique interest in and respect for other student's contributions and comments, building on their thoughts, and helping to create a dynamic learning atmosphere in the classroom.

Note: Not everyone starts out in the same place when it comes to class participation. I believe that class participation is a skill that one acquires, with regular practice and effort, over time—the same way that one acquires other critical skills in any given class. Participation in college classes is good preparation for discussions in other spheres of one's professional and social lives, so this is something we all get better at with practice; I see it as one of my goals as your professor to help you become an active participant. I am mindful of this in assessing this part of the final grade: I will pay as much attention to regular participation as I will to progress and improvement over time. **To this end, I will assign a number out of ½ of your possible participation points (so, out of 6) mid-way through the quarter, together with a comment on your participation. The remaining points (out of the remaining 6) will be assigned at the end of the quarter, and you'll be able to calibrate your participation in the second half of the quarter based on my comments from the first half.**

Attending office hours absolutely counts towards your participation grade!

If you know yourself as someone who is an engaged listener who experiences anxiety or any other lack of certainty about participating in class discussion, please come talk to me in office hours as soon as possible. I've always been able to accommodate students—and help students develop various strategies—but it's up to the individual students to seek me out for this discussion.

❖ Part 4. Written assignments: 38 pts (2 take-home exams, 18 pts & 20 pts respectively).

18 points for exam #1 and 20 points for exam #2 (statistically speaking, students tend to do better on the second of the two exams).

These take-home exams are open-book exams. You will generally have 10-11 days to complete each take-home exam from the moment it is made available until it is due. I aim to give my students a generous amount of time to complete exams—you should use this time wisely and produce the best work possible. I find that take-home exams, where students are asked to analyze and apply their knowledge rather than in-class exams, for which students have to memorize material and be stressfully timed, tend to produce better learning outcomes and allow students to better use their creativity. I also tend to dislike longer papers—a more typical college assignment—because I find that shorter essays tend to better correspond to the genre of prose many of us end up writing in “real life” outside college (e.g. legal briefs, policy assessments, grant applications, book reviews, pitches for longer projects, etc.)

Details of these take-home exams will emerge during the quarter. I never start out any of my courses with a precise set of exams in mind: I design these for to each group of students, depending on how our class goes. On these take-home exams, you should expect to see some versions of assignments that we will be doing together in class (for example, analysis of specific scenes in a film, or specific lines in a short story). These exams are not typical college papers—I usually ask my students to write a brief essay of not more than 1,200 words on each of the exams, and to submit a set of detailed notes on their process of thinking. *Exam #2 will be either identical or very similar to exam #1 (save for the material that you'll be working with, which will be*

different): I will give you extensive comments on your work after exam #1, so with exam #2 following the same format, you will have clear ways to improve on your earlier performance, if it needs improvement.

We will be modeling various exam questions in class throughout the quarter—so by the time you take the exam, you will know exactly what kind of thinking the exam expects you to showcase. So, this all goes back to regular participation in class and regular in-class quizzes: learning ways of thinking that we'll be polishing in class is not something you can make up, so do your best to avoid missing classes.

If you have a specific interest in the subject of our course, are a graduate student or an advanced undergraduate, or just love writing longer papers for any reason and would like to write one longer research paper, instead of the two shorter exams, please speak to me as early as you can at the beginning of the quarter. Our class is small enough for there to be some degree of accommodation with students wishing to undertake different kinds of written assignments.

How your final grade will be calculated:

At UW, grades are given on a 4-point scale. In this class, assignments will be graded in points. Points will add up to 100 (so, e.g., a 12-point assignment is 12% of your final grade). I calculate grades this way because students tend to find it easier to add points than to think in terms of percentages. The 100-point total makes it clear the relative importance of different assignments or sections of assignments.

To calculate your final grade, I will convert your total number of points (out of 100) on the UW 4.0 scale, with 4.0 equaling 97 points, which is the usual metric in the departments hosting this course. I will be regularly updating the gradebook in Canvas, so you should be able to track your progress easily that way as well.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

Extra credit opportunities will be available throughout the quarter. These will involve attending public lectures and / or events on topics relevant to our course (e.g. Soviet Jewish, or just events on some aspect of Ukrainian, Russian, or other Slavic cultures or on Jewish culture, history, and experience, but also a range of other events not necessarily related directly to the topic of the course) hosted both at the University of Washington and elsewhere in the city of Seattle. For example, the Slavic Department is planning three talks on Ukrainian history and culture this quarter; these would very much qualify. I'll create a document with a list of these as they come up and will communicate any significant updates through Canvas.

Please do not request extra credit at the end of the quarter: the idea is that you take advantage of various extra credit opportunities throughout the quarter. Because we are still in a hybrid in person / Zoom era, some events will be online (but some are in person, unless another serious Covid wave hits!)

Because ours is a course on cultural expression and cultural representation, my pedagogic approach to extra credit is to get the students out into the larger community (the university and the city of Seattle) and to approach a range of cultural events – book talks, theater performances, concerts – through the interpretative and analytical lens acquired in the course. This kind of extra credit is not busy work – I'd like to encourage my students to go observe, listen, participate in the wealth of cultural events that happen in a world-class city like ours, many of them free of charge.

The total amount of extra credit for attending events will be limited to the total of 3 points per quarter and will generally be 1 point per event (so, 1% of the final grade per event); you can use these points to, for example, fill some gaps in the quiz grades that you might accumulate during the term. In addition to attending the event, you will be asked to contribute a short (1 page or about 300-350 words) written response about what you learned at the event—aim to provide a kind of analytical review of the event rather than its summary. I hope that offering extra credit in this fashion will incentivize students' participation in a rich set of offerings at UW and in Seattle.

PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES

No phones / smart phones in class

You should not be using your phones in the classroom. A phone does not have a screen large enough for reading homework (if phone is your only electronic device, there are paper options for all class materials—see the beginning of the syllabus).

Please switch your phone off or put it in *silent mode* so that you will not be distracted by incoming texts or calls. Vibrate mode is not acceptable. (Believe me, if you don't switch it to silent mode you will be distracted—and you will distract me and other students in class).

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to have your phone on. These will primarily relate to life's occasional unpreventable emergencies, and child and family care obligations. If this is your situation in general or on a particular class day, please tell me in advance, and be prepared to step out of the room if you are contacted by phone.

No other communication is urgent enough to interrupt you (and others!) during class. You can get back to it during the break or after class is over. I'm a human being with a smartphone, too, so I know from my own experience that if my phone is on vibrate or otherwise alerting me to incoming messages, such messages will feel urgent. It is my obligation as your professor to devote the class time to you as my students; it would not be acceptable for me to use my phone during such times. I ask the same of you as students in the course.

We will take a short break about halfway through each class. This is the appropriate time to use the bathroom, refill your water, or check your email, phone, text messages, Instagram feed, TikTok, etc. Students who repeatedly leave at times other than this may end up missing some part of the class that's impossible to make up.

Laptops / tablets / e-readers:

If these are your primary devices for doing class readings and you bring your readings to class by way of these devices—remember that you do need to have most readings with you in class!—then use such electronic devices as needed. Same if you take your notes on the computer or require a computer for any learning assistance (including as documented by the Disability Resources for Students office).

Please don't use these for purposes other than those related to class—no email, social media, etc.

COMMUNITY STANDARDS, ETIQUETTE, COMMUNICATION

The Five Commandments (of our class):

(borrowed from and with the permission of UW's Professor Mika Ahuvia)

1. Thou shalt strive to create a positive learning environment for all, with respect for everyone's ethnicity, color, creed, religion, national origin, citizenship status, sex, pregnancy, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or veteran status.¹
2. Thou shalt use your freedom of speech and expression in a manner that is consistent with UW's values of equality and respect for all campus community members: Your need for self-expression is important, but may never come at the expense of other people's needs.²
 - a. Instructor reserves the right to move class conversations forward.
3. Thou shalt not over-generalize about any religion or religious / cultural community.
 - ~~E.g. Jews are..., According to Christianity..., All Muslims ..., All Russians...~~
4. Thou shalt not tokenize your classmates (by expecting them to represent millions or billions of people.).
5. Thou shalt prioritize your health and well-being and your classmates' health and well-being. Reach out to your classmates and professor if you feel overwhelmed or need help. All students should be able to contact each other directly through Canvas.

Who is the “we” in the Jewish Studies classroom?

This course is co-hosted at the University of Washington's Stroum Center for Jewish Studies—a premiere institution in the Pacific Northwest and a national leader in the academic study of Jewish life in its cultural, intellectual, religious, and international contexts. At the same time, Jewish Studies classes address universal questions about identity, community, and cultural adaptation over time.

The academic study of the Jewish experience is fundamentally different from the promotion of Jewish religious, cultural, or lifestyle practices: as an interdisciplinary field in the Humanities, Jewish Studies on the UW campus is open to *all* students irrespective of their background.

When the professor or students say “we” in a Jewish Studies classroom, “we” means “students in this classroom” (and “we” never means “we the Jewish people” in the context of the classroom).

¹ Executive Order No. 31: Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action in This policy is adopted in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq](#)) and the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 ([20 USC § 1681](#)), Title I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 as amended, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (P.L. 93-11) and [45 C.F.R. Part 84](#), Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 ([42 U.S.C. 2000d et seq](#)), [Chapter 49.60 RCW](#), and Gender Equality in Higher Education ([Chapter 28B.110 RCW](#)). For full text, see <http://www.washington.edu/admin/rules/policies/PO/EO31.html>

² See: Marshall Rosenberg and Deepak Chopra, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life* (PuddleDancer Press, 2015).

**Etiquette in emailing /addressing professors
(for this course but I mean for it to be useful for your other courses, too)**

As a rule of thumb, it's best to use appropriate, professional language in your email with your professors. Phrases like "hey there" are not appropriate or professional. Best to begin your emails with "Dear Prof. [insert last name]."

Unless otherwise instructed by individual faculty members, you should generally refer to your professors at the university as Prof. or Dr. followed by their last name. Choosing an appropriate salutation for your professor is not simply a matter of formality, but relates to the assumptions of gender identity, marital status, and sexual orientation that many other salutations may make. Studies have shown that precisely due to such implicit cultural assumptions and, frequently, biases female faculty and faculty of color do not always get the same kind of respect and recognition in academia as white male faculty. Using Prof. or Dr. (as opposed to Ms., Mrs., Miss., or Mr. or "Hey") is one small step towards mitigating such biases.

(I personally prefer to be on first-name basis with students, but I recognize that my comfort with that is itself a form of privilege. Hence, my insistence that you refer to me and to your other professor—unless they tell you otherwise—by their title. As soon as our class is over and the grades are in, you are welcome to address me by my first name.)

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Religious Observances

Washington state law requires that UW develop a policy for accommodation of student absences or significant hardship due to reasons of faith or conscience, or for organized religious activities. The UW's policy, including more information about how to request an accommodation, is available at [Religious Accommodations Policy](#).

Accommodations must be requested within the first two weeks of this course using the [Religious Accommodations Request form](#).

As with all absences, you are expected to check with other students about what you missed and catch up on all reading and work.

Access and Accommodations

It is important to me that this course be accessible to all students. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but are not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.

If you are not sure whether you will need the accommodations you have been granted or not sure whether your condition requires accommodations, it is best to err on the side of disclosure and documentation in case they do prove necessary. I will keep all accommodations confidential and will attempt to address them discretely if possible. The presence of an accommodation will have no effect on your grade.

Academic Integrity

Students at the University of Washington are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct, professional honesty, and personal integrity.

Plagiarism, cheating, and other misconduct are serious violations of the [University of Washington Student Conduct Code](#) (WAC 478-120). We expect you to know and follow the university's policies on cheating and plagiarism, and the [SPH Academic Integrity Policy](#). Any suspected cases of academic misconduct will be handled according to University of Washington regulations. For more information, see the University of Washington Community Standards and Student Conduct website.

Classroom Climate

Diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences are essential to the critical thinking endeavor at the heart of university education. Therefore, I expect you to follow the [UW Student Conduct Code](#) in your interactions with your colleagues and me in this course by respecting the many social and cultural differences among us, which may include, but are not limited to: age, cultural background, disability, ethnicity, family status, gender identity and presentation, citizenship and immigration status, national origin, race, religious and political beliefs, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and veteran status. Please talk with me right away if you experience disrespect in this class, and I will work to address it in a professional and educational manner. DCinfo@uw.edu is a resource for students with classroom climate concerns.

Covid-19: please remain vigilant for your own safety and the safety of others

- The university no longer requires but recommends universal masking. Please wear masks to class as the new subvariant of Covid (Omicron BA.2) is now on the rise around the world and in the United States.
- Wear high-quality mask, [such as an N95, KN95, KF94 or surgical mask](#) — these protect you better than a cloth face covering. These types of masks [are available for free in several locations on each campus](#). See the [University's face covering policy page](#) for more information and FAQs.
- **If you are sick or have any [symptoms of COVID-19](#), stay home** (do not go to class or work), get tested immediately, and follow [the University's COVID-19 public health requirements and guidance](#).
- **If you haven't yet received your COVID-19 booster, please [go get a booster](#) and ensure you are [up to date on your vaccines](#)**. This is the most important measure to help prevent serious illness from COVID-19.
- **[Get tested for COVID-19](#)** within 72 hours before or upon returning to the University.
 - If you're enrolled in [Husky Coronavirus Testing](#), a voluntary research study, your daily check-in will ask about travel outside of Washington.
 - You can also [order free at-home tests](#) to be delivered to you.
- **Wash your hands regularly.**
- **[Activate WA Notify](#)** so you can receive exposure notifications and anonymously let others know of their exposure if you test positive.

Student resources in times of need—and in times of the pandemic:

The prolonged Covid-19 pandemic has caused / will continue to cause / may cause emotional and financial strain on students.

UW's History department has very helpfully compiled a list of resources—including applying for emergency funding, Covid-related concerns, and a number of other issues pertaining to mental health and other matters—[under this link](#). Bookmark it; it is a terrific list of resources at the university level, but also at the city (Seattle) and county (King County) level.

(Note: this course is not affiliated with UW's History Department, so ignore the specific resources that pertain to that department under this link, but most resources linked to here are for all UW students.)