

Jews and Christians Throughout History (RELG 491J/594J)

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For most of the last two millennia, the complex relations between Jews and Christians have been marked by much conflict but also mutual gain. This class considers how religious, cultural, social and economic conditions shaped this encounter from both the Jewish and Christian perspectives. In what ways, for instance, did unfavourable church teachings contribute toward violence against the Jews? What is the relationship between Christian anti-Jewish teachings and anti-Semitism? And, not least: how did Jewish thinkers react to claims made by Christians? On April 22, we will convene the *Council of Columbia* and stake out a new agenda for the Jewish-Christian encounter. The course participants as delegates will identify open key issues and lay out strategies addressing these issues.

Required books

Frymer-Kensky et. al. *Christianity in Jewish Terms*

Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Many Religions, One Covenant: Israel, Church and the World.*

Learning objectives

The goal of this course is to investigate the history of Jewish-Christian relations. By the end of this class, students will

- Recognize and examine key theological and legal positions.
- Develop an understanding of some of the many dimensions of the Jewish-Christian encounter.
- Analyze primary texts in terms of their specific historical and religious messages.
- Analyze the impact of contemporary cultural, political, and religious ideals on the formation of messianism.
- Communicate effectively in written work and oral presentations.
- Use the library and relevant bibliographic tools.

Course Requirements

5 Reading responses (1 page each) (5 % each) 25%

1 comparative, analytical paper (5 pages) + bibliography (total=6 pages) 20%

Midterm 25%

Leading class discussion 10%

Oral final presentation (5 mins.) + handout/Powerpoint 10%

Participation 10%

Students taking this class on a 500-level will receive additional reading assignments and will write a 15-20 page research paper.

Syllabus

January 12. Introduction

January 14. The origins of hostility. Christian Origins and Jewish-Christian Relations

January 19. The origins of hostility. Christian Origins and Jewish-Christian Relations

The Parting of the Ways

January 21. Melito of Sardis

January 26. Melito of Sardis

January 28. Research Seminar

February 2. The Rabbis on Pagans, Sectarians, Christians

February 4. The Rabbis on Pagans, Sectarians, Christians

The formal position of the Church

February 9. Augustine of Hippo: Jews as witnesses

February 11. Augustine of Hippo: Jews as witnesses

The Medieval Encounter

February 16. Acculturation: A boy's first day at school

February 18. Disputations: Christian Evangelism and Jewish Response

February 23. Disputations: Christian Evangelism and Jewish Response

February 25. Blood Libel and Host Desecration Accusations

March 2. Blood Libel and Host Desecration Accusations

The Reformation Period

March 4. Erasmus

March 16. Martin Luther

March 18. Martin Luther

Modernity

March 23. Franz Rosenzweig

March 25. Franz Rosenzweig

After the Holocaust

March 30. *The Declaration of Barmen*

April 8. Film: *Bonhoeffer* (2003)

April 13. The Catholic Position: *Nostra Aetate*

April 15. Research Day

April 20. *Dabru Emet*

April 22. The Council of Columbia

April 27. TBA