



JWSC 12000 1, NEHC 22010 1, RLST 22010 1, MDVL 12000 1, HIST 11701 1 - Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period - Instructor(s): Larisa Reznik

Project Title: **College Course Feedback - Autumn 2023**

Number Enrolled: **26**

Number of Responses: **13**

Report Comments

Opinions expressed in these evaluations are those of students enrolled in the specific course and do not represent the University.

Creation Date: **Friday, February 2, 2024**

What are the most important things that you learned in this course? Please reflect on the knowledge and skills you gained.

Comments
Jewish history
Judaism both influenced Islam and was influenced by Islam. The channel of influence was bidirectional.
Torah, Tanakh, diaspora, talmud, midrash, how Jews faired in society living among other cultures, kabbalah, and much more about Jewish history and tradition.
I learned a TON about early Jewish civilization, Jewish culture as well as Jewish scripture and literature.
The history of early Jewish civilization up through the Midle Ages
Jewish Civilization from 2000 BC to medieval Europe. I learned a lot about Jewish culture and religion, which was very interesting.
I learned how to take documents that I had been more familiar with as religious and/or poetic texts and to think about them from a more historical lens. (Basically, I learned that, even the events within a text aren't necessarily completely accurate to what exactly happened in history, we can still think about how those texts contributed to the history of a people)
Learned about Jewish Civilization throughout history, and read excerpts from the Torah, Talmud, etc
Jew and nonjews, canonization, midrash
Early history of Judaism, lots of interesting facts about early Israel, the diaspora, and how it progressed into the medieval era.
I learned about Jewish civilization, from its very early origins in ~3000 BCE to 1492 CE. Particularly, I learned to consider questions like, what does 'Jewish' mean, how is Judaism in the diaspora shaped by other dominant civilizations, etc.
How to think about a concept of "Jewish civilization," basic knowledge about the Tanakh and rabbinic Judaism.

Describe how aspects of this course (lectures, discussions, labs, assignments, etc.) contributed to your learning.

Comments
lecture/discussions were the most useful for my learning
This class was seminar based. I liked the class discussion, and I liked the mini lectures at the start of class with background information.
Homework readings were the main source for our learning. Lecures/discussions provided more context on the readings and allowed us to delve further into specific aspects of the text and share our thoughts with one another. Low stakes quizzes (5% of our grade each) made sure we were on track and understood what was going on. Exams (two 1000 word responses) evaluated our understanding from the lectures.
Lectures were excellent and discussions were insightful and illuminating
Both lectures and class discussions were very helpful
Lectures were helpful for understanding major historical moments and piecing the readings together. Discussion was helpful as a way to take a deeper look at what we were reading and how it fits into the historical context.
The classes were a mix of lecture and discussion, and it was really nice to have those so fluidly mixed together – when something was troubling about a lecture, we could pause to have a discussion about it.
Lectures were helpful but we didn't really have any assignments outside of doing the readings.
Discussions were great
The readings were always very relevant to what was going on in class, and professor Reznik does a great job of explaining the readings. Slides are used occasionally but are not too heavily relied on; most of the learning is done through in–class discussion and lecturing.
Lectures and readings were particularly helpful.
The professor was excellent at lecturing and facilitating discussion. Readings were well–structured.

Please respond to the following:

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
This course challenged me intellectually.	4.33	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	66.67%	33.33%
I understood the purpose of this course and what I was expected to gain from it.	4.33	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	50.00%	41.67%
I understood the standards for success on assignments.	4.18	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	18.18%	45.45%	36.36%
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	4.50	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	33.33%	58.33%
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve my subsequent work.	4.17	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	50.00%	33.33%
My work was evaluated fairly.	4.25	4.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	41.67%	41.67%
I felt respected in this class.	4.42	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	25.00%	58.33%
Overall, this was an excellent course.	4.25	5.00	0.00%	8.33%	16.67%	16.67%	58.33%

Additional comments about the course:

Comments
Prof. R is certainly very knowledgeable in this area of study, and her command of the field is very evident in class.
Very interesting course, highly recommend it, especially for Jewish students
If you have a significant background in Jewish history (are a practicing Jew, know Hebrew, et cetera), this class will be an easy A. If not, you will be at an active disadvantage. There will be an initial assertion that this is not the case, but it definitely is. If you want an easy Civ and you are already familiar with the Torah, take this course. If not, look elsewhere.
I often find history horribly sad (and this one definitely was at times), but I also had a lot of fun talking about the weird and wonderful texts in this course!
This was a very interesting course!
The task of summarizing thousands of years in just one quarter is a mighty one, and Professor Reznik handled it amazingly.

I would recommend this course to:

	No	Yes
Highly-motivated and well-prepared students	8.33%	91.67%
Anyone interested in the topic	16.67%	83.33%

Thinking about your time in the class, what aspect of the instructor's teaching contributed most to your learning?

Comments
explanations
The mini lectures at the beginning of class provided helpful background information.
The instructor was very nice, very engaging, very accommodating, and very great at explaining what we are learning. She is a fantastic instructor!
The instructor did a great job fostering interesting and fun discussions of the material and did a great job breaking concepts down in order to make the class understand.
Lectures
Lectures on history were helpful.
I found their style of conducting combined discussion--and--lecture particularly helpful (and used the classes as a sort of model for writing the midterm and final).
The class was mostly discussion based, but sometimes there were slideshows with background information on the topic that were helpful
Facilitating discussions
The in class lecturing and discussion, and professor Reznik's ability to mix both.
Dr. Reznik's lectures were great!
I really appreciated when Prof. Reznik lectured and answered questions. She really took the time to explain things carefully.

What could the instructor modify to help you learn more?

Comments
It would perhaps have been helpful to define the more politically--charged terminology in class. For example, it is historically accurate and correct to refer to Jerusalem as Palestine prior to 1948, but it is not geographically accurate to refer to it as "Israel--Palestine" after 1948, and it also is not accurate to refer to Tiberias as "Israel--Palestine" at the time that Jesus was born, which she did. The terminology of Israel and Palestine should have been explained, as well as what she means by the word "Israel--Palestine," because I was confused by that term, but kept an open mind.
The format of this class made it a little difficult for quieter students to participate. Including more group work and close reading activities and also making a little more of an effort to engage students who do not normally speak over the same few super--engaged students could help make this better.
Also, the 72--hour time limit on the midterm was unnecessarily stressful. I STRONGLY believe that the exam would benefit from giving us unlimited time up until the deadline just as with the final.
Potentially make the exams in person and written rather than online and with a big time frame. The exams would need to be smaller, but it would make grading easier and reduce the student stress about having to write multiple essays in a short amount of time.
Professor Reznik posted the lecture slides and handout documents to Canvas in a big separate module; it could have been helpful to have those put in the modules that corresponded to the weeks we used them in?
Adding more secondary sources to the reading assignments and possibly contextualizing the sources we had to read for the next class in the previous class so we would have a better understanding of what we were reading.
Maybe more streamlined reference sources (e.g. slides), but nothing really beyond that
Nothing!

The Instructor . . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Organized the course clearly.	4.83	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	83.33%	0.00%
Presented lectures that enhanced your understanding.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	75.00%	0.00%
Facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	8.33%	83.33%	0.00%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	83.33%	0.00%
Challenged you to learn.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	8.33%	83.33%	0.00%
Helped you gain significant learning from the course content.	4.75	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	8.33%	8.33%	83.33%	0.00%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.83	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	83.33%	0.00%
Motivated you to think independently.	4.58	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	8.33%	75.00%	0.00%
Worked to create an inclusive and welcoming learning environment.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	83.33%	0.00%
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	4.67	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	83.33%	0.00%

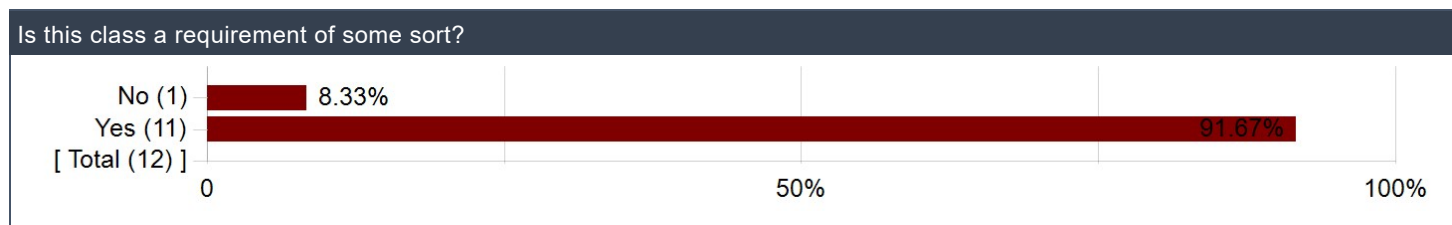
Please include the name of the TA/CA/Intern you are evaluating. What aspects of the TA's teaching contributed most to your learning? What could the TA modify to help you learn more? Please include any additional feedback for the TA/CA/Intern.

Comments
Our TA was Eli. I only met him when he introduced himself to the class at the beginning of the quarter, so I don't have much to say about him, but he seemed very nice.
N/A
Eli Reiter.
Eli Reiter. I'm not sure; he seemed lovely the time I met him, but I didn't really get to know him.
Eli Reiter
Eli Reiter was very helpful when meeting for office hours. He was super friendly and asked excellent questions.

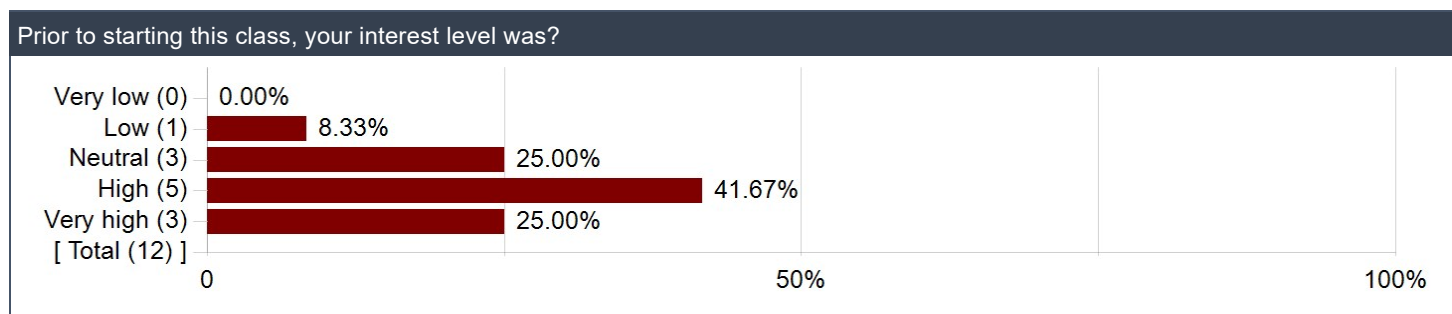
The TA/CA or Intern. . .

	Mean	Median	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
Facilitated discussions that supported your learning.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%
Gave you useful feedback on your work.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	14.29%	71.43%
Stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the class.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%
Challenged you to learn.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%
Helped you succeed in the class.	5.00	5.00	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	85.71%
Was available and helpful outside of class.	4.50	4.50	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	14.29%	71.43%
Overall, this individual made a significant contribution to your learning.	3.00	3.00	0.00%	14.29%	0.00%	14.29%	0.00%	71.43%

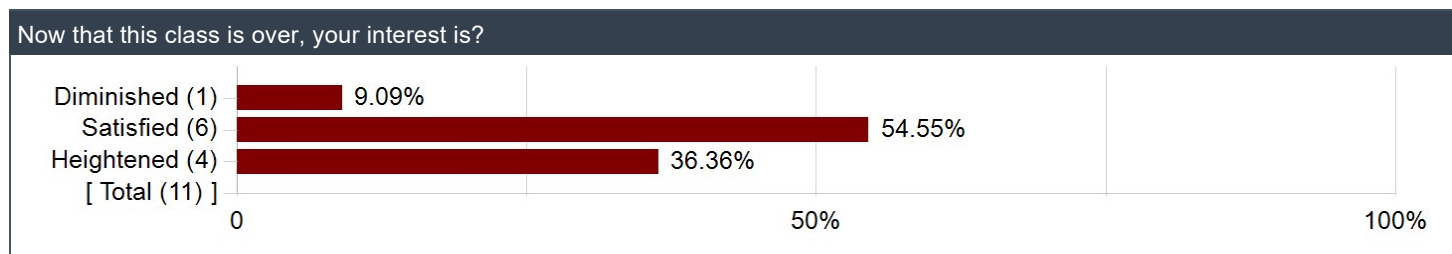
Is this class a requirement of some sort?



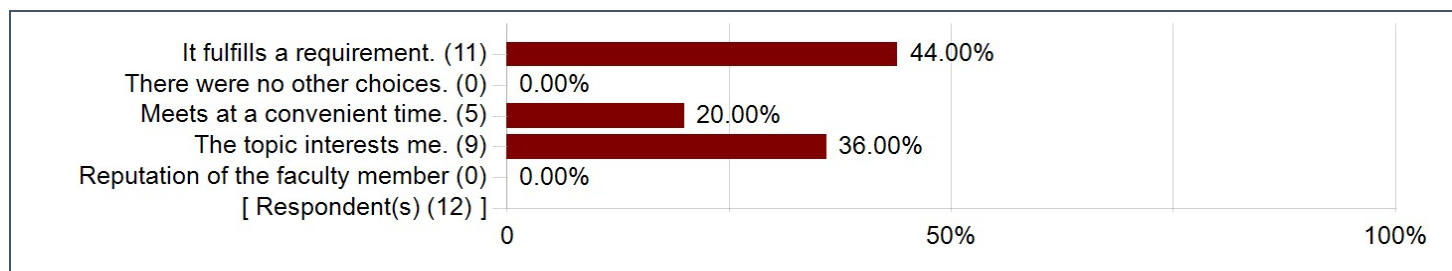
Prior to starting this class, your interest level was?



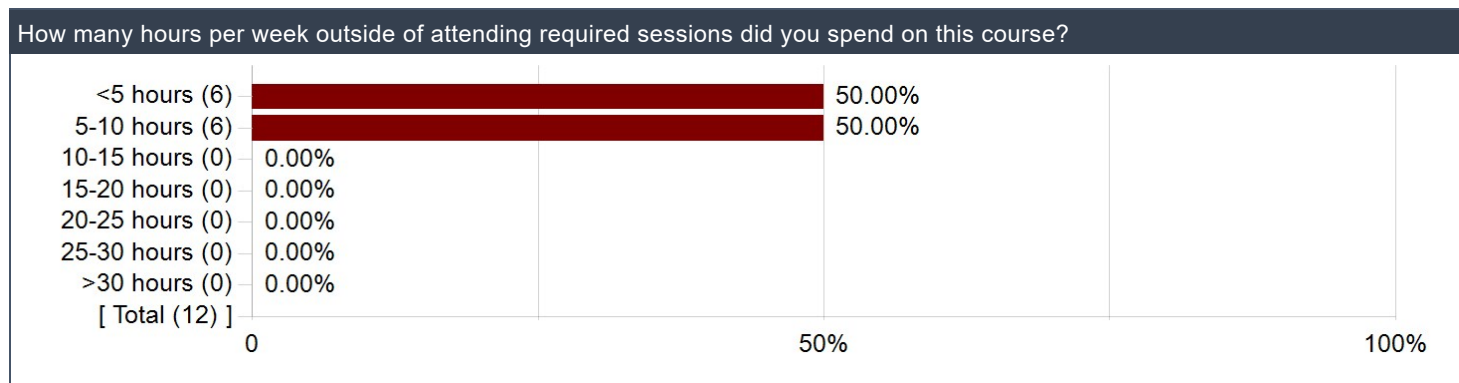
Now that this class is over, your interest is?



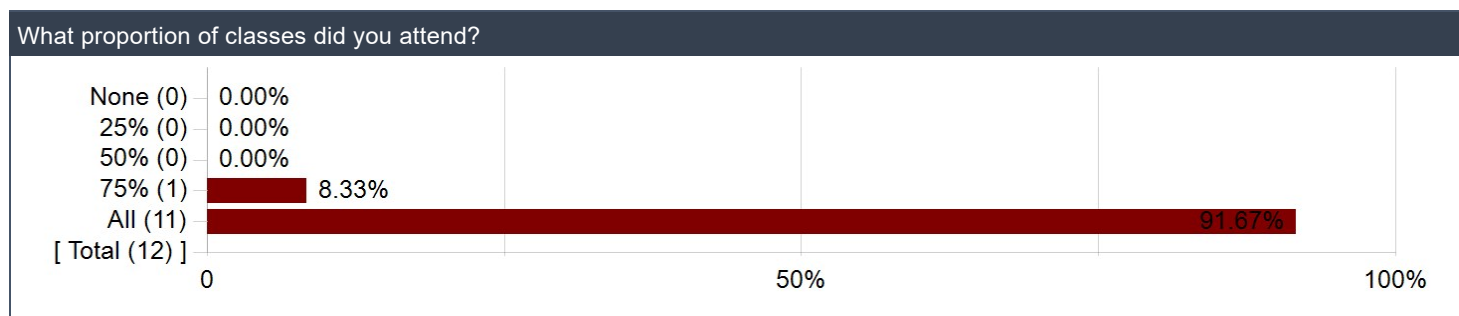
Why did you choose to take this course? (Select all that apply)



How many hours per week outside of attending required sessions did you spend on this course?



What proportion of classes did you attend?



Please comment on the level of difficulty of the course relative to your background and experience.

Comments
The class difficulty was very appropriate. I had a moderate background of exposure to course materials, and I was able to understand the class discussion.
I went to a Jewish private school and had a substantial Jewish education going into this course. Because of this, much of the course material, especially earlier on in the course, was already familiar to me. Still, I gained a lot from reading the primary sources and I feel that the course was appropriately challenging but fair.
This class focused more on Jewish texts so I was initially quite unfamiliar with the material but I was able to get acclimatized easily
As someone who does not know a ton about Jewish Civ, this course was the appropriate level of difficulty. As long as you do the readings, speak up in discussion, and pay attention to lectures, you should be fine.
I knew almost nothing about Jewish civ besides the basic and came out with a comprehensive understanding
If you do the readings and take notes in class you will be ok
I never took any history classes related to Jewish history and found it very reasonable.
I'm a religious studies major, so the course dealt with topics with which I was already somewhat familiar. However, it was both very interesting and not that difficult.
This class was very approachable given my background in the humanities.