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


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 13. The Catholic Position: Nostra Aetate
April 15. Research Day
April 20. Dabru Emet
April 22. The Council of Columbia
April 27. TBA