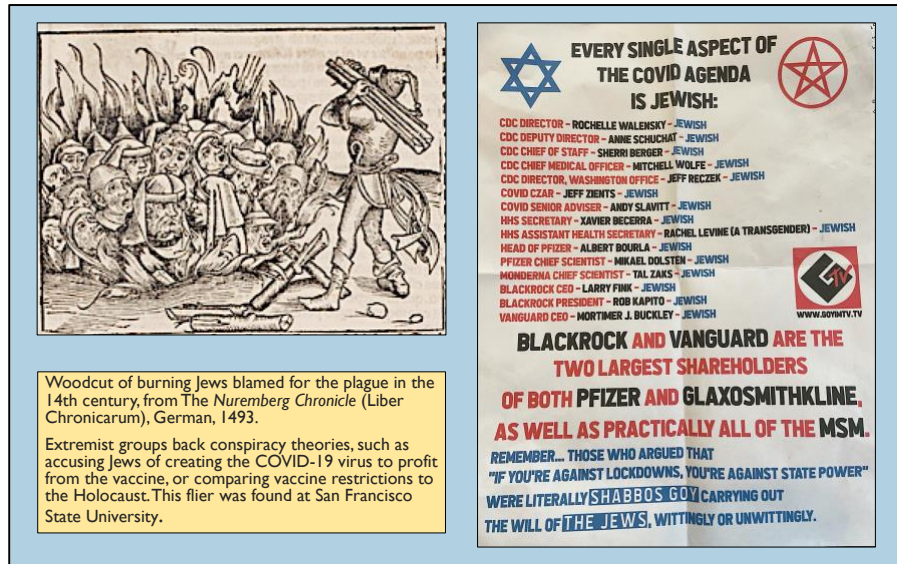


# Antisemitism Revisited

## Fall 2022, 2 credits



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According to the Southern Poverty Law Center prejudice against Jews is sometimes called “the oldest hatred.” New versions are periodically invented, including in our times. In 2021 the American Jewish Committee reported a quarter of American Jews targeted by antisemitism and nearly half changed their identifying behavior out of fear. 82% of American Jews said antisemitism had risen over the last five years, while only 44% of the general public believed that to be the case. What is going on?

In **Antisemitism Revisited**, students will learn about how centuries of religious discrimination shaped Jewish experience, how 19th century racial thinking produced the modern prejudice against Jews called antisemitism, and how antisemitism subsequently intersected with other features of identity and affected diverse Jewish peoples around the world. The class equips students with new knowledge and understanding about antisemitism and related topics.

**CLASSES:** Thursdays, 6:00-9:00 p.m.: October 20, November 3, and December 1, and Sunday, November 13, 9:00-6:00 p.m. for a field trip to Seattle. Classes include lectures and discussions. Come prepared: read and screen assignments, take notes, and arrive with ideas and questions.

**TEXTS:** Materials for each class will be available on Canvas by noon on the day after the previous class meeting. All reading materials and films will be free.

**WRITING:** Two assignments: one paper before the first class, and one after our last class. Credit will not be granted without these two papers. Please submit papers on Canvas. Your notes on lectures, texts, films, and our field trip will be invaluable to you, particularly for the last paper.

**FIELD TRIP:** On Sunday, November 13, we will take a field trip to Seattle. We’ll visit the Holocaust Center for Humanity and the Anne Frank Tree. All expenses, including lunch, are paid for.

## SCHEDULE and ASSIGNMENTS

- 1) Prepare for the first class, which meets on Thursday, October 20 (complete in the order listed):

**WRITE:**      **Introduction Essay: My Impressions About Antisemitism**

DUE: Friday, October 7, 10:00 a.m., 1.5 pages minimum, double-spaced.

Explain your understanding of antisemitism. If you know a little, explain what you think you know. If you know a lot, say what you know, and how you know it. If you have a story to tell about an experience you've had, something you read, or something you observed, write about that, too. If you have questions about antisemitism, write them, too. ***Please do not google "antisemitism" or look it up on Wikipedia or other websites.*** The task here is **not** to write a definition, but rather to illustrate your understanding, right now, as honestly and searchingly as you can. It's OK to know very little; after all, you enrolled in the course **to learn**. You are welcome to write more than the required 1.5 pages.

**VIEW:**      *The Story of the Jews: The Beginning*, and *The Story of the Jews: Among Believers* on the Alexander Street platform through our library. These are the first two episodes in a five-part series produced by the BBC based on the book *The Story of the Jews* (2013) by Simon Schama. Schama is a multi-award-winning British historian who is University Professor of History at Columbia University in New York City.

**IN CLASS:**    Introductions and Lecture: Anti-Judaism through the Enlightenment  
                   Discussion: Documentaries and excerpts from your papers  
                   Preview of November 3: The coming of racialized antisemitism

- 2) Prepare for the second class, which meets on Thursday, November 3:

**READ:**      About the [Haskalah](#) (Jewish Enlightenment and Emancipation)

About the [Dreyfus Affair](#)

Excerpts from Christian leaders (handout)

About [Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe in the 19th century](#)

**VIEW:**      *The Story of the Jews: A Leap of Faith*

Dr. Henry Abramson's lecture about the [Emancipation of the Jews](#). Dr. Abramson is a professor of philosophy and Dean of the Lander College of Arts, and Sciences at Touro University in New York, one of the largest private Jewish universities in the U.S.

**IN CLASS:**    Lecture: Racialized antisemitism after the Enlightenment  
                   Discussion: Documentaries and texts  
                   Preview of November 13, 9:00-6:00 field trip to Seattle

- 3) Prepare for the third class, which meets on Sunday, November 13, 9:00-6:00 p.m.:

**READ:** Theodor Herzl, “The Jewish Question” (1897)

About [antisemitism after the Great War \(World War One\)](#).

About the and particularly the links under “Learn” at the top of the homepage.

About Anne Frank on in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

**VIEW:** [“A Night at the Garden”](#) (2017, 7 minutes), an Academy Award-nominated short documentary film of a Nazi rally held in New York City in 1939. The film is composed entirely of original footage from the event.

This [this documentary about Ken Burns’s limited series](#) “The US and the Holocaust” (about an hour), which was released about a month ago on PBS. I wasn’t able to get access to it for us, but this documentary summarizes and includes many excerpts from the series. [Burns is a prolific documentarian](#) who has produced 35 films or series about a wide range of topics, mostly in U.S. history. Millions of people who know very little about the Holocaust will learn about it from this series.

**IN CLASS:** Field trip to Seattle:  
Holocaust Center for Humanity  
Anne Frank Tree

- 4) Prepare for our fourth and final class, which meets on Thursday, December 1:

**READ:** [“Why is there resistance to a working definition of antisemitism?”](#) by Günther Jikeli, who holds the Erna B. Rosenfeld Professorship at the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Antisemitism/ Borns Jewish Studies Program at Indiana University.

The Introduction and Chapter 1 from Dara Horn’s book of essays, (2021). These excerpts are available free on Amazon, which is where the link will take you. Also read her essay, [“Cities of Ice”](#), which became a chapter in the book.

Eric Ward, [“Skin in the Game: How Antisemitism Animates White Nationalism.”](#) You can read about Eric Ward [HERE](#).

**VIEW:** This debate: [“Is Anti-Zionism the New Antisemitism?”](#) (2020).

**LISTEN:** To [this story from NPR](#), entitled “ReAwaken America brings together some of the U.S.’s most prolific conspiracy theorists” which aired on November 2, 2022.

**IN CLASS:** Lecture: Antisemitism in the Present  
Discussion: Documentaries and texts  
Final essay assignment discussion

## 5) WRITE:

### Final Essay: Antisemitism Revisited

Due on Sunday, December 11 at 12:00 noon. This essay should be at least 3 pp., double spaced. **You will not earn any credit for the course unless you write at least the required number of pages and submit this assignment on time.** You are expected to reference course materials and experiences in your essay.

This assignment has two parts.

**Part 1.** To “revisit” something is to return to it, or take it up again, or to reconsider, reevaluate, and reexamine it. The title of this class refers to the aim of this part of the final writing assignment.

Go back and read the essay that you wrote in early October—revisit your previous understanding of antisemitism. Read the essay a couple of times. Then look over the work we’ve done this quarter. Review the assignments that you read and screened each week. Read your notes from the lectures. Recall the discussions. Recall the field trip and what you learned from it. Then write a response to this prompt:

How has your understanding of antisemitism **changed**, as a result of your work in this course? Cite specific texts, films, experiences, and discussions to show what changed your understanding. If your understanding hasn’t changed, cite specific texts, films, experiences, and discussions to show how your understanding has been **confirmed** as a result of your work in this course.

**Part 2.** In the introduction to *People Love Dead Jews*, which you read for our last class meeting, Dara Horn writes, “Those girls were not stupid, and probably not even bigoted. But in their entirely typical and well-intentioned education, they had learned about Jews mainly because people had killed them. Like most people in the world, they had only encountered dead Jews: people whose sole attribute was that they had been murdered, and whose murders served a clear purpose, which was *to teach us something*. Jews were people who, for moral and educational purposes, were supposed to be dead” (p. xiv). Here’s the writing assignment:

Respond to Horn’s quote. Explain what you think it could mean for people to be interested in living Jews. Do you think such an interest might challenge antisemitism and, if so, how?