This course will explore the Jewish political tradition, focusing particularly on the concepts of power, sovereignty, and community. Starting from the Biblical text, we will examine how both classical and modern thinkers within the Jewish tradition understood the ways in which power was created, various meanings of leadership, the idea of national independence, and the ultimate question of belonging within a fragmented political community.

Students are required to contribute to class discussions, write short summaries of readings, and write a research paper. There will be a take-home final exam.

**Required Texts**

- Michael Walzer, et.al., eds., *The Jewish Political Tradition*, Volumes 1 and 2 (Yale University Press)


**Course Learning Objectives**

This course requires substantial reading and writing, as well as class discussions. Students are expected not only to learn the substantive material, but also to apply the ideas they learn across multiple areas. By the end of the semester, students should be able to understand a wide range of topics relating to the Jewish political tradition, write a substantial research paper, and generate their own informed perspectives on many of the important questions we are considering.

**Course Requirements**

1) Complete all readings on schedule. If you miss a class, email me for the next reading assignment, as the schedule may change. Bring the assigned readings with you to class.

2) Attend on time and actively participate in class discussions. Those who arrive more than 5 minutes late, or who leave in the middle of class, will be marked for half of an absence. Each student is allowed only three unexcused absences. Your participation grade will be reduced by one-third of a letter for each unexcused absence over two. Not being active during class discussions will also result in a lowering of your participation grade. During weeks 5 and 10 of the semester I will update you as to your current participation grade, so that you will have an
opportunity for improvement. Use of electronic devices such as phones or music players during class is prohibited. Laptops/tablets are permitted for note-taking only.

3) Take the final exam. It will be in take-home form.

4) Complete all required writing assignments.

*Writing Assignment #1:* Write 5 short papers summarizing the day’s assigned readings. Papers should be 2-3 pages in length. For each class you may write only one short paper, and you may not submit more than 5 in total.

Once you have received a grade on your paper, I will give you the option of revising it, if you wish. All revisions are due within one week of when I return the paper to you.

*Writing Assignment #2:* Write a research paper.

This will be done in 4 stages:

1. Topic proposal. This should be 1-2 pages. Briefly describe your area of interest, and state your research question. Due no later than **September 30th**. The grade for this assignment is Approve/Disapprove. If I do not approve your proposal, you must rewrite and resubmit it.

2. Annotated bibliography. This should be 1-2 pages. List no fewer than 4 separate sources that you will use for your research, not including Internet sources or readings from the syllabus. Describe their relevance to your research. Due no later than **October 21st**.

3. First draft. This must be at least 6 pages. Cite all sources appropriately and include a bibliography. Due no later than **November 18th**.

4. Final draft. This must be 8-12 pages. Make all appropriate corrections to the first draft. Due no later than **December 2nd**.

**Late papers will be penalized one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late** (barring serious emergencies, which must be documented). For the purposes of this course, “late” is defined as submitted through D2L after the class starting time on the due date of the assignment. I will not accept submissions via email or in hard copy. Do not wait to the last moment to submit assignments.

All written assignments must be typed in a 12 point font, double spaced, with one-inch margins, and have page numbers. Papers not meeting these criteria will be penalized.
Grading

Work conducted towards the end of the semester will be more heavily weighted in my mind when dispensing final grades; in other words, *improvement counts.*

Attendance/Participation: 20%
Research Paper: 40% (in categories)
  - Proposed bibliography: 10%
  - First Draft: 10%
  - Final Draft: 20%
Summaries: 20%
Final: 20%

Incompletes will only be given for valid, documented emergencies.

**NOTE ON PLAGIARISM:** Any student found plagiarizing work will receive a grade of *zero* for that assignment and an *F* for the course. You will also be reported to the University for violating the academic integrity policy. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: direct copying of material that is not your own, copying the material even while providing a citation, or copying ideas without proper attribution. *It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism; if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask!*

Accessibility

If you are a student with a disability or believe you might have a disability that requires accommodations, please contact Student Disability Services at (773) 442-4595, room D-104.

Schedule of Classes and Exams

**August 26th:** Introduction to the Jewish Political Tradition

Abraham Melamed, “Is there a Jewish Political Thought? The Medieval Case Reconsidered,” *Hebraic Political Studies* 1:1 (Fall 2005): 24-56. [D2L]

**September 2nd:** Covenant, Revelation, and the Sources of Morality
JPT, chapters 1 and 2

September 9th: Governing Structures: Kings and Prophets
JPT, chapters 3 and 5


September 16th: Governing Structures: Rabbis and the Oral Tradition
JPT, chapter 6

September 30th: “The Chosen People”
(Semember 23rd – No Class)
JPT, chapter 11


October 7th: Social and Gender Hierarchies
JPT, chapters 12 and 13

October 14th: Challenges to the Community
JPT, chapters 14 and 15

October 21st: Gentile and Jew
JPT, chapters 16 (volume 2) and 9 (volume 1)

October 28th, November 4th, and 11th: The State of Israel
JPT, chapter 10

Ehud Luz, Wrestling With an Angel: Power, Morality, and Jewish Identity
November 18th, 25th and December 2nd: Responses to the Holocaust
Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*
