

Welcome to

# Judaism, Law, and Society

Spring 2023  
CPO 4000 (22009)  
CCJ 4934 (29850)  
JST 4936 (28757)

Tuesday 7th period, Fine Arts C 120  
Thursday 7th and 8th periods, Fine Arts C 127

Dr. Patricia Sohn, Ph.D., Associate Professor; Office: 333 Anderson; Office Telephone: 352-273-2370 Email: [pjsohn@ufl.edu](mailto:pjsohn@ufl.edu)

## Office Hours

Tuesdays, 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in 333 Anderson; Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in 333 Anderson; and Thursdays, 10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in 1120K Turlington. In person or via Zoom @ this link: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/84458445844>

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Addresses themes in Judaism, Law & Society in ancient, medieval, modern, and late-modern periods with approximately half of the course dedicated to late-modern Israel. Themes include Jewish law and Jewish communities in historical context; Legal principles in Jewish law; Judaism & Law in religious and secular contexts; Judicial Institutions in Israel; Civil rights, human rights, and constitutionalism in Israel; Judicial biography; and the Judge in a Democracy.

## TEXTS

√ = free e-book at Smathers Library course e-reserves

∞ = Library West Reserve Desk text only (not available for purchase)

- √ - *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law*, edited by Christine Hayes. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- *Public Law in Israel* edited by Itzhak Zamir and Allen Zysblat. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- *Judgement in Jerusalem* by Prina Lahav. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.
- *The Judge in a Democracy* by Aharon Barak. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- ∞ - *Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles* by Menachem Elon. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994. (Only available at Library West Reserve Desk; must read from library copy, so please access it early in the semester.)

(Recommended reading [*not required*], Nikolaus Wachsmann, *Hitler's Prison: Legan Terror in Nazi Germany*. Yale University Press, 2004.)

***These texts are posted on reserve and will be available to students on or before the first day of classes.***

## ASSIGNMENTS

- 15% Participation (ad hoc participation regarding weekly readings including individual and in-class group exercises; one individual presentation; and one round table presentation)
  - 30% 3 Abstracts (1-1.25 pages each)
  - 20% 2 Journal Entries (1.5-2 pages each)
  - 35% 1 Final Essay (6 pages)
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## EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

### 15% Participation, of which:

- (A) 33.3% - Ad Hoc Participation: Active and appropriate participation in discussion of readings, ad hoc group activities in the classroom.
- (B) 33.3% - Individual Presentations on readings in the classroom or via Voice Thread (free account at <http://ufl.voicethread.com>).
- (C) 33.3% - Round Tables. The round tables are a culminating panel discussion in which each student responds to a set of prompts for that section of the course. Each student will be assigned to one round table.

*Please note: if you do not attend the semester, you cannot pass the class. No make-up assignment will be allowed if you miss more than 15 days of class, unexcused. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a manual reduction of 0.5 points, per unexcused absence over 3, from your final grade on a 100-point scale. It will appear in the "grade override" column in your gradebook on Canvas. Any extra credit will be applied in the same location. Make-up work for excused absences follows UF policy, see UF and Course Policies, below.*

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### 30% Abstracts (3)

1 to 1.25 pages each (longer will reduce points)

Explain the central argument/contention (or take-home message) of the assigned readings in paragraphs that are 5-7 sentences each (strict limit), drawing upon three (3) major pieces of evidence used in the reading to support that argument/contention. In this assignment, you are working to develop analytical distance and analytical neutrality or clarity. In some ways, it is the opposite of personal engagement. Please use footnotes and give a reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements. Please use 11- or 12-point font, 1" margins (or a tiny bit less, but not more), and double-space all written assignments.

You will choose which day that you will submit an abstract. An abstract should be written about one chapter of your choice. Submit an abstract by 11:59 p.m. of the day that we are scheduled to discuss the chapter or article in the Reading Schedule. You can only submit one written assignment per class day; you cannot submit an abstract and journal about the same chapter or article. Please do not wait for your written assignments until the end of the semester, as you want to use them to help you prepare for class and in preparation of the Final Essay prompts. There will be "last date" deadlines posted for the writing assignments in Canvas.

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### 20% Journal (2)

1.5 – 2 pages each

This assignment is your opportunity to engage with the course readings on a personal level. Include only information that would be appropriate for me to read. I encourage you to keep a wider journal of your experience of the course for your own posterity. Please use footnotes and give a reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements. Paragraphs must be 5 – 7 sentences each, strict limit.

You will choose which day that you will submit an abstract. An abstract should be written about one chapter of your choice. Submit an abstract by 11:59 p.m. of the day that we are scheduled to discuss the chapter or article in the Reading Schedule. You can only submit one written assignment per class day; you cannot submit an abstract and journal about the same chapter or article. Please do not wait for your written assignments until the end of the semester, as you want to use them to help you prepare for class and in preparation of the Final Essay prompts. There will be “last date” deadlines posted for the writing assignments in Canvas.

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### 35% Final Essay (1)

6 pages

Each student will write one 6-page essay in response to a choice of two essay prompts. Use Chicago Manual of Style in-text citations and full reference page. There is no final exam for this course. You will be asked to distinguish between analytical distance and personal engagement with the materials, and to demonstrate both. When in doubt, analytical distance should come first. You may draw in some part upon your abstracts and journals, as appropriate to answering the essay prompt. Essays are limited to the readings from class. Please use footnotes and give a reference list, all formatted according to the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available in Announcements. Paragraphs must be 5 – 7 sentences each.

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## GRADING SCALE

A 93-100	C 73-76
A- 90-92	C - 70-72
B+ 87-89	D+ 67-69
B 83-86	D 63-66
B- 80-82	D- 60-62
C+ 77-79	E Below

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students who successfully complete the work for this course will be able to:

1. Identify major themes in Judaism, Law & Society in ancient, medieval, modern, and late-modern periods.
2. Explain the relationship between legal trends or principles and community relationships with a range of regional states and/or cultural systems in ancient, medieval, modern, and late-modern contexts.
3. Compare themes, theories, and trends in Judaism, Law & Society across time periods and a few regions.
4. Identify and explain major issues relating to religion, secularism, human rights, and constitutionalism as aspects of Judaism, Law & Society in the state of Israel, including legal development thereof.
5. Apply judicial biography to comprehension of the legal developments mentioned in point 4.
6. Consider the role of a judge in Democracy as relates to Judaism, Law & Society over time, although particularly in the late-modern period.

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## READING SCHEDULE

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A common theme that runs throughout the sections (e.g., throughout the other themes) of the course is: Judaism & Law in religious and secular contexts.

### Weeks I through IV

Theme: Jewish Law and Jewish Communities in Historical Context

**Main Text:** *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law*, edited by Christine Hayes. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

Week 1 (beginning January  
9th) Tuesday: Introductions  
Thursday: Chapter 1

Week II (January 16)  
Tuesday: Chapter 2  
Thursday: Chapter 3  
Week III (January 23)

Tuesday: Chapter 5  
Thursday: Chapter 6

Week IV (beginning January  
30) Tuesday: Chapter 7  
Thursday: Chapter 14; and ROUND TABLE ONE

### Weeks V through VIII

Theme: Legal Principles in Jewish Law

Main Text: *Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles, Volume IV* by Menachem Elon. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994. *One copy is available at the Library West Reserve Desk. Please access early in the semester, as it is extremely costly to purchase copies of this text. You will need to read this text from the library. It is not available as an e-book. Primary responsibility for class discussion is indicated in parentheses. There will also be one student presentation per day.*

Week V (beginning February 6)  
Tuesday: Elon, Volume IV, Chapter 41 (Group 1)  
Thursday: Continue discussion of Chapter 41

Week VI (February 13)  
Tuesday: Elon, Volume IV, Chapter 42 (first half, Group 2)  
Thursday: Elon, Volume IV, Chapter 42 (second half, Group 3)

Week VII (February 20)  
Tuesday: Elon, Volume IV, Chapter 43 (Group 4)  
Thursday: Continue discussion of Chapter 43

Week VIII (February 27)  
Tuesday: Elon, Volume IV, Chapter 45 (Group 5)  
Thursday: Continue discussion of Chapter 45; and ROUND TABLE TWO

### Weeks IX and X:

Theme: Judicial Biography and  
Civil Rights, Human Rights and Constitutionalism in Israel

**Main Text:** *Judgement in Jerusalem* by Prina Lahav. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press,

1997. Week IX (March 6)  
Tuesday: Lahav,  
Chapter 1 Thursday:  
Chapter 2



Week X (beginning March 20)  
Tuesday: Lahav, Section II  
Thursday: Lahav, Section IV, Section V; and ROUND TABLE THREE

### Weeks XI through XIII

Theme: Judicial Institutions in Israel

**Main Text:** *Public Law in Israel* edited by Itzhak Zamir and Allen Zysblat. Oxford: Clarendon Press,

1996. Week XI (March 27)  
Tuesday: Zysblat, Chapter 2; and Zamir, Chapter 3  
[Optional, not required, related chapters: 13 and  
14]  
Thursday: Chapter 4

Week XII (April 3)  
Tuesday: Zysblat, Chapter  
5 Thursday: Chapter 8, 9,  
10

Week XIII (April 10)  
Tuesday: Chapter 22 and  
23  
Thursday: Chapter 24 and 25; and ROUND TABLE FOUR

### Weeks XIV through XV:

Theme: The Judge in a Democracy

**Main Text:** *The Judge in a Democracy* by Aharon Barak. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

Week XIV (April 17)  
Tuesday: Chapter 1  
Thursday: Chapter 2

Week XV (April  
24) Tuesday:  
Chapter 5  
Thursday: Chapter 14; and ROUND TABLE FIVE

Final Essay:  
Choose ONE of a choice of two prompts,  
to be posted April 3, 2023 on Assignments Tab for “Final Essay” Final Essay Due: Tuesday, May 2nd, at  
11:59 p.m. on Canvas

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## ROUND TABLES

Each student should speak for 2 minutes regarding one or two questions for their round table of choice. The questions will appear at the Canvas Assignments Tab for this assignment one week prior to the round table for each. The questions(s) will be in regard to the text listed. The round table will happen on the last day of the readings for each text (accounting for holidays).

On Tuesday of Week III, students will be asked to sign up for a choice of the round tables below. The list of students assigned to each round table will be your study group for in-class ad hoc participation activities for the semester.

### ROUND TABLE ONE

- (1) *The Cambridge Companion to Judaism and Law*, edited by Christine Hayes. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017.

### ROUND TABLE TWO

- (2) *Jewish Law: History, Sources, Principles* by Menachem Elon. Philadelphia, PA: The Jewish Publication Society, 1994. (Selections.)

### ROUND TABLE THREE

- (3) *Judgement in Jerusalem* by Pnina Lahav. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997.

### ROUND TABLE FOUR

- (4) *Public Law in Israel* by Itzhak Zamir and Allen Zysblat. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.

### ROUND TABLE FIVE

- (5) *The Judge in a Democracy* by Aharon Barak. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008.

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For “Notes on Inclusiveness, and the Epistemological Orientation of the Professor,” please see my webpage (click link): [Teaching/Pedagogy: Notes on inclusiveness, and the epistemology of the professor | Patricia J. Sohn](#)

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## PROSE EXPLANATION OF GRADING OF WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

(For table/graph form, see Canvas course page)

Your grades for your written assignments are made up primarily of three components: research, writing, and ideas. The three are weighted in that order.

You can go a long way with meticulous **RESEARCH** into our readings, perfectly formed footnotes, and perfectly formed reference lists. No outside sources for abstracts or final essay, and minimal outside sources are allowed for journal entries (more details in class). I provide a style guide to help with footnotes, reference list, and some basic comma issues. But that will not take you to an A or A+.

Your **WRITING** should be well organized, coherent, grammatically correct, and follow a certain political science model. The political science model entails writing in a way that is to the point, direct, succinct, active voice, avoids passive voice wherever possible, avoids generalizations, and stays very grounded in the readings (and their details, where appropriate). You will learn and develop writing skills in this model as we move through the semester. You are not expected to know it in advance.

**IDEAS** means that, once you have effectively and accurately explained the main argument or take-home message of our reading(s) using the political science model just mentioned, you can then move to the third step, which is to develop your own analytical ideas about what really matters in the readings. That is, what should the reader of your abstract/journal/essay take home as the central point from your essay about the readings? (Journals include personal engagement; more details in class.)

When you have effectively achieved strong skills in all three areas, research, writing, and ideas, you can expect an A+ grade on written assignments in this class.

I do not grade on a curve. If you put the time and effort in and learn these skills, you can get a good grade in this class.

Note: If you have writing issues that you know about with regard to grammar, syntax, style, English language, etc., I recommend going to the [Writing Studio](#) (see last page of syllabus for contact information) with your first few written assignments to get comments from the lab before turning them in to me. You are also welcomed to bring them to office hours for feedback.

-- *Dr. Sohn*



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## UNIVERSITY AND COURSE POLICIES

- UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.
- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. Click here to read the university attendance policies.
- Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.
- Grading for this course follows University policies and guidelines; see, [this link](#).
- Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.
- Materials and fees: texts; some optional video rentals. E-reserves readings are free with Gatorlink account and/or use of UF-VPN.
- All electronic communication in this should must use internal Canvas email.
- For discussion in class, please limit yourself to course readings unless specifically requested to speak regarding personal experience, etc. Appropriate decorum and respect for a wide variety of opinions amongst your fellow classmates is asked and requested. Your cooperation in this effort will be greatly appreciated.

## CAMPUS RESOURCES

Health and Wellness U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu), 352-392-1575, or visit U Matter, We Care website to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit the Student Health Care Center website.

University Police Department: Visit UF Police Department website or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency

Room and Trauma Center website.

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

## ACADEMIC RESOURCES

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at [helpdesk@ufl.edu](mailto:helpdesk@ufl.edu).

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420.

General study skills and tutoring.

**[Writing Studio](#): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.**

Student Complaints On-Campus: Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.

On-Line Students Complaints: View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.