

General Education Submission Form

Electronic submissions are required.

A. GE component for which course is being proposed: Thinking Historically and Thinking Globally

B. Submitted by Holly Huffnagle (and Richard Pointer, History Department Chair)

C. Ideally, submissions should be discussed by the entire department prior to submittal.

Chair has reviewed and approved the course.

D. Course being proposed (please attach syllabus): HIS 195 Topics in History: Antisemitism and the Politics of Prejudice/ POL 150 Seminar: Antisemitism and the Politics of Prejudice

E. This course

- Has not been modified, but is being submitted to check its suitability
- Has had its syllabus rewritten to communicate the course's contribution to GE
- Has had its contents modified to address the relevant GE issues
- Is a new course designed to fulfill the GE requirement

F. This course is being submitted as

A Template. Applicable to courses with multiple sections which require only general training in the discipline. The submission should come from the department chair and should clearly identify what course content and what elements of the syllabus the department has agreed will common to all sections. Upon approval by the GE Committee, any course whose syllabus is determined by the department to meet the specifications of the template is approved to satisfy this area requirement. A copy of each syllabus should be forwarded to the GE Committee for record keeping purposes.

An Individual Course. Applicable to courses requiring specialized training in the discipline or are typically offered by a particular instructor. The course should be resubmitted and reassessed in the event of a change in staffing or syllabus.

G. Statement of rationale:

(Include a list of the area certification criteria (former called GE objectives) and GE Student Learning Outcomes (if applicable). These certification criteria and GE SLOs are listed in the [GE Committee Combined](#) document. After each certification criterion and GE SLO, list several course activities (lectures, readings, assignments, etc.) that address it. If it is not completely obvious, explain how the activities relate to the certification criterion or outcome. Please attach a copy of the syllabus which has been annotated to identify the corresponding activities. Electronic annotations are required. Please use the *comment* feature in Word to annotate electronic copies).

Thinking Historically

HIS 195/POL 150 *Antisemitism and the Politics of Prejudice: Religion, Israel, & U.S. Foreign Policy* will fulfill the “Thinking Historically” component of the Westmont General Education curriculum.

Following the course, students will be able to:

1. *Read primary sources historically – asking and answering basic questions about historical sources (historical context, author, audience, genre); drawing historical conclusions from the sources and assessing their reliability and usefulness; and reflecting on how their own background shapes their interpretation.*

Throughout the semester, students will read and work critically with primary and secondary historical texts. Each lecture will be framed by primary source material specifically selected for their contrasting voices, different viewpoints, and unique perspectives. These sources, including Martin Luther’s *On the Jews and their Lies*, the plagiarized forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, Émile Zola’s open letter *J’Accuse!*, and Karl Marx’s essay “On the Jewish Question,” among others, will also form the basis of student-led in-class discussions on how the source relates to the broader class theme and lecture.

Students will also evaluate primary and secondary sources and appropriately integrate them into their research. They will complete a primary source-based essay during the semester (choosing from several primary source options), and will be asked to use a range of secondary sources to contextualize their primary source selection. This essay, which will be evaluated based on the students’ abilities to analyze historical context, author bias, genre, and intended audience, will be worth 15% of their grade.

By using both primary and secondary sources in each lecture, class discussions, and their written assignments, students will be able to recognize and understand source subjectivity and its contribution to a more balanced historical perspective.

2. *Appreciate the contextuality of historical narrative and interpretation – understanding that the ways in which historians tell the story is shaped by their context (intellectual, social, etc.) and recognizing that interpretations of history are subject to change; they will understand the term “historiography” and its implications.*

By studying the history of one type of prejudice—antisemitism—through the use of primary sources, each class will discuss individual interpretations, multiple viewpoints, and competing memories of past events. Analyzing these competing narratives (both by eye witnesses and historians) will enable students to challenge previous notions of the past as simply black and white and to grasp the complex process of historical change. Students will also study the methods historians use in Antisemitism Studies and the debates which currently exist within the historiography. For instance, in the class “Socio-

economic Antisemitism: Origins and Persisting Theories,” the students, alongside many prominent scholars in the field, will debate on the appropriate use of the term ‘antisemitism’ today after comprehending its historical context as a product of late-19th century, post-emancipation Germany—created to protest Jews’ rising socio-economic status and influence in German society.

Students will also learn that historians can misuse primary source material and they should not take everything they read in secondary sources at face value. They will be taught that questioning an argument’s veracity can be constructive; asking questions—while not meant to discount or undermine what happened—can help to promote multiple sides of the story and to acknowledge and realize our own limitations as students of this history. For instance, in the class “Challenges on the Right: Neo-Nazism and Holocaust Denial/Distortion,” students will read critically the current work of Polish and Hungarian government-sponsored historians (translated segments) to see how current right-wing governments and populist trends are encouraging a reinterpretation of Holocaust history in efforts to promote their own national narratives.

Lastly, the course will encourage students to further appreciate the important role historical context plays in understanding human action or inaction. For example, viewing Europe and Europeans with a ‘post-Christian’ lens without taking into consideration the spiritual and cultural wounds caused by World War II, the Holocaust, and (in central and eastern Europe) communism, can be misleading. Students will directly tackle this issue during the lectures “Genocidal Antisemitism: The Holocaust” and “Antisemitism after Auschwitz” to better comprehend how the Holocaust altered the religious and political landscapes of European society and also impacted levels of antisemitism. Before we blame others for “not speaking up or out” during the Holocaust, students will develop the ability to see others in historical context to better cultivate compassion and a posture of humility.

3. *Articulate with less naiveté how the past is relevant for the present – making connections between students’ historical study and their responsibilities within the larger world. Students will appreciate what separates us from the past and avoid presentism.*

One of the course’s main objectives is to explain how present-day incidents and attitudes of antisemitism have been shaped by what has happened over the past two thousand years. In the class “Israel, Zionism, Anti-Zionism,” students will discuss how the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 as a homeland and safe haven for the Jewish people is integrally connected with the history of the Diaspora, Judaism, and also to Jewish persecution and antisemitism. At the same time, we will grapple with tough issues surrounding the Jewish state and look at the occupation, anti-Zionism, and the plight of Palestinians (and specifically Palestinian Christians).

Several of the semester’s reading assignments will also discuss how the past and popular interpretations of the past affect contemporary politics and policies, such as Robert Wistrich’s *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (2010)

and Robert Fine's and Philip Spencer's *Antisemitism and the Left: On the Return of the Jewish Question* (2017). After students have spent four months grappling with the history and impact of antisemitism as a particular form of prejudice, the final classes will ask students to think about prejudice in the context of other times and places. Student will be encouraged to think critically about exclusion, hatred, xenophobia, and other forms of bias such as anti-Muslim sentiment, racism, and sexism as themes that are not particular to time and/or space, and reflect on what is one's role to combat prejudice and violence in today's world.

Given students' own role in the continuing history of Jewish-Christian relations and a collective responsibility to fight against hate and prejudice, their education will go beyond the classroom setting. Students will also attend a Shabbat or Rosh Hashana service at the local B'nai B'rith Temple, meet with the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), and have the option to volunteer on a project with the Jewish Federation of Santa Barbara.

Thinking Globally

HIS 195/POL 150 *Antisemitism and the Politics of Prejudice: Religion, Israel, & U.S. Foreign Policy* will also fulfill the "Thinking Globally" component of the Westmont General Education curriculum.

Following the course, students will be able to:

1. *Demonstrate substantial engagement of trans-regional and international connections, and include multiple perspectives arising from these connections.*

This course will utilize a comparative global approach to allow students to think about contemporary antisemitism in a global context. Classes will discuss how hatred of Jews and Judaism has been impacted by globalization, and students will rely heavily on Alvin Rosenfeld's 2013 edited volume: *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives*.

Students will also encounter various ways of thinking different from their own, work with multiple (and often competing) narratives, and be exposed to a range of methodologies that extend beyond Western/North American approaches. For example, the class on "Communism and the Soviet Jewry Movement" will look at the Soviet Jewry movement, and while it will be easy to see things from the United States' perspective and from an international human rights perspective, this course will look at all sides. Even when Jews were free to leave the Soviet Union, many Jews chose to stay. Today they are a strong voice for Russia's current government and its policies. Why?

This course is also meant to help students better engage diplomatically by utilizing historical knowledge and tools. A capstone project will be an oral presentation in the form of a simulated UN High Level Forum on Global Antisemitism. In small groups,

students will represent a country other than their own and will come prepared to their panel knowing the political, economic, and social contexts and challenges within this country to be able to accurately assess and successfully advocate for the needs of its Jewish community.

2. *Evaluate the impact of global processes on various world contexts and life experiences.*

Because antisemitism is a global phenomenon, students will study, discuss, and write about its history and contemporary manifestations around the world, including in Europe, the United States, the Middle East and North Africa, Russia, Latin America, and even South Korea.

One of the most frightening trends in rising antisemitism is the global reach of the internet and social media. Given our first amendment rights in the U.S. of free speech, how do technology companies curb hatred spreading online? Where is the line between free speech and incitement to violence? In the class “Digital Antisemitism and Hate Speech,” students will debate differing national responses to this global challenge and engage with various tech companies’ codes of conduct. Students will complete an in-class case study on the European Union and the effectiveness of its current legislation on criminalizing hate speech and Holocaust denial.

Lastly, students will do a deep dive on monitoring and combating antisemitism today. What tools are being used by different countries around the world? In which countries are governments more effective in combating antisemitism, and in which countries is civil society leading the charge? Why are coalitions important? How do law enforcement agencies differentiate between an antisemitic crime and a hate crime? Students will hear from the Santa Barbara/Tri-Counties Anti-Defamation League (ADL) on their reporting and combating hate crime methodologies for Santa Barbara county, trainings for law enforcement, and anti-bias education.

3. *Explore the ethical demands for Christians in light of increasing global antisemitism.*

The students’ final paper will trace the history of the Jewish community in a selected country as well as research the sources of antisemitism using landscape mapping tools. It will also ask for a Christian perspective on the topic. While the final section of the paper will provide a comprehensive policy plan on ways to lower levels of antisemitism within the selected country, a reflective postscript will allow for a Christian response and even a call to action.

Throughout the semester, students will be asked to think about “What does this topic—as both academic and advocative—mean to me as a Christian?” Why should I care? Why does it matter? Many Christian students are unaware that Christian theology and teaching bears considerable culpability for antisemitism and the Holocaust. Other students may view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict solely through a Palestinian Christian lens and have preconceived notions about Israelis and Jews. Traditional, xenophobic (and unfortunately

often ‘Christian’) antisemitism is still the main source of global antisemitism. Demonizing the state of Israel or delegitimizing the Jewish people (because of Israeli government policies) is quickly becoming a close second. As Christ followers equipped with humility and a willingness to learn, students will be reminded of their responsibility to be both truth seekers and knowledge bearers—to complicate set narratives and ask questions—as they become the next generation of Christian educators and enactors of justice in the world.