

Introduction to Jewish Studies

JWST/WCL 2380

Dr. Caryn Tamber-Rosenau

Spring 2022

Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11:30 a.m.

Classroom and Business Building 124

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Please call me: Dr. Tamber-Rosenau, Prof. Tamber-Rosenau, Dr. T-R, Prof. T-R, or just Professor (she/her pronouns)

How to get in touch: Send me an email! I generally respond within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours over a weekend. If I don't reply within that time frame, please contact me again.

Office hours: By appointment via Zoom or outdoors. You can make an office hours appointment to discuss the course, questions you have, assignments, etc.



Images, left to right: A close-up of a panel on the Arch of Titus in Rome depicting the Romans sacking Jerusalem and looting the Jewish Temple in 70 C.E. (Image source: biblicalarchaeology.org); Jewish labor activists protest against child labor in New York in the early 20th century (Image source: jewishlaborcommittee.org); the main gate of the Auschwitz extermination camp, with its deceptive legend "Work Will Make You Free" (Image source: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum); Ethiopian Jews move to Israel in 2013 (Image source: NPR).

Course description:

The history of the Jewish people is in many ways also the history of the world. Judaism is thousands of years old, bearing witness to much of recorded history, and Jews have lived in nearly every land in the world. In this course, we will explore the sweep of Jewish history from biblical origins to the present day, exploring persistent themes such as ethnicity, religious pluralism, multiple identities, diaspora, in-group/out-group boundaries, and persecution. At several points in the course, we will examine Jewish history for resonances with the history of other groups. At every turn we will discuss the influence of history on how the public speaks about Judaism and Jews today.

Course goals:

- To gain an understanding of Jewish history from ancient times to the present day;
- To be able to speak and write knowledgeably about that history;
- To explain how that history affects the present;
- To understand how the public speaks about Judaism, Jews, and Jewish history;
- To be able to use these skills to understand broader questions of ethnicity, religious pluralism, multiple identities, diaspora, in-group/out-group boundaries, and persecution, both historically and in the present day.

Required book:

Raymond P. Scheindlin, *A Short History of the Jewish People: From Legendary Times to Modern Statehood*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

I have posted the first three chapters of this book online to help students who may not receive their orders of it right away. It is available through the campus bookstore and at online booksellers.

Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard and/or linked from the syllabus.

Diversity statement: This class includes and honors students of all backgrounds. The following will not be tolerated: hate speech, belittling others' religious traditions, arguing about whose religion is best/most valid/closest to "the truth," and proselytizing (also known as evangelizing, missionizing, seeking converts, or witnessing).

Course requirements and policies:

1. Attendance is required. Excessive absences or lateness will affect your grade, as will unexcused early departures from class. If you must miss class, arrive late, or leave early on a given day, please let me know in advance if at all possible; it will be your responsibility to make up work that you have missed.
2. You are entitled to two absences, no questions asked, without your attendance and participation grade suffering. Further absences will affect your grade unless they are excused. Examples of excused absences include holidays, personal illness, or family emergency. Documentation of absences may be requested by the professor for them to count as excused. Experiencing COVID

symptoms and needing to get tested is always an excused absence, as long as you let me know at the time. Never come to class if you are experiencing COVID symptoms. Never come to class when you have a pending COVID test.

3. Class participation counts significantly (20%) toward your grade! Please come to class prepared to contribute to class discussions. You are expected to do the assigned readings for every class and share insights or ask questions.
4. Laptops, tablets, phones, and other electronic devices are permitted only for class-related uses. Do not text, post, or chat during class. Do not do work for other classes during our class time. No earbuds or headphones may be worn in class. Failure to honor these rules will result in a lowered attendance and participation grade.
5. I strongly encourage you to use paper and pen to take notes; research has shown that retention of class material is improved when students use pen and paper rather than a computer for notetaking.
6. For most class sessions, I have provided a few questions for you to consider while doing the readings for that day. I hope that this will focus your time and allow you to get more out of both the readings and class sessions.
7. In between class sessions, I will occasionally need to communicate important information to the class via e-mail. It is your responsibility to check your university e-mail regularly.
8. *Quizzes*: We will have regular quizzes on reading and class material. We will vote as a class on how often these quizzes will occur; the more often you are quizzed, the more quiz grades can be dropped at the end of the semester. Unless there are extenuating circumstances *that you tell me about before the quiz*, no make-up quizzes will be allowed. (Experiencing COVID symptoms or waiting for the results of a COVID test count as extenuating circumstances. You can make up a quiz for COVID-related reasons as long as you tell me about your absence beforehand.) Quizzes will be held at the beginning of class, and if you arrive late, you will have that much less time to complete the quiz.
9. *Written work*: Written work will be submitted via TurnItIn on Blackboard.
 - a. Students will write short response papers (~300-400 words) about the films *Constantine's Sword*, *Hava Nagila the Movie*, and *Denial*. For each film, I will give you a set of response questions to choose from.
 - b. Students will prepare a final project on a Jewish Studies topic of their choice. There will be interim deadlines for the project's topic and format, bibliography, and annotated bibliography. The final project will be due on **Wednesday, May 4**.
 - c. My policy on late work is as follows: I accept late written work up to one week after the due date. Late papers will be docked 1/3 of a letter grade per late day. For example, a paper handed in up to 24 hours late would start with a 97, 24-48 hours late with a 94, 48-72 hours late with a 90, and so on.
10. There will be opportunities to earn extra credit points by attending events and/or doing a bonus assignment. Stay tuned for more information. By policy, I do not offer individualized extra credit.
11. To succeed in this class:
 - a. You should expect to spend at least 4-6 hours per week *outside of class* on work for this course: reading, taking notes, asking questions, working on written assignments, and studying.
 - b. Make sure to keep a document on your computer or in a notebook where you record your observations about the course material. Write down notes when reading, record your

answers to any guiding questions or prompts, and keep a record of your thoughts and important quotes from your readings. Make sure to write down questions that occur to you, or objections you have to what you are reading. These will be useful for your other activities.

- c. Communicate with me regularly.
12. We are (still) in the midst of a global pandemic that is upending all facets of our lives. There may be circumstances where following the above guidelines becomes challenging or impossible for you. Please keep me in the loop if this happens, and we will work together to find a solution. Additionally, there may be COVID-related circumstances in which it becomes impossible to meet in person on a particular day. I am prepared to pivot any individual session to synchronous online instruction if necessary, and I will give you as much notice as possible if this needs to happen.
 13. Attending class on Microsoft Teams: every class at the university has a dedicated Microsoft Teams channel. You can find a link to ours on Blackboard. If it becomes necessary to hold class online at some point, this is the format we will use. Additionally, if you cannot attend class due to personal illness/fear of infecting others, but are well enough to attend virtually, you may arrange with me in advance to attend via Teams. I will only be live-streaming class on Teams on days when someone has made this arrangement. If you are on Teams but haven't made this arrangement, you will not get credit for attendance.
 14. This syllabus is subject to change. If I make any changes, I will notify you.

Grading:

Quizzes: 30%

Film response papers: 30%

Final project: 20% (Includes grades for interim elements of the project)

Attendance and participation: 20%

Grading for assignments will be on the following scale. Please note that the highest *final course grade* the University permits is A.

97-100: A+	77-79: C+
93-96: A	73-76: C
90-92: A-	70-72: C-
87-89: B+	67-69: D+
83-86: B	63-66: D
80-82: B-	60-62: D-
	<60: F

Schedule:

Week 1

Tuesday, January 18: Introductions, What is Judaism?

Thursday, January 20: Judaism 101, or Everything You Wanted to Know about Judaism but Were Afraid to Ask; Biblical beginnings

Read: Scheindlin chapter 1

- Which pieces of the biblical story can we analyze historically?
- According to Scheindlin, what are the results of those analyses?
- What were the major empires that affected the ancient Israelites?

Week 2

Tuesday, January 25: What's so Jewish about the Jewish Bible?

Read: Amy-Jill Levine, [“What Is the Difference Between the Old Testament, the Tanakh, and the Hebrew Bible?”](#) and John Barton, [“Judaism and Christianity Both Rely on the Hebrew Bible. Why Do They Interpret It So Differently?”](#)

- Which readers are most likely to use the term “Old Testament”? How about “Tanakh”? “Hebrew Bible”?
- Name some differences in the content and interpretation of the Old Testament and the Hebrew Bible, according to Levine.
- Think of and discuss one way in which the differences in interpretation discussed by Levine might produce misunderstandings or confusion between Jews and Christians.
- According to Barton, what most surprises Christians about how Jews read the Hebrew Bible?
- What forces outside the text shape how Christians and Jews interpret the Hebrew Bible?
- What conflicts between Jews and Christians do you think might result from their different understandings of the Hebrew Bible?

Thursday, January 27: The Second Temple Period and the Diaspora

Read: Scheindlin chapter 2

- At what point in history can we begin speaking of “Jews”? Why is it important what we call a group of people?
- What is Diaspora? Where were the earliest Diaspora communities? What were the religious implications of the development of the Diaspora?

Week 3

Tuesday, February 1: The Diaspora; Talking about World Diasporas

Read: Fernando Segovia, “Toward a Hermeneutics of the Diaspora,” pp60-65; [“5 Facts about the Global Somali Diaspora”](#)

Watch: [“The Jews of Georgia: A Legacy of 26 Centuries”](#) and [“The Legacy of the Jews of Afghanistan”](#) (3-4 minutes total)

- What specific type of diaspora does Segovia treat in his essay?
- How does he describe the experience of living in the diaspora?
- What is the significance of “naming,” for Segovia?

- Is there any way in which you can relate to his comments about “otherness”?
- How might we compare the diaspora about which Segovia speaks to the Jewish diaspora?
- What are some similarities and differences between the Somali diaspora and the Jewish diaspora?
- What aspects of the diasporic communities of Georgia and Afghanistan stand out to you? Do the communities remain today? If not, where are they now?

Thursday, February 3: The Rabbis and the Rise of Christianity

Read: Scheindlin chapter 3

- How and why did religious authority shift from Temple to synagogue and from priests to rabbis?
- What did life look like for Jews in Roman Palestine after 70 C.E.? What about for Diaspora Jews?
- How did the rise of Christianity in this period affect Judaism? How did the rise of rabbinic Judaism affect Christianity?
- What is the Talmud and why is it important?

Week 4

Tuesday, February 8: The Roots of Christian Anti-Judaism

Read: Amy-Jill Levine, “Bearing False Witness: Common Errors Made about Early Judaism”

- To what does Levine attribute Christian misunderstandings about Jews and Judaism?
- Have you encountered any of these misconceptions before? In what context?
- Are you surprised at any of the points Levine makes?

Thursday, February 10: Jews in the Muslim Middle Ages

Read: Scheindlin chapter 4

- How did the rise of Islam affect the Jews?
- What kinds of intellectual cross-pollination occurred between Jews and Muslims in the Middle Ages?
- Are you surprised at the nature of the interactions between Jews and Muslims in this period? If so, to what do you attribute that surprise?
- Who were the Karaites and why were they important?
- Who was Maimonides?
- What are the origins of Sephardi Jews?

Week 5

Tuesday, February 15: Migrations; Ethiopian Jews; Jews in the Christian Middle Ages

Read: Scheindlin chapter 5

Watch: [“Going East: The Jews of China,”](#) [“Chinese Jews from Kaifeng Arrive in Israel,”](#) [“Preserving What’s Left of a Once-Thriving Jewish Community in India,”](#) [“The Beta Israel,”](#) [“Shlomo Shmuel: An Israeli Comedian Combats Racism in His Quest for the Main Stage”](#) (20-25 minutes total)

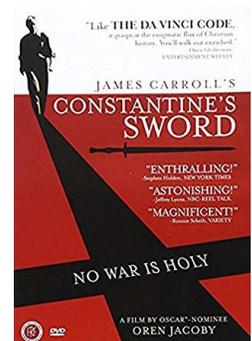
- What are the origins of Ashkenazi Jews?
- What was the general status of Jews in Christian Europe in the early Middle Ages?
- How did the Crusades affect Jewish-Christian relations?
- What kinds of anti-Jewish sentiments and actions took hold during this time period? Why?
- What led to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492?
- Can you identify common threads in the decline of the three Jewish communities treated in these videos?
- How did these Jewish communities interact with local non-Jews?
- Why did Ethiopian Jews move to Israel? What is their situation there now?

Thursday, February 17: Considering Jews in the Medieval Christian World

Read: Excerpt from *Debating Truth: The Barcelona Disputation of 1263: A Graphic History* (It’s a lot of pages but it’s in comic book format!)

In class: Start watching *Constantine’s Sword*

- What are the key issues debated by Nahmanides and Friar Paul at the Barcelona Disputation?
- What do you think each side in the disputation hoped to accomplish? To what extent was each side successful?
- What do the disputation and its aftermath indicate about interreligious relations in Spain during this period?



Week 6

Tuesday, February 22: Jews in the Ottoman Empire

Read: Scheindlin chapter 6

In class: Finish *Constantine’s Sword*

- What led to the growth of Jewish life in the Ottoman Empire?
- What is a “messianic movement”? Why did these movements flourish in Renaissance Europe?
- Who was Shabbatai Zvi, and how did his story affect ordinary Jews?
- What happened to the status of the Jews in the Muslim world in modern times (1800s and after)? How did these Jews fare during and after World War II?

Thursday, February 24: Jewish Mysticism

Read: Primary sources about Jewish mysticism

Due by 9:30 a.m.: *Constantine’s Sword* response paper

- The Zohar is notoriously difficult to understand. Come up with as many questions as you can about the meaning of the excerpts “The Bodies of the Torah and the Soul of the Torah,” “The Creation of the Universe,” and/or “On Bereshit, In the Beginning.”
- What is Abraham Miguel Cardozo's reasoning for proclaiming Shabbati Zevi to be the messiah?
- With regard to any of these texts, what aspects of this sort of mystical thought do you think people might find appealing, i.e. why do you think many people continue to read about and respond positively to the Jewish mystical tradition?

Week 7

Tuesday, March 1: Jews in Western Europe

Read: Scheindlin chapter 7

In class: Discuss final project

- How did the Reformation and Counter-Reformation affect the fate of the Jews in Western Europe?
- What is a ghetto? How does the original meaning of “ghetto” differ from the word’s usage in America today? Why do you think the word’s meaning shifted?
- What was the Jewish Enlightenment? How was it related to the idea of “emancipation”? How did these ideas affect the Jewish community?
- What kinds of religious changes were introduced starting in the 1800s? Why? Why might these religious changes have made some Jews nervous?

Thursday, March 3: The beginning of Jewish movements

Read: Primary sources and chart about Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative Judaism

- What kinds of changes do the Reformers propose making to Judaism?
- Why do some Jews resist? What are their arguments?
- Can you get a sense of what relations between the Reform and Orthodox camps would have looked like in the 1800s?
- Why does Conservative Judaism emerge? How is it different from Reform and Orthodox?
- What were the major points of disagreement between the movements when they formed, and do those points of disagreement still exist today?
- How was each movement shaped by the question of how the Jew should interact with the modern world?

Week 8

Tuesday, March 8: Library day and Torah visit

Due via Blackboard by 9:30 a.m.: Proposed topic and format for final project

Thursday, March 10: Jews in Eastern Europe

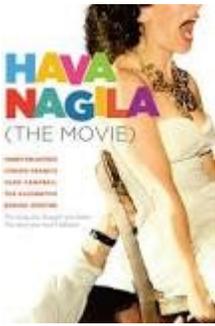
Read: Scheindlin chapter 8

Primary sources about the Golem legend

- What was the “Pale of Settlement”?
- What kinds of religious changes were introduced in Eastern Europe? Why?
- How would you describe the importance of Yiddish to Jewish life in Eastern Europe?

SPRING BREAK

Week 9



Tuesday, March 22: Becoming Americans

Listen: StoryCorps Yiddish Radio Project Part I (39 minutes)

In class: Watch *Hava Nagila the Movie*

- How did Jews on Yiddish radio in the 1930s-1950s navigate being Jewish and being American?
- Can you make any connections to the way other ethnicities navigate their identities in America?

Thursday, March 24: Jewish Immigration to the U.S.

Read: “Opening of the Hinterland,” “The Galveston Movement,” Jacob Schiff, “The Galveston Movement,” Morris D. Waldman

- What factors led Eastern European Jews to emigrate starting in the 1800s?
- What were conditions like for Jewish immigrants to the U.S.?
- What was the Galveston Movement and why did it fail?

Week 10

Tuesday, March 29: Becoming Americans

Read: Excerpt from *A Bintel Brief*

Due by 9:30 a.m. on TurnItIn: *Hava Nagila the Movie* response

- All three of the illustrated Bintel Brief letters assigned here deal with immigration and adaptation to America. What do these letters tell you about what kinds of problems new Jewish immigrants and their families faced in the early 1900s?
- Do you see any parallels between the immigrant stories told in these Bintel Brief letters and the stories of more recent immigrants to the U.S.?

Thursday, March 31: The Shoah

Read: Scheindlin chapter 9

- What was Hitler’s early message about the Jews? Why did it gain popularity?
- How did German restrictions and violence against Jews progress over time?
- To what extent did Germany’s allies and occupied countries cooperate with Hitler’s policies toward the Jews?
- Describe the ghetto system during the Shoah.

Week 11

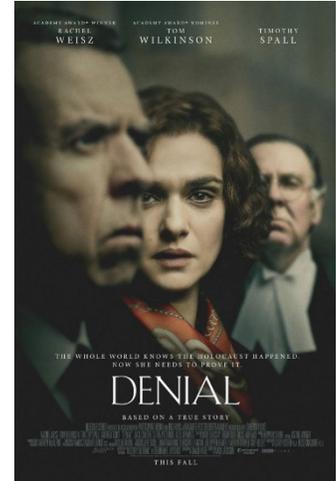
Tuesday, April 5: Confronting the Shoah

Read: [U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Genocide Prevention page](#)

Due by 9:30 a.m.: Final project proposed bibliography

In class: Start watching *Denial*

- Be prepared to discuss two of the USHMM's country case studies. Where have genocides occurred in the last few decades, and what commonalities do you see between your examples and the Shoah?
- Some people argue that the Shoah was on such an enormous scale and was so horrifying that it should not be compared to anything else, or that we should at least be very cautious about making such comparisons. Others say that if we do not make these comparisons, we are losing the ability to learn anything from the horrors of the Shoah. What do you think?



Thursday, April 7: Confronting the Shoah

In class: Finish *Denial*

Week 12

Tuesday, April 12: The Founding of the State of Israel; Israel’s Wars and Conflicts

Read: Scheindlin chapters 10 and 11

Optional to watch: Drunk History, [“The Capture of Adolf Eichmann”](#)

Due by 9:30 a.m. on TurnItIn: *Denial* response

- How and why did Zionism develop?
- What was the relationship of the Shoah and World War II to the founding of Israel?
- What discussions and challenges were there around the revival of the Hebrew language?
- What early challenges did the state of Israel experience? Outline its major wars and their outcomes.
- Describe the capture, trial, and execution of Adolf Eichmann.
- What is Hamas? What is Hezbollah?
- Who was Yitzhak Rabin and why was he important?
- What changes occurred in the American Jewish community in the 1960s and beyond?

Thursday, April 14: Understanding the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Read: Hey Alma's ["Guide to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict"](#)

- What do Palestinians want the resolution of the conflict to be? Do all Palestinians agree? If not, what are the factions and what solution do they advocate?
- What is BDS and what do you think about it as a technique?
- What is a "one-state solution"? What is a "two-state solution"?

Week 13

Tuesday, April 19: Emerging Jewish Communities

Read: Sam Kestenbaum, ["Can This Rabbinic Revolutionary Make Hebrew Israelites Mainstream?"](#)

Due by 9:30 a.m. on TurnItIn: Annotated bibliography

- What challenges have Hebrew Israelite groups experienced in making connections with mainstream Jews?
- How is Rabbi Funnye working to overcome challenges of relationships between Hebrew Israelites and mainstream Jews?

Thursday, April 21: Crypto-Jewish Identities

Read: Suzanne Selengut, ["The Converso Comeback"](#)

In class: Guest speaker Anna Guerra, a Houston psychotherapist who will talk about her crypto-Jewish story

- Discuss the role of DNA testing services in the "converso comeback."
- Discuss the role of secrecy in *converso* families.

Week 14

Tuesday, April 26: Contemporary Anti-Semitism

Read: Eric K. Ward, ["Skin in the Game: How Anti-Semitism Animates White Nationalism."](#)

John-Paul Pagano, ["How Anti-Semitism's True Origin Makes It Invisible to the Left"](#)

- If you have experienced or witnessed anti-Semitic acts or words before, either in person or online, have they followed any of the patterns discussed in these articles? In what ways?
- According to Eric Ward, in what ways does anti-Semitism form the "theoretical core" of white nationalism? What do you think of his argument?
- According to John-Paul Pagano, why does the political left sometimes miss anti-Semitism in its ranks? What do you think of his argument?

Thursday, April 28: Jews and Whiteness; End-of-semester wrap-up

Listen: Code Switch, ["Members of Whose Tribe?"](#) (You can also access this episode by searching your podcast app of choice)

Read: Tema Smith, ["Are Jews White? American History Says It's Complicated"](#)

- Are Jews “white”? Support your point of view with material from the op-ed and the podcast.
- Do you agree with Tema Smith that “white-passing” is not an appropriate term for Jews? Why or why not?
- According to the podcast, what are the complicating factors for Jews thinking of themselves, or being thought of, as a “race”?

Final project due: Wednesday, May 4 by 11:59 p.m.

Academic integrity: Students at the University of Houston are required to adhere to the university’s academic honesty policy. If you are unsure how the honesty policy applies to a given assignment in this course, please ask me. I have a zero-tolerance policy towards any type of academic dishonesty (including plagiarism) and will refer all violations to the department hearing officer. According to plagiarism.org, plagiarism includes:

- a. “turning in someone else’s work as your own
- b. copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- c. failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- d. giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- e. changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- f. copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not” (<http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism>)

CAPS Statement: Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS (www.uh.edu/caps) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. No appointment is necessary for the “Let’s Talk” program, a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus.

http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html

Special accommodations for students with disabilities: The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students who have a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, the Student Accessibility Center strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please call the Justin Dart, Jr. Student Accessibility Center at [\(713\) 743-5400](tel:7137435400) or email them at JDCenter@central.uh.edu.

Title IX reporting: Please note that the instructor is a mandatory reporter for sexual misconduct and other concerns related to Title IX (including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual intimidation, intimate partner violence, or stalking). Moreover, recent changes to Texas law impose increased reporting requirements and more drastic penalties for failure to report. According to the UHS Sexual Misconduct Policy and state law, a disclosure regarding either a past or recent incident, or mention of your identity as a survivor of past misconduct, is sufficient to trigger reporting requirements. Thus, all students should be aware that no faculty member in a teaching role can agree to confidentiality in discussing these topics, and no statement from a faculty member

should be taken as granting confidentiality. If you (in person or in writing) disclose any such information, it will be reported consistent with Texas law and UH policy. Please know that if a report is made, you will hear from UH Equal Opportunity Services (EOS)/the UH Title IX Office regarding your rights under the Sexual Misconduct Policy and the campus and community resources available to you, but you are not required to respond. Additionally, EOS/the UH Title IX Office will not compel you to make a police report, though it will assist you in doing so upon your request. Please know also that there are places on campus where you can instead make a confidential report: the Student Health Center, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Sexual Misconduct Support Services, and the A.D. Bruce Religion Center.

Face Covering Policy: To reduce the spread of COVID-19, the University strongly encourages everyone (vaccinated or not) to wear face coverings indoors on campus including classrooms for both faculty and students.

Presence in Class: Your presence in class each session means that you:

- Are NOT exhibiting any [Coronavirus Symptoms](#) that makes you think that you may have COVID-19
- Have NOT tested positive or been diagnosed for COVID-19
- Have NOT knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or suspected/presumed COVID-19

If you are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms that are not clearly related to a pre-existing medical condition, do not come to class. Please see [Student Protocols](#) for what to do if you experience symptoms and [Potential Exposure to Coronavirus](#) for what to do if you have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Consult the (select: [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) or [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#)) for information regarding excused absences due to medical reasons.

COVID-19 Information: Students are encouraged to visit the University's [COVID-19](#) website for important information including on-campus testing, vaccines, diagnosis and symptom protocols, campus cleaning and safety practices, report forms, and positive cases on campus. Please check the website throughout the semester for updates.

Vaccinations: Data suggests that vaccination remains the best intervention for reliable protection against COVID-19. Students are asked to familiarize themselves with pertinent [vaccine information](#), consult with their health care provider. The University strongly encourages all students, faculty and staff to be vaccinated.

Excused Absence Policy: Regular class attendance, participation, and engagement in coursework are important contributors to student success. Absences may be excused as provided in the University of Houston [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) and [Graduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for reasons including: medical illness of student or close relative, death of a close family member, legal or government proceeding that a student is obligated to attend, recognized professional and educational activities where the student is presenting, and University-sponsored activity or athletic competition. Under these policies, students with excused absences will be provided with an opportunity to make up any quiz, exam or other work that contributes to the course grade or a satisfactory alternative. Please

read the full policy for details regarding reasons for excused absences, the approval process, and extended absences. Additional policies address absences related to [military service](#), [religious holy days](#), [pregnancy and related conditions](#), and [disability](#).