

JWST 60013 Understanding Early Judaism  
3 semester hours

Instructor: Ariel Feldman

Prerequisites: None

Description of Content: This course introduces students to the histories and literatures of Second Temple Judaism. Through a close study of key events and texts of this period, it explores the development of a vibrant and diverse religious system that saw an emergence of nascent Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. Analyzing a selection of texts written in different times, languages, and geographical locations, this course highlights the changes in beliefs and practices of Second Temple Jewry as it negotiated religious, cultural, political, and economic effects of Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman rule.

Class Procedures: lectures, discussions, students' presentations.

Requirements:

1. Class attendance and informed participation in the class sessions.
2. One in-class presentation with a write-up (credit/non-credit).
3. Public lecture attendance and a written report (credit/non-credit).
4. In-class quiz.
5. Two papers (5-6 pages each).
6. Final Exam.

Required Texts:

1. James C. VanderKam. *An Introduction to Early Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. ISBN-10: 0802846416. \$18.69
2. Shaye Cohen, *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah*. 3rd edition. Westminster John Knox Press, 2014 (available as an e-book through TCU)
3. Matthias Henze, *Mind the Gap: How the Jewish Writings between the Old and New Testament Help Us Understand Jesus*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017. ISBN-10: 1506406424. \$26.27

Grading Procedures:

- In-class presentation with a write-up: 5%
- Public lecture attendance and a written report: 5%
- In-class quiz: 10%
- Paper 1: 30%
- Paper 2: 30%
- Final Exam: 20%