Sample Syllabi

Teach Jewish History · a free online textbook of Jewish history and the history of antisemitism · teachjewishhistory.org/sample-syllabi

Teach Jewish History is an online textbook: the whole arc of Jewish history, and the history of antisemitism, in more than 60 sourced Chapters across six Units. A textbook can anchor a course. These two syllabi show how.

Both syllabi are free to copy and adapt. Neither requires a login, a budget, or permission from us. Course approval is your school's process, and the packet below is built for it. Download the sample PDF.

START HERE

How to use these.

Each syllabus selects from the more than 60 Chapters, and neither reads them all. Chapters are cited as Unit and Chapter ("U3 · 01") so students can find them from the Table of Contents. Chapters end with discussion questions, key takeaways, sources, and a printable PDF, so the daily rhythm (read, discuss, check) is built into the pages themselves. Where a week lists three Chapters, assigning two and referencing the third works. The plans mark natural cuts.

Assessments draw on what the site already provides: exit tickets from Key takeaways, document work from the Sources sections, and the arc of antisemitism as an essay frame. Two more site resources extend any week: papers can center on a primary source or on a single object from the Museum, credited to the institution that holds it. A week of reading can also become a field week, in person if a collection is nearby, or through the site's Virtual Field Trips: archaeological sites, memorials, and historic Jewish quarters from the projector.

ONE SEMESTER · GRADES 10–12

The high-school elective.

Jewish History and the History of Antisemitism. Fifteen weeks and a final project. The course begins with the civilization: the people first, then the hatred, then the catastrophe, the reckoning, and the present. A student who meets the Jewish world before meeting antisemitism reads the hatred as what it was: a set of claims about real people whose actual story the student already knows.

WEEK	THEME	READING AND WORK
1	**A people, not only a religion**	U1 · 01 Who Are the Jews?, U1 · 02 The Land of Israel In class: the Chapter's opening question, what makes a Jew in Morocco and a Jew in Poland one people. Exit ticket from Key takeaways. Supplement: *The Story of the Jews*.
2	**How we know**	U1 · 03 The Continuous Jewish Presence, U1 · 06 The Sacred Texts Document work: a Dead Sea Scrolls fragment, and a Cairo Geniza fragment from the presence record. Supplements: the Ancient Israel reading and *Dead Sea Scroll Detectives*.
3	**Temple to synagogue**	U1 · 04 The First & Second Temples, U1 · 05 The Synagogue Short response: what changed in 70 CE, argued from the pages. Supplement: the Judea in the Classical World reading.
4	**A living culture**	U1 · 07 The Calendar, and either U1 · 08 Ritual Objects or U1 · 09 The Jewish Life Cycle Object analysis using the Museum. A natural week for a collection visit, in person or virtual. Supplement: the ANU Museum's *A Journey Through Jewish History*.
5	**A world of communities**	U1 · 10 The Diaspora, U2 · 01 A Connected People Map work: one community per student from Unit 2. Supplement: films for Unit 2.
6	**Communities up close**	Choose two: U2 · 02 Iraq, U2 · 04 North Africa, U2 · 06 Spain and the Sephardic World, U2 · 07 Poland and Lithuania, U2 · 09 American Jewry Comparative paragraph: same people, different worlds. Supplements: *Remember Baghdad*, *The Forgotten Refugees*.
7	**The hatred begins**	U3 · 01 Adversus Judaeos, U3 · 02 The Blood Libel Documents: the Elephantine petition of 407 BCE and Claudius's letter of 41 CE, both on the Chapter page. The arc at a glance as the unit's anchor. Supplement: *The Longest Hatred*.
8	**The machinery**	U3 · 03 The Ghetto System, U3 · 04 The Expulsions, reference U3 · 09 The Dhimma Documents: the Alhambra Decree of 1492, traced from order to effect, and Toledo's 1449 statute barring Christians of Jewish descent from office. Supplement: films for Unit 3.
9	**From faith to race**	U3 · 05 The Racial Turn, U3 · 06 The Russian Pogroms, U3 · 07 The Protocols Midterm essay assigned: how the reasons changed while the target did not. Supplement: films for Unit 3.
10	**The synthesis**	U3 · 08 The Nazi Synthesis, U4 · 01 The Years Before the Killing Dated-laws timeline exercise from the Chapter. Supplement: films for Unit 4.
11	**The Holocaust**	U4 · 04 The Camp System, and either U4 · 03 The Nazi Ghettos or U4 · 05 The Einsatzgruppen Document: the Höfle telegram, the perpetrators' own count. One response this week may use recorded survivor testimony or a vetted film from the site's Films page.
12	**Response and aftermath**	U4 · 07 Jewish Resistance & Rescue, U6 · 01 Liberation & the Displaced Documents: the Scrolls of Auschwitz and a page of the survivors' own DP-camp newspaper. "Did anyone fight back" answered from the record. Final project assigned. Supplement: *Who Will Write Our History*, the film of the buried archive.
13	**The reckoning**	Choose two: U6 · 02 The Postwar Trials, U6 · 04 Postwar Restitution, U6 · 06 Nostra Aetate The record of repudiation beside the record of the crime. Supplement: films for Unit 6.

WEEK	THEME	READING AND WORK
14	**What one people built**	Choose three from Unit 5: Rashi, Maimonides, Mendelssohn, Lazarus, Herzl, Einstein, Hollywood, Salk Student presentations that tie back to Week 1. Supplement: films for Unit 5.
15	**Today**	U3 · 11 The Terror Record, U3 · 12 Contemporary Antisemitism, U6 · 09 The Hatred That Outlived the War Final project workshop. Supplement: *Antisemitism Today*.
Final	**Project**	A documented research project centered on a primary source or a single object, built from the site's sources and Museum. National History Day formats work as-is. Milestones: topic proposal in Week 13, annotated source list in Week 15. Rubric anchor: every claim traceable to a source.
Extra credit	**Beyond the classroom**	A museum or memorial visit, with proof (a ticket, a photo, an exhibit note) and a short reflection connecting one object to a Chapter. Or an oral-history piece: an interview with a survivor or a survivor's descendant, arranged through a local Holocaust center. Or invite a speaker: Holocaust centers and speaker bureaus bring survivors, descendants, and educators to classrooms, in person or by video. Where neither can be arranged, recorded testimony from the collections linked on For Teachers serves the same purpose. Survivor time is limited. Centers coordinate it, so request it early.

FOR YOUR APPROVAL PACKET

Course description. Jewish History and the History of Antisemitism is a one-semester elective that follows one civilization across more than 3,000 years and examines, from primary sources, how antisemitism, often called the longest hatred, was built, transmitted, and answered. The textbook is Teach Jewish History (teachjewishhistory.org), a free, independent online textbook whose editorial standards are public and whose Chapters cite their sources.

Objectives. Students will trace the arc of Jewish history from antiquity to the present using primary sources. They will explain how antisemitism developed and changed across its theological, legal, racial, and conspiratorial forms. They will evaluate historical claims against documentary evidence and produce a documented research project centered on a primary source or object.

Suggested assessment. Participation and exit tickets 20%, document responses 25%, midterm essay 20%, final project 35%. Adapt the split to your school's format.

Standards. NYS Global History & Geography 9.3, 9.6, 10.2, 10.5, and 10.7. Common Core ELA-Literacy RH.9–10 and RH.11–12. Each Chapter lists its exact codes in its Classroom Connections section.

Level. Designed for grades 10–12, and workable in grade 9 with pacing.

Policies. Your school's academic-integrity and AI-use policies apply. State them here.

These are samples. Adapt them freely, and if you would build them differently, tell us: education@teachjewishhistory.org.

ONE SEMESTER · SURVEY

The college survey.

Jewish History and the History of Antisemitism: A Documentary Introduction. Fourteen weeks, reading-heavier, built around primary sources. The site's Chapters serve as the textbook, and the documents inside them serve as the seminar material. Written work runs from short source responses to a research paper grounded in the institutional archives the site cites. Weekly supplements, films by Unit and museum objects, are on the site's Films and Museum pages.

WEEK	THEME	READING AND WORK
1	**The subject and the method**	U1 · 01 Who Are the Jews?, U1 · 02 The Land of Israel, U1 · 03 The Continuous Jewish Presence, and the Sources page Response 1: how this textbook sources a claim, shown on one example.
2	**Text, temple, calendar**	U1 · 04 The First & Second Temples, U1 · 05 The Synagogue, U1 · 06 The Sacred Texts, U1 · 07 The Calendar Seminar: what survives in text vs. what survives in stone.
3	**Diaspora as a structure**	U1 · 08 Ritual Objects, U1 · 09 The Jewish Life Cycle, U1 · 10 The Diaspora, U2 · 01 A Connected People Response 2: the Elephantine marriage contract (449 BCE, from a Jewish garrison town in Egypt) and daily life.
4	**Communities: the Middle East and North Africa**	U2 · 02 The Jews of Iraq, U2 · 03 The Jews of Iran, U2 · 04 The Jews of North Africa Seminar: continuity and rupture in one community's record, for example North Africa, from the first mellah in 1438 to Morocco's fourteen schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1912.
5	**Communities: the modern map**	U2 · 05 The Departure from MENA (the Middle East and North Africa), U2 · 06 The Jews of Spain and the Sephardic World, U2 · 07 The Jews of Poland and Lithuania, U2 · 08 Soviet Jewry, U2 · 09 American Jewry, U2 · 10 Beta Israel, U2 · 11 The Modern State of Israel Short paper assigned: one community, its documents, its departure or arrival.
6	**The ancient world and the engine**	U3 · 01 in full, including the ancient-world prelude and the arc Response 3: Elephantine's petition to rebuild its destroyed temple (407 BCE) and Claudius's letter to Alexandria (41 CE), read together.
7	**Myth and machinery**	U3 · 02 The Blood Libel, U3 · 03 The Ghetto System, U3 · 04 The Expulsions Seminar: how an accusation becomes an institution.
8	**The parallel record**	U3 · 09 The Dhimma, U3 · 10 The Eastward Turn Response 4: the Pact of Umar tradition beside the Fourth Lateran canons, with canon 67 as quoted in U3 · 04 The Expulsions.
9	**Race, pogrom, forgery**	U3 · 05 The Racial Turn, U3 · 06 The Russian Pogroms, U3 · 07 The Protocols Midterm essay: the mechanism arc, argued from documents.
10	**Synthesis and state power**	U3 · 08 The Nazi Synthesis, U4 · 01 The Years Before the Killing, U4 · 02 Aktion T-4 Seminar: law as the instrument, 1933–1939.
11	**The Holocaust**	U4 · 03 The Nazi Ghettos, U4 · 04 The Camp System, U4 · 05 The Einsatzgruppen, U4 · 06 The Holocaust in North Africa & the Middle East Response 5: one perpetrator document (the Höfle telegram) beside one survivor document (a DP-camp newspaper page).
12	**Resistance, liberation, justice**	U4 · 07 Jewish Resistance & Rescue, U6 · 01 Liberation & the Displaced, U6 · 02 The Postwar Trials Research paper topic due: one primary source or one object at the center, with a source plan from the institution that holds it. Prospectus due Week 13.

WEEK	THEME	READING AND WORK
13	**Memory and repudiation**	U6 · 03 Hannah Arendt, U6 · 04 Postwar Restitution, U6 · 05 The Memory Architecture, U6 · 06 Nostra Aetate Seminar: what an apology is worth, measured in documents. Pairs naturally with a memorial or museum visit, in person or through Virtual Field Trips.
14	**The present, and the record**	U3 · 11 The Terror Record, U3 · 12 Contemporary Antisemitism, U6 · 07 Holocaust Denial, U6 · 08 The Afterlife of the Image, U6 · 09 The Hatred That Outlived the War Research paper due. Closing seminar on the Recurring Cycle.
Extra credit	**The living record**	A documented museum or memorial visit connected to one Chapter, or an oral-history assignment: an interview with a survivor or a survivor's descendant arranged through a Holocaust center or campus Hillel, transcribed and set beside the documentary record it corroborates. A class session with an invited speaker, a survivor, a descendant, or a center educator, arranged through the same channels, serves the course equally well. Recorded testimony collections stand in where neither can be arranged.

YOUR COURSE, YOUR CALL

Build your own.

These are starting structures, not requirements. A quarter-length version, a Holocaust-centered version built on Units 3, 4, and 6, or a Jewish-civilization version built on Units 1, 2, and 5 all work. The Chapters are self-contained, and every one names the courses it fits in its Classroom Connections section. Integrating into existing courses instead? For High School maps Chapters course by course for grades 9–12, and For Colleges does the same for college teaching. Teaching grades 6–8? Start with For Middle School. Questions, or a syllabus that worked in your room: education@teachjewishhistory.org.