

## **HIST 3500-001: Charity in Judaism, Christianity and Islam**

**Spring 2011, MW 3:00-4:15pm, Gaylord Hall 2020**

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Office hours: Monday, 10-12am, Hester Hall 132

The study of charity has become a flourishing field of historical enquiry during the past few decades. Charity is not merely a matter of giving based on religious or altruistic motives, and research has accordingly evolved to reflect the complexity of the topic. It is no longer solely a question of the power of charity to preserve from death or the sufficiency of giving “even a single date” to gain consideration for charitable acts. Investigation of charitable giving has become an important tool in the writing of social, economic, cultural, political and intellectual history. In this course we will read texts that have defined the study of charity and the conceptualizations of the phenomenon, for different periods, cultures, and traditions. As a final project, you will need to interview people who run a charity and assess whether the principles of charity we have learned in class apply to that charity’s work, and in what ways.

### **Grading and Requirements:**

The maximum number of points you may earn for this course is 1,000. Grading will be distributed in this manner:

Attendance and participation in class – 300pts [minimum 200]

Weekly questions on D2L – 300pts [minimum 150]

Final paper – 400pts (300: paper, 100: peer review; see below for details) [minimum 200]

There will be opportunities to earn bonus points. See below.

The minimum points listed next to each section represent the number of points you need to earn *in that section* to pass the course. Please note that one element cannot compensate for another. You must earn *at least* the minimum in each section to pass.

Your final grade will be determined by your points balance as of 5/13/11, according to the following key: above 920 points – A; 790-919 points – B; 690-789 points – C; 600-689 points – D; below 600 points – F.

No incomplete, withdrawn, or satisfactory grades will be issued for this course. If you don’t earn 600 points for whatever reason by the end of the semester, or don’t meet the minimum points requirement for each category, your final grade will be F.

## Explanation of specific requirements

1. **Attendance and Participation**– I treat our classes as if they were a personal appointment with each one of you, and expect you to do the same. My policy on attendance is that you pay for a product (university education), and thus should have at least some interest in getting your money’s worth. I do not check attendance on a regular basis, but I will from time to time pass a sign-in sheet around. If by the end of the semester you’ve missed more than 3 classes according to the sheets I have, your attendance and participation grade will be affected, and as you can imagine, not positively. It is your responsibility to sign the sheet when there is one. And since you have no way of knowing when I’ll be passing one around, your best strategy would be not to miss class.

If you have more than 7 registered absences, you will receive an F grade for this course.

Under this attendance policy, there are no excused absences. Every time I choose to check attendance and your name is not on the list counts toward your 3 allowed absences, *no matter the reason*. If you believe there are very special circumstances that require you to miss classes, talk to me (not waking up, having a cold, or being unable to attend because your car broke down are not special circumstances).

In addition to attendance, you are expected to participate in class discussion. To earn points for participation you have to offer some meaningful contribution to class discussion (staying silent or saying “yes, I agree” from time to time won’t do), and to do that, you will have to prepare the readings assigned for each week (see schedule below).

2. **Weekly questions** – every week, I will post a question or two on D2L, related to that week’s assigned texts. You are expected to post a meaningful answer each week, which will show reference to that week’s reading and some analysis. Questions will be updated every Wednesday or Thursday night, to be answered before our class on Monday. You will earn up to 20 points per weekly response (depending on the quality of your answer, whether you relate to the assigned texts, the quality of your writing, etc.; grades posted weekly on D2L). In addition, you may respond to others’ posts, and earn another 5 points per subsequent meaningful post/response. Once you’ve reached 300 points under this section, your posts will count as bonus. There is no limit to the number of bonus points you can earn.

Note: online posts divided into 2 or more entries due to length or other technical difficulties will count as one post for grading purposes.

3. **Final papers** – as the final project for this course, you will write a research paper based on the following assignment: find a charity of your choice, one that you identify with its cause or that interests or intrigues you. The charity can be a non-profit, a business that is engaged in charitable giving, or a religious organization. You may choose a local, national, or international charity. Then, interview the person who runs the charity, or in a large organization, someone who has an executive position there or oversees regional activities. Your paper should integrate what you’ve learned about that charity with what you’ve learned in class, specifically addressing the question: how are the principles of charity we have learned about reflected in the organization you have chosen to study?

**Stages of writing the final paper – peer review:** papers will be written in two rounds. The first stage will be due right after spring break. At that point papers will be uploaded to the dropbox on D2L without any details that disclose the identity of the author. They will be distributed to other students in the class anonymously, so each student gets to read 2 papers of other students, and each student gets 2 others to read his/her paper. You will receive guidelines on what to look for when reading your peers' papers, and 2 weeks to complete your detailed review. Then, the anonymous reviews will be returned to each author. You will have over a month to rewrite/revise your papers. 100 points (out of the total 400 for the paper) will be given for your performance as a reviewer of your peers' works.

I will provide more details about this assignment in class.

Please note: For the weekly questions and the final paper, you will be judged by the quality of your writing as much as (or even more than) the substance of your argument. If you have had problems with grammar, style, punctuation, etc., you may want to get help from the writing center. In addition, all students should consult my online writing guide (<http://www.yaronayalon.com/writing>). I will take off points for writing problems in your posts/papers that you could have avoided by using this resource.

4. **Attend a Middle East, Judaic Studies, or History-related event** throughout the semester and write a short (no more than one page, double spaced, Times New Roman font size 12) report about it to earn up to 5 bonus points per report. A list of events will be posted on D2L and the course's website, as well as on bulletin boards in Hester and Dale Halls, so make sure to check back often.
5. **End of semester teaching evaluations** – filling out teaching evaluations is voluntary. It is your chance to affect the quality of instruction on campus, and I take these reports very seriously. If you fill out the online teaching evaluation form, print out the confirmation screen showing that you've evaluated this course, and bring me a copy, you will earn 20 bonus points.

**Disability accommodation:** Students who have a disability that prevents them from fully demonstrating their academic skills should contact me during office hours to discuss arrangements that can ensure full participation and facilitate their learning experience.

**Academic integrity:** Students who are not familiar with the Student Code of Conduct should read it closely and uphold the obligations, rights, and procedures regarding violations of academic integrity. Please see <http://www.ou.edu/provost/integrity-rights/>

**Readings:** There are three required purchases, available from bookstores around campus and from online retailers, such as Amazon.com. You may want to check [abebooks.com](http://abebooks.com) or [half.com](http://half.com) for used copies.

Mark Cohen, *The Voice of the Poor in the Middle Ages: An Anthology of Documents from the Cairo Geniza* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) [in the course schedule below: Cohen]

Sandra Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy: Benefactors and Their Motives in Turin, 1541-1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) [in the course schedule below: Cavallo]

Amy Singer, *Charity in Islamic Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) [in the course schedule below: Singer]

Readings from other sources will be available via D2L under “content” in PDF form. Some of the books mentioned in the schedule below are also available at Bizzell library (just look them up in the catalog). If you prefer to read from the books themselves instead of the PDFs, please do so in the library and do not check out the books, so others may have access to them as well.

Reading assignments that appear under each week should be read *in preparation for* that week. This preparation includes looking up information about the author of each text, and any other places, organizations, or people mentioned in the text that you have not heard of before. You may use the internet or any other credible source you like to dig out that information. Please note that a text or an argument is generally meaningless if we don’t know anything about the author. Thus knowledge about the texts we read will be assumed when they are discussed in class.

And finally, announcements about this course will be regularly posted on D2L. It is your responsibility to check the website often. I will not send you individual e-mails for each announcement, and will assume you have read everything I’ve posted online.

## Course Schedule

This schedule should give you a general idea of the reading we will be doing. We will not be reading every item listed below, and the assigned texts from week to week will be based in part on our interests and progress in class. Please follow announcements in class or on D2L to ensure you read the correct texts for each week.

Week 1 (Wednesday, 1/19) – Introduction

Week 2 (1/24-26) - basic definitions and theoretical background

Isaac Prilleltensky, “Poverty and Power,” Virginia Moreira, “Poverty and Psychopathology,” Euclides Sanchez et al., “Poverty and Community,” Stuart Carr and Tod Sloan, eds., *Poverty and*

*Psychology: From Global Perspective to Local Practice* (New York: Springer, 2003), pp. 19-44, 69-86, 123-146

Duran Bell, *Wealth and Power: Survival in a Time of Global Accumulation* (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2004), pp. 149-160

### Week 3 (1/31-2/2)

J. B. Schneewind, "Philosophical ideas of charity: some historical reflections"; Allen Buchanan, "Charity, justice and the idea of moral progress"; and Robert Frank, "Motivation, cognition and charitable giving," in: J.B. Schneewind, ed., *Giving: Western Ideas of Philanthropy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 54-75, 98-116, 130-152

### Week 4 (2/7-2/9) - Judaism

"Begging and beggars," "Charity," "Gmilit ḥasadim," "Philanthropy," "Poverty," and "Sick, Visiting the," *Encyclopedia Judaica*

Cohen, 3-46

### Week 5 (2/14-2/16)

A compilation of texts on charity from the *Babylonian Talmud* and Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, in translation

Cohen, 47-72, 83-103

### Week 6 (2/21-2/23)

Salo Baron, *The Jewish Community: Its History and Structure to the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1945), vol. 2, pp. 290-350

Natan Meir, *Kiev, Jewish Metropolis: A History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2010), 211-260

Week 7 (2/28-3/2) – Christianity

Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: an Essay in Social History* (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1986), 13-53

Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 54-98

Week 8 (3/7-3/9)

Cavallo, 12-97

Robert Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 100-42

3/14-3/16: no class, spring break

Week 9 (3/21-3/23)

Cavallo, 98-152, 183-224

Adele Lindenmeyr, *Poverty is Not a Vice: Charity, Society, and the State in Imperial Russia* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 7-47

3/21: \*\*\*First draft of papers due (for peer review)\*\*\*

3/23: \*\*\*Peer review assignments distributed\*\*\*

Week 10 (3/28-3/30) - Islam

Singer, 1-65

Michael Bonner, "Poverty and charity in the rise of Islam," Michael Bonner et. al., eds., *Poverty and Charity in Middle Eastern Contexts* (Albany: SUNY, 2003), 13-30

Week 11 (4/4-4/6)

Singer, 67-113

Adam Sabra, *Poverty and Charity in Medieval Islam: Mamluk Egypt, 1250-1517* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 50-68, 134-168

4/6: \*\*\*peer review assignment due, returned to authors by the weekend of 4/9\*\*\*

Week 12 (4/11-4/13)

Singer, 114-175

Mine Ener, *Managing Egypt's Poor and the Politics of Benevolence, 1800-1952* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 1-48

Weeks 13-14 (4/18-4/20-4/25-4/27) – Modern trends in almsgiving and philanthropy

Walter Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), 30-46, 140-62

Andrew Carnegie, "The gospel of wealth," *North American Review* (December 1889), pp. 1-36

Francie Ostrower, *Why the Wealthy Give: the Culture of Elite Philanthropy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 86-99

Samuel Heilman, *Portrait of American Jews: The Last Half of the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995), pp. 47-100

Week 15 (5/2-5/4) – radical ideas of charity: eradicating poverty?

Sue Fishkoff, *The Rebbe's Army: Inside the World of Chabad-Lubavitch* (New York: Schocken Books, 2003), 88-106

Ahmad Nizar Hamzeh, *In the Path of Hizbullah* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 44-79