



Religious Studies 2168a/b (670)
Angels, Demons and Magic: Jewish Folklore
Fall/ Winter 2026-2027

Instructor: C. Halberstam

Email: chaya.halberstam@uwo.ca

Course Information

Calendar Description:

Did Adam have a wife before Eve? Does the spirit of the prophet Elijah roam the earth? Do Jews believe in angels, demons and magic? This course is an introduction to Jewish legends, tall tales, monster stories and superstitions for their insights into Jewish communities and the Jewish religion.

Antirequisite(s): [Jewish Studies 2168A/B](#).

Extra Information: 3 lecture hours; cross-listed with [Jewish Studies 2168A/B](#).

Course Weight: 0.50

Breadth: Category B

Subject Code: RELSTUD

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

RS 2168A COURSE OUTLINE



Course Overview

Course Title: Angels, Demons, and Magic in Judaism

Term: Fall 2026

Platforms: OWL-Brightspace and Perusall

Class Meeting Time: Unscheduled

Course Description

What do the Bible and later Judaism believe about angels, demons, and magic? This course is an introduction to Biblical and Jewish legends, monster stories, superstitions and journeys into supernatural worlds. Special attention will be paid to what these stories tell us about the people who considered themselves practitioners of the Jewish religion throughout the ages, and the communities in which they lived.

Instructor

Professor Chaya Halberstam

Office Hours

By Appointment

Teaching Assistant

Molly Rastin, M.A.

Contact Address and Response Time

Email: relstudcourse@gmail.com

- Both instructors share this email account, and all emails can be seen by both of us.
- Under normal circumstances, you should receive a response within **one business day**. (Weekends, holidays, and university breaks are not considered business days.)
- Emails with URGENT in the subject line, if deemed urgent, will be prioritized.
- There may still be times when due to other commitments responses to emails will be delayed. **A class chat page will be available** on our OWL-Brightspace page where you can ask general questions and choose to be anonymous. Please try to use that space before contacting the instructors directly.
- A Basic FAQ will also be posted on OWL-Brightspace, which will help answer many of your questions and should be consulted before you contact us.

Note: If you try to contact either instructor using any other email or messaging platform, including Brightspace or Perusall Messaging, Prof. Halberstam's UWO email address, FB or Instagram DMs, etc. YOU WILL LIKELY NOT RECEIVE A RESPONSE

RS 2168A COURSE OUTLINE



Class Format

This course is asynchronous. Learning materials will be released week by week with a few exceptions. You cannot get future weeks released to you early unless you have an approved accommodation.

Lecture videos and readings are hosted on Perusall, which you can access directly through OWL-Brightspace. Perusall facilitates great, small-group conversations with your classmates on the course readings.

Course Materials

All readings and viewings are posted on Perusall. There is no cost for course materials other than a few small items you may need to complete your assignments.

Assessment

Perusall Discussions	25 %
Lecture Quizzes	20 %
Creative Assignment + Peer Review	30 %
Final Exam (open book)	25 %
Total	100%

Learning Outcomes

A successful student, by the end of the course, should be able to:

- ★ Demonstrate an understanding of different categories and occurrences of angels, demons, and magic in Greco-Roman, ancient Near Eastern, and later Jewish worldviews
- ★ Analyse obscure texts on the supernatural in the Jewish and biblical tradition in terms of their function and purpose
- ★ Critically evaluate “unscientific” beliefs and practices for what they are attempting to express and influence
- ★ Relate the various “enchantments” of the past to manifestations of similar expressions in the contemporary world

RS 2168A COURSE OUTLINE



Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading/Viewing	Assessments
1 Sept 9-15	What is Reality?	Lecture Video, YT Video <i>no reading</i>	Quiz & Discussion
2 Sept 16-23	What is Magic?	Lecture Video, Chapter, & Primary Texts	Quiz & Discussion
3 Sept 24-29	What are Angels?	Lecture Video, Primary Texts	Quiz & Discussion
4 Oct 1-6	Otherworldly Journeys	Primary Texts	Discussion only
5 Oct 7-20	What is Divination? READING WEEK	Lecture Video, Primary Texts	Quiz & Discussion Assignment 1 – Divining Device
7 Oct 21-27	Satan, Demons & Fallen Angels	Lecture Video, Video & Primary Texts	Quiz & Discussion
8 Oct 28-Nov 10	Incantations & Amulets	Lecture Video, Primary Texts	Discussion Assignment 2 – Create an Incantation Object
9 Nov 11-17	The Golem	Lecture Video, Primary Texts	Quiz & Discussion
10 Nov 18-24	The Golem Continues	Primary Texts, Video	Discussion Assignment 3 – Create an AI Golem
11 Nov 25-Dec 1	Spirit Possession	Lecture Video, Primary Texts	Quiz & Discussion

12 Dec 2-8

Superheroes &
Modern Magic

Lecture Video, Chapter

Quiz & Discussion

Assignment Descriptions

Assignments in this course are creative and fun! You also get to **choose which one (1)** assignment you want to do out of a total of three (3). While you only have to do one assignment, to get the highest grade, everyone will also have peer review a classmate's assignment (anonymously) and respond to peer review on your own assignment.

You also get to **choose how much work** you want to do for different grade maximums. This is a judgment-free zone regarding how much effort you want to put in to your assignment based on the grade outcome that makes sense for you. More details and rubrics can be found on OWL-Brightspace.

➤ **Assignment 1: Divining Device.** Due Oct 20, 2026

Create a divining device out of 3 objects in your room, describe how it works, and make connections to what we learned in class about divination.

Stop here to get up to a B-

Connect with someone else in the class (we will facilitate this) and record a video of you using your divining device on them, and them using their divining device on you, either in person or on Zoom.

This addition to the assignment will allow you to get up to an A+

➤ **Assignment 2: Incantation Object.** Due Nov 10, 2026

Create an incantation bowl or amulet using household items or crafting materials. Explain it and make connections to what we learned in class about incantations & amulets.

Stop here to get up to a B-

Record a YouTube- or TikTok-style tutorial video showing the world how to make your object, what it's for, and why we need to know how to make it. This can be in the style of a crafting / home decorating tutorial or a more no-nonsense DIY / skill-mastering video.

This addition to the assignment will allow you to get up to an A+

➤ **Assignment 3: AI Golem.** Due Nov 24, 2026

AI 'bots' are seen by many today as modern-day Golems. Drawing on the Golem legends, write out what kind of persona you'd create for your personal AI Golem and what instructions you'd give it. Make connections to what we learned in class about the Golem.

Stop here to get up to a B-

RS 2168A COURSE OUTLINE



Actually create this bot using Gemini Gems or some other bot-making platform of your choice. Screen-record a short video of you interacting with your bot using the framework of a short Golem story. Share the bot with us so we can interact with it ourselves.

This addition to the assignment will allow you to get up to an A+

Final Exam Description

The final exam will consist of an exploration of the way you related to the material we studied throughout the course. You will be encouraged to keep notes or a journal throughout the semester and on the final exam you will collate and present these notes along with a narrative of what you learned about yourself through your exploration of the weird and supernatural.

Course Policies

- **Checklists will be provided on OWL-Brightspace.** It is your responsibility to ensure you've completed the work you've been assigned.
- **Extensions.** Weekly coursework (quizzes, Perusall comments) due on Tuesday nights at 11:59pm *are each worth less than 10% of your grade and there will be no extensions for illness, forgetting to do it, etc.*
- **Tokens.** Every student will get **3 "tokens"** to exchange for a **24-hour** extension on an assignment or a 1-week extension on coursework (Perusall discussions, quizzes). If you use a self-reported *undocumented* absence, that will count as one of your tokens.
- **Generative AI Policy:** Use of generative AI is **prohibited** in this course for the **essential skills** you are expected to develop as an undergraduate in university. **DO NOT USE AI FOR:**
 - Generating ideas & expressing those ideas in speech and in writing
 - Reading comprehension
 - Summarizing readings or videos
 - Forming questions about the readings or viewings
 - Engaging in discussion or debate about what you read or saw
 - Expressing confusion about or having problems with what the readings or viewings
 - Developing pathways for further inquiry
 - Analysing and applying what you learn

On the other hand, there are some skills that are less essential to Humanities higher education for which you may use AI. Always make sure to **verify** that the answers you get are correct, and always **cite** which AI system your information comes from. **You MAY use AI for:**

- Getting definitions of terms in a reading to enhance your understanding

RS 2168A COURSE OUTLINE



- Searching for things (e.g., ‘what’s a good video I can watch to understand more about this topic that is accurate according to the latest academic research?’) (‘help me construct some old-timey phrases that sound spooky and ancient’)
 - Finding out how to do something (e.g., ‘how do I create an engraved look using paper’; ‘what tools should I use to create an AI bot’)
 - Building tools to help you organize your learning and studying (e.g., ‘create a schedule for me to do all these assignments’; ‘help me organize my notes’; ‘quiz me on this material’)
- Creating Accountability for Avoiding AI. In other words, “It’s so tempting...”.
- All written work will be submitted in MS Word or Google Docs so that we can see your **document history**. You are responsible for making sure the document history is available – do not write rough drafts somewhere else and then copy-paste to the final version that you turn in.
 - Written work and videos should be *informal*. There is no need to turn to AI to formalize your language or find synonyms because you used the word “ghost” 7 times in one paragraph. Perfect, formal writing often now sounds *more* suspicious to instructors than casual writing. This applies to everything from Perusall comments to the final exam.
 - If we *do* suspect that you handed in AI slop, we will first review your document history (if applicable).
 - If that doesn't clear it up, we will likely contact you for a one-on-one meeting to chat about what you wrote. *This conversation will count towards your mark on the assignment.*
 - If there is enough evidence of improper AI use, we will refer your case to the academic dean’s office to be investigated as an academic offence.

Academic Integrity Statement

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and comply with institutional policies regarding plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and misconduct.

Any use of words or ideas that did not come from you, without attribution, is plagiarism and constitutes academic misconduct. This includes words and ideas produced by generative AI.*

(*The words and ideas produced by generative AI are themselves plagiarized; scholars like me have published books and articles, and those have been stolen by tech companies to train their models without attribution or compensation.)

RS 2168A COURSE OUTLINE



You are here to *learn*, to *critically assess and creatively apply* what you learn, and to *respect the transmission of expertise* from one generation to the next.

Please Consult King's General Academic Policies Appended Below

**KING'S UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
GENERAL COURSE POLICIES
2026-27**

1. Academic Accommodations (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found at [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

2. Academic Consideration for Student Absences

Students must be approved to write a makeup exam or for an extension of the assignment deadline. If you need to miss an exam or the deadline for the assignment, please follow these instructions.

There are two ways to seek academic consideration:

(i) Academic consideration based on medical or compassionate grounds

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate grounds), they should contact the Academic Advising Office. As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration.

For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is the appropriate documentation. The SMC is available at <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf>

- King's students: The Academic Advising Office website is located in DLH 104. The Academic Advising website is <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>.
- If your home faculty is Huron or at Western, please submit your documentation to your faculty's academic counselling office.
- Requests must be made as soon as possible, and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

You may submit requests for academic consideration through the **Student Absence Portal**, linked on this website: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>.

(ii) Academic consideration through an undocumented absence

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per half-course (0.5) weight.

- Note that instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline to confirm this which assessment has been designated as requiring documentation for consideration (that is, exempt from undocumented absences).
- Undocumented absences can not be used as the basis for academic consideration for December or April exams.

If an instructor has built flexibility into their assessments (e.g., “complete 8 of 10 quizzes”), this flexibility will already address consideration needs and thus academic consideration may be denied.

For further information on the academic consideration policy, please see

https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf

c) Absences from Final Exams

If you miss the Final Exam, **contact your Academic Advising Office** as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the “Special Examination” (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a multiple exam situation (i.e., you are scheduled to write more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period).

If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details (under [Special Examinations](#)).

d) Religious Accommodations

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and their Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

3. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/accessibility-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/campus-life/student-supports/>

Good2talk is an online and phone resource for students, available 24/7, with services in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options on how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental-health/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College: <https://kings.uwo.ca/academics/academic-supports/>

4. Statement on Gender-Based Sexual Violence

King's and Western are committed to reducing incidents of gender-based sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [Mental Health and Wellness at King's](#).

You can reach supports at King's by emailing care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Social Worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email (health@uwo.ca) or by calling 519-661-3568. Additional support services can be found <https://www.uwo.ca/health/gbsv/support/index.html>

5. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see https://kings.uwo.ca/sites/2025/assets/files/campus/Kings_Code_of_Student_Conduct.pdf

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

6. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_offences.pdf

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. **Check with you instructor to check which tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in each course.** Note that although some courses may permit the use of such tools, it does not mean use of such tools is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality_Reports_-_TurnItIn.html.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

7. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member. Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

8. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

9. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.