



Pacific Lutheran University  
Department of Religion  
**The Seventeenth Annual David and Marilyn Knutson Lecture**

Thursday, September 29, 2022

*From Religion to Politics: Antisemitism and Jew Hatred from Ancient Times Until Today*

**Dr. Marc Dollinger**

The Richard and Rhoda Goldman Chair in Jewish Studies  
San Francisco State University | San Francisco, California

As an annual event organized by the Religion Department, this lectureship stems from the generosity and intellectual passions of David and Marilyn Knutson to share the best thinking in the field of Religion with our PLU family and the wider community.

David Knutson (PLU '58), a longtime faculty member of PLU's Religion Department, taught at Pacific Lutheran University for more than twenty years. David and Marilyn met at PLU in the 1950s, married, and when David left for New York City as a Rockefeller Fellow, Marilyn followed. She completed her teaching degree from the University of Minnesota in 1960. For the next 32 years, Marilyn taught the K-6 set while David focused on college students.

A deep sense of giving remains a guiding force in Marilyn Knutson's life. Her commitment to bring nationally recognized scholars in religion and theology to the campus is expressed in the lectureship she has generously provided. As Marilyn has noted, the David and Marilyn Knutson Lectureship invites scholars to ask tough questions about contemporary challenges. For her generosity, we offer our profound thanks.

The Knutson Lecture and Lutheran Studies Conference take place this year during the Jewish Days of Awe, beginning with Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year, September 26-27) and ending with Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement, October 5).

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### I. Introduction

#### A. Wilhelm Marr and the term “Anti-Semitism”

### II. Historical Question

A. How can we best understand the history, meaning, and impact of antisemitism in Jewish history?

### III. Thesis

A. Antisemitism, a modern construct, refers to group-based discrimination against Jews. A closer examination, though, reveals that its pseudo-scientific basis makes it unique from, and more dangerous than, its antecedents in the ancient and medieval periods, which rooted Jew hatred in theological or economic terms.

In the recent past, spikes in domestic antisemitism have challenged long-held notions of American exceptionalism. Perhaps Jews are not as safe in the United States as they thought.

### IV. Anti-Semitism as a modern invention

### V. Major phases of Jew hatred (proto-antisemitism).

#### A. Ancient period

1. Deicide
2. Supersessionism

#### B. Medieval

1. Creation of ghettos
2. Blood libel
3. Passion Play
4. Money lender

#### C. Modern Period

1. Eugenics
2. Scientific Racism
3. U.S. Government-sponsored antisemitism
4. The Protocols of Zion
5. The Shoah

### VI. The Contemporary Scene

The David and Marilyn Knutson Lecture  
serves as the capstone of the Twelfth Annual Lutheran Studies Conference,  
**Resisting an Ancient Hatred: Antisemitism in Church and Society**