



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS Fall 2017

- **BIB 346 The Book of Exodus: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Blessedness**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course will explore the theme of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Blessedness through a critical reading of the book of Exodus. By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to articulate: (1) the structure, purposes, and theological outlook of Exodus; (2) the theology of liberty, happiness, and self-transcendence as reflected in Exodus; and (3) three examples where the book of Exodus is a source for understanding the human condition in our own day. The subjects we will discuss include: “election and covenant,” “liberty and ownership,” “politics and holiness,” “slavery and political violence,” “gender and resistance,” “care for others and the risk of humiliation,” “individuality and collectivity,” “God’s transcendence and exclusivity,” “religious leader as a vessel or partner of God,” “law and the image of God,” “ritual and creation,” “identity and narrative,” “self-deification as idolatry,” “holiness of space and holiness of time,” and “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee.” This course will fulfill the *Parashat Hashavua* requirement or count as a Bible elective. Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible. (2 credits)

- **CAN 280 Drumming and Chanting**

Cantor Meredith Greenberg

There are many pathways to opening the heart to prayer. This course will explore the art of chant and drumming as spiritual practice, and in your work as *shaliach tzibbur*. Students will learn techniques to facilitate drumming and chanting in community. A portion of each class will be used to strengthen those skills as together we engage in the practice. All students must bring a drum to use during class though No prior drumming experience is required. This course will fulfill the Diverse Musical Traditions requirement (1 credit)

- **CAN 447 Advanced Nusah Yammim Noraim II**

Cantors Lisa Klinger-Kantor and Sol Zim

A study of the *nusah* and cantorial pieces for *Yammim Noraim* focusing on traditional melodies, prayer modes, and *Misinai* tunes. *Targil* section required. (4 credits)

- **CAN 563 Conducting**

Cantor Sol Zim

An in depth study on developing the many skills required to conduct an adult and/or children’s choir, whether two-part, three-part, four-part or solo voice. This course will also teach the various techniques used for proper breathing, phrasing, diction and warm-up exercises for adult or children’s choirs. (1 credit)

- **HAL 401 Introduction to Codes**

Rabbi David Almog

This course will introduce students to the literature of the *halakhic* codes, with a focus on Maimonides' Mishneh Torah. We will explore several facets of the text: its internal dynamics and unique features; the way in which it sets the standard for Jewish legal codification, and the ways in which it is faithful to its earlier sources and how it reshapes them. Emphasis will be placed on precise and accurate reading of the text, with commentaries consulted as necessary. Prerequisite: Introduction to Mishnah. (2 credits)

- **HAL 500 Advanced Codes**

TBA

This course examines the complex process of the understanding, deciding, expounding, organizing and creation of Jewish law. The codificatory literature is one legal genre that exemplifies this process and was produced by it. A number of *halakhic* topics will be studied as they are treated by various authorities. Prerequisite: Introduction to Codes. (2 credits)

- **HEB 250 Hebrew IA – Beginner**

Ilana Davidov

This course is a continuation of Mechina. Using the second volume of Hebrew from Scratch (עברית מן ב'), students will read and listen to texts of different genres. 500 additional words will be presented and practiced. Grammatical topics will include possession sentences in all tenses; causal, temporal and conditional clauses; the future tense of all active *binyanim* and the declension of various prepositions. (4 credits)

- **HEB 400 Hebrew IIIA – Intermediate-Advanced**

Ilana Davidov

The purpose of this course is to transition students from intermediate into advance level of Hebrew. The course will focus on vocabulary expansion and reading comprehension and will provide training in speaking and listening. Students will develop their productive language skills via class discussions and presentations and via reading and writing assignments. (4 credits)

- **HIS 400 Great Ideas and Debates of Jewish History**

TBA

This course will focus on and trace significant debates throughout Jewish History and pursue the issues raised, the impact on Jewish history, and our understanding of these issues today. This is part one of a year-long course. This course will fulfill the Antiquities or Medieval History course requirements (2 credits)

- **HIS 450 Judaism and (Non) Violence: Theology and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict**

Dr. Yakir Englander

What is the role of the Jewish religion in the Israeli – Palestinian conflict? Is the Occupation a result of Jewish theology? Is nonviolent action also a Jewish value? And does (the Jewish) God forbid violence, or encourage it?

This course will delve into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using the tools of Jewish theology. Each of the course's themes will first be examined from the perspective of Jewish theology. Later, we will investigate if and how Jewish theologies and values influence the actual conflict: do they increase tensions, or can we use them to resolve, transform or end the conflict? A central focus of the course will be on American Jewish theology concerning the conflict, on the image of Israel in the U.S.A., and how these are both relevant to violence and peace-making in Israel/Palestine.

We will examine subjects like: sovereignty and security, rights and obligations, “just war” and peace, nonviolence and occupation. We will learn of different perspectives of Jewish law banning both Jewish sovereignty and Zionist ideology. We will re-examine the term "Judaism" - today "Judaisms" is possibly more correct - and study the implications of this new term for Israel as a “Jewish State.” We will focus on the Israeli settlements from a religious-political perspective, on the role of religion in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), and on the role of interfaith dialogue in transforming or ending the conflict. This course will require that students practice the Greek virtue of *epoché* – suspending their judgments about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and trying to see it from new angles. The materials of the course will include mostly primary sources like Jewish theological texts, documentaries, memoirs, articles of political criticism and short film clips. No prior knowledge of Israel or Judaism is required, but students will need the courage to devote themselves to learning about the conflict from new perspectives. This course will fulfill the Contemporary History, the Israeli society, or the Critical Issues (PRO) course requirements (2 credits)

- **INT 400 Gender and Sexuality in Jewish Life and Culture**

Dr. Yakir Englander

Does God have a body? If so, is it feminine or masculine? How do our sexual lives influence our understanding of God? What does the Zionist movement think about the Image of the Jewish Male Body? How does Israeli cinema influence the image of the Israeli soldier? What do different Jewish Sects think about Queer life, and do they perceive modesty in Jewish life? These are a few of the questions we will focus on in this course. By using gender theories and religious, historical and cultural studies we will try to deepen our understanding of Jewish texts, culture, law and art.

Students will enrich their understanding of both gender theories and sexual theories: Mackinnon, Foucault, Deida and Butler. They will learn about perceptions of the body and sexuality in Western societies in comparison to those in Eastern societies, gaining a deeper understanding of the key differences. Finally, they will gain the basic tools necessary to explore different Jewish texts and literature from the Bible, Talmud, Midrash, and Mystical (Hasidic) texts to Modern Israel Poetry, literature and Cinema. No prior knowledge on the subject is required. All basic concepts will be covered in this course, and students of all levels are welcome. This course will fulfill the Critical Issues (PRO) course requirement. (2 credits)

- **Lit 530 The Bible in the Siddur**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

More than half of the wording of the *Siddur* consists of direct quotations from the Bible. However, most of the time, when the rabbinic creators of the liturgy cited the Bible, they did not have *peshat* (contextual) meanings in mind. Rather, they had midrashic meanings in mind that are revealed when one compares the original, biblical, setting of the citation with the new, liturgical, setting. We will examine many examples of these creative citations of the Bible in the *Siddur* from a literary perspective and we will also explore their implications for enhancing the spiritual experience of the worshiper. One credit. This course can be used to fulfill the following requirements: Bible class, Tefillah and Seminar, elective.

- **MEC 120/121 Mechina Hebrew and Jewish Studies**

TBA

The Mechina Program is made up of two sections.

1. One class covers the basics of both modern and liturgical Hebrew, preparing the students to enter the required Hebrew classes of both the Rabbinical and the Cantorial Programs. No credit is given for this class.
2. The other part is a preparatory course for the Rabbinic and Cantorial Programs. The course includes a survey of Jewish history; introduction to the *Siddur* (prayer book) for weekdays, Sabbaths and festivals, with guided reading and analysis of selected Hebrew passages; introduction to classical Jewish literature, including Mishnah and Midrash; and orientation to Jewish liturgical observances and religious and cultural institutions. The two sections may be taken separately. No credit is given for this class.

- **PHI 301 Bioethics**

Rabbi Jill Hackell, M.D.

Technological advancements in medicine have brought bio-ethical issues of increasing complexity. This course will examine issues pertinent to today's bio-ethical dialogue from a Jewish point of view, including issues such as organ donation, end-of-life issues, reproduction, genetic screening, illness prevention and immunization. How does the Jewish way of looking at these issues compare and contrast with the general societal discussion? What are the governing principles of bio-ethical argument in each of these? How are ancient Jewish sources reconciled with modern technology in guiding thinking about these issues? (1 credit)

- **PHI 312 Modern Philosophy**

Rabbi Len Levin

The issues of modern Jewish thought will be studied through familiarization with principal works of the major modern Jewish philosophers—including Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Buber, Rosenzweig, Kaplan, Heschel, and Soloveitchik—as well as representative thinkers of the major modern and contemporary movements. The focus will be on how all of these thinkers and movements adapted Jewish tradition—each in their own way—to the intellectual, cultural and political challenges of modernity. (2 credits)

- **PHI 346 Ethics**

Rabbi Len Levin

This course will introduce the students to the classical sources and issues of ethics in the Jewish tradition, both historical and contemporary. Attention will be paid to biblical, rabbinic, and medieval ethical texts, Moshe Hayyim Luzzatto's "Path of the Upright," and contemporary discussions of Jewish personal and social ethics. (2 credits)

- **PRO 326 Education**

Dr. Renee Holtz

From Lesson to Lesson – Create a curriculum and understand how learning can be fostered. As a rabbi you are, at the heart, a teacher. Learn how to create the materials that you need in order to teach meaningful, engaging, and creative courses of study. Each student will end the term with a complete curriculum to teach one content area. Topics such as lesson planning, assessment, differentiation, meeting to needs of various learners, and fostering enduring understandings will be examined. (2 credits)

- **PRO 341 Life Cycle I**

Rabbi Jeffrey Segelman

This course is designed to prepare religious leaders to participate in the various life cycle rituals of the Jewish people. Primary focus will be on the life cycle events from birth through bar/bat mitzvah, leading up to marriage. Role play and reenactments will allow students to receive feedback on their developing skills. (2 credits)

- **PRO 490 Difficult Conversations**

Arline Duker

This course will provide students with an understanding of what causes anxiety, strong emotional reactions, and avoidance of conversations which are often necessary. It will provide opportunities for developing the skills and confidence to handle these difficult situations more comfortably. Students will learn how to manage those issues that are problematic for them, and how to structure conversations that can promote greater understanding. Classes will include discussion of ideas as well as lots of practice and role-playing of real-life situations. (1 credit)

- **PRO 700 Field Work Support Seminar**

Cantor Michael Kasper

This seminar group focuses upon issues that arise in the course of rabbinical and cantorial work. Students will explore the challenges that they face in their work and in their developing rabbinate/cantorate through the presentation of a case study. Participation is required of all students whose work is counting as a required internship experience. All Fieldwork must be approved prior to the beginning of the semester by Cantor Michael Kasper. Tuition is charged but no academic course point is given for this seminar. (No credit)

- **RAB 100 Introduction to Mishnah**

Rabbi Julie Danan

An introduction to the study of Mishnah. The students will be introduced to basic rabbinical concepts that underlie the Mishnah. The structure of the Mishnah and its subject matter will be studied. Selections will be chosen to illustrate the variety of literary styles and some distinctive features of Rabbinic Hebrew that are found in the Mishnah. The course will also include a brief introduction to the scholarly issues regarding the development and redaction of the Mishnah. (2 credits)

- **RAB 330 Intermediate Talmud**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

This course will continue the study of the Talmud, its structure, and concepts. Tractate to be announced. *Havruta* session is required of all students. Prerequisite: 4 credits in Talmud (2 credits)

- **RAB 372 - The Image of G-d: A Survey of Rabbinic Theology**

Joshua Schwartz

As a religion, Judaism is often action-oriented and externally focused, as opposed to being concerned with specific doctrines or beliefs. The uncodified nature of rabbinic faith has often led to claims that ancient Judaism had no set beliefs, but is this the case? While there is no tractate of the Talmud designated with that task, scattered within rabbinic literature are clear examples of Rabbis operating within a theological world. In this course, we will explore what major ideas informed their beliefs and world-views, how the Rabbis understood the deity and their relationship to it, and what kind of role they, and the Jewish people as a whole, played in it. There will be a range of answers found for each question. We will look at a survey of rabbinic texts found in the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash, and will try to craft an answer to the challenge: What was it that the Rabbis believed, and how do we fit within that story? This course is open to all levels. (2 credits)

- **RAB 530 Advanced Talmud**

TBA

This course will continue the study of the Talmud, its structure, and concepts. Tractate to be announced. *Havruta* session is required of all students. Prerequisite: 8 credits in Talmud (2 credits)

- **SPI 362 Life After Death in Jewish Tradition**

Rabbi Jill Hammer

In Genesis, there's *She'ol*. In the Talmud, there's resurrection, or the heavenly *yeshiva*. In kabbalistic times, reincarnation is in. And in modern times, no one agrees. In this course, we'll learn about traditions of the afterlife that Jews have accepted in different eras, and we'll begin to understand how and why Jews have shifted their beliefs across time. This class will prepare participants to understand Jewish traditions concerning death and the afterlife and clarify their own approaches. This course fulfills the Spirituality elective course requirement. (2 credits)