



Course Descriptions Spring 2018

- **BIB 350 The Book of Deuteronomy: Life in the Promised Land as a Mixed Blessing**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course is a close critical reading of the book of Deuteronomy, revolving around the themes of individuality, collectivity, and humanity. By the conclusion of this course, each student will be able to articulate: (1) the structure, purposes, and theological outlook of Deuteronomy; and (2) three examples where the book of Deuteronomy is a source for understanding the human condition in our own day. The subjects we will discuss include: “monotheism and violence,” “duties of the heart,” “election and history,” “fear and awe,” “free will and responsibility,” “gender and sexuality,” “holiness and language,” “identity and the Other,” “law and history,” “legislation and interpretation,” “memory and empathy,” “nationalism and universalism,” “privilege and entitlement,” “the grip of power,” “The Oral Torah and the Written Torah,” “leadership and failures,” and “divine transcendence and divine personhood.” Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible. (2 credits)

- **BIB 475 Abraham to Ibrahim** *Dr. Tzemaḥ Yoreh*

Why did Abraham bind/sacrifice Isaac? How do we make sense of the different categories of sacrifice in Leviticus? How did the idea of martyrdom develop in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam? What is the relationship between Jesus’ crucifixion and the binding of Isaac? Why did the Mishnah devote so much space to sacrificial law after the Temple was destroyed? Which son did Ibrahim offer God according to Muslim texts and traditions? This course will answer these questions and others as we explore the evolution of the sacrifice tradition in the sacred texts of Abrahamic religions. Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible (2 credits)

- **CAN 106 Choir** *Cantor Sol Zim*

Students will attain an in-depth exploration and will learn two, three, and four part choral settings ranging from pop, Israeli, chassidic niggunim, Yiddish folk songs and liturgical Shabbat rock selections. All these choral pieces will be taken from rich contemporary musical sources. Students will be introduced to major Jewish composers and will be taught proper breathing, vocal coloration and musical integrity for choral singing. (2 credits)

- **CAN 448 Yammim Noraim III** *Cantors Sol Zim and Lisa Klinger-Kantor*

This course gives an in-depth and extensive study of the vast liturgy with emphasis on *Yizkor*, *Avodah*, *Minha*, *N'ilah*, and *Selihot*. Students will develop a deep understanding of the vast components of the *MiSinai* tunes, High Holiday motifs, and the various *Nusboat* that make up our High Holiday liturgy. All students will master and lead, the entire Yom Kippur Day service from the *Mahzor*, including the many participator melodies, thus creating a sense of oneness and unity for all to share. *Both sections required.* (4 credits)

- **CAN 525 Introduction to Sephardi - Mizrahi Music** *Dr. Samuel Torjman Thomas*

Taught by ethnomusicologist and bandleader Dr. Samuel Torjman Thomas and several guest instructors, this course aims to open a window into the wide and deep world of Sephardi-Mizrahi musical traditions. Part lecture and part hands-on experience this course will whet your appetite for a lasting appreciation of the music of Jewish communities from around the world. (2 credits)

- **HAL 402 Introduction to Codes II** *Rabbi David Almog*

Continuation of the Introduction to Codes I course taught in the fall. Prerequisite: Introduction to Codes I. (2 credits)

- **HEB 300 Hebrew Reading for Accuracy and Fluency** *Ilana Davidov*

This course will emphasize reading fluency and accuracy of Hebrew texts both vocalized and unvocalized. Students will practice reading selections from the Siddur, from the Tanach and from modern writings. Some of the tools include the analysis of morphology, syntax elements, the *binyanim* and their meaning, and other grammatical factors. (1 credit)

- **HEB 320 Biblical Hebrew** *Rabbi Peg Kershenbaum*

This course will be an examination of and exercise in the grammar, syntax, and vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew, for the development of competence in understanding and translating the classical Biblical texts (with some attention to major differences between BH, Rabbinic, and Modern Hebrew). (2 credits)

- **HEB 401 Hebrew IIIB** *Ilana Davidov*

This course is a continuation of Hebrew IIIA. The focus of this course will be on reading and listening comprehension of informative and narrative texts in Modern Hebrew. Written, oral, and aural assignments will enhance communication and comprehension skills while improving absorption and integration of vocabulary and grammar. Prerequisite: Hebrew IIIA or its equivalent. (4 credits)

- **HIS 400 Ideas and Debates of Jewish History** *Dr. Eric Miller*

This course will examine the new ideas and the great debates that affected Jewish belief, culture, and society throughout the ages, from the Ancient period up through Modern Times. This is a two trimester class. The first trimester will focus on the earliest periods of the Jews as a people and conclude with Late Antiquity, exploring internal arguments within Judean society, with and among Diaspora Jews, and the interactions with pagan and early Christian society. (2 credits)

- **LIT 101 Introduction to Liturgy** *Rabbi Jeff Hoffman*

Foundations in the academics of Jewish liturgy. That means asking questions of history, textual sources, and literary meaning. Added to that will be inquiries into spiritual meaning for today's Jews. Portions of the weekday service will be used as examples for developing an understanding of the basic liturgical units including: *p'suqei dezimrah*, *keri'at Shema u'virkhoteba*, *tefillah*, and *kaddish*. Approaches of the varied streams of contemporary Judaism will be taken into consideration. (2 credits)

- **LIT 271 Tefillah and Seminar** *TBA*

A seminar on the various techniques, strategies and attitudes relevant to the experience of leading prayer. (1 credit).

Note: The focus of this trimester's version of *Tefillah* and Seminar will be Festival Liturgy. LIT 271 – *Tefillah* and Seminar may be taken with, or independent from LIT 307 - Festival Liturgy. (1 credit)

- **LIT 307 Festival Liturgy** *Rabbi Robert Scheinberg*

A study of the liturgy of the three festivals: *Pesah*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot*. Features of this course include: variations in the basic liturgy for the *Shelosh Regalim*, especially the *Amidah*; the development of *Hallel*; the form, function, and texts of principal *piyyutim*; and variations in practice among various contemporary communities. Discussion of creative and innovative rituals that can be introduced into the fixed liturgy. (2 credits)

Prerequisite: Introduction to Liturgy. (2 credits). Note: The focus of this trimester's version of LIT 271 - *Tefillah* and Seminar will also be Festival Liturgy. LIT 307 - Festival Liturgy may be taken with, or independent from, LIT 271, *Tefillah* and Seminar. (2 credits)

- **MEC 130 Mechina Hebrew** *TBA*

This 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. This is part two of a full year class. No credit is given for this class. (No credit)

- **PHI 475 Personal Theology** *Dr. Len Levin*

Through taking this course, students will each: clarify one's own theological agenda, including the questions and core-concepts that are most central to one's own Jewish theological vision; develop a statement of one's personal theological vision, through a combination of drawing on previous paradigms and creating one's own; and specifically, be able to address the issues of revelation/authority/practice, God, Israel/Jewish peoplehood, suffering/evil, and eschatology in a way that will be meaningful to oneself and to one's future audience. (2 credits)

- **PHI 515 Sefer Hayetzirah** *Rabbi Jill Hammer*

This will be a course in which we read in its entirety one of the earliest works of Jewish mysticism, *Sefer Yetzirah*, and explore its meanings. We'll consider the spiritual and philosophical underpinnings of the book, learn about its connection to the later *kabbalah*, and also discover "practical *kabbalah*— how mystics might have used this work to transform their consciousness and shape their experience of time, space, and soul. This course can count toward the Mysticism requirement or the spirituality requirement. (2 credits)

- **PRO 004 Core Concepts IV** *Dr. Ora Horn Prouser*

This is a multi-year sequence of seminars. The seminars cover some of the fundamental values, concepts and vocabulary of Jewish tradition. Students are expected to first gain a basic acquaintance with these terms and to then delve more deeply into them so as to appreciate their range of significance. The goal of the seminars is not simply to gather information, but to develop an integrated way of thinking about and expressing these value concepts, so that students may grow from having an appreciation of the tradition to actively and creatively participating in the discourse of Torah. Every student is required to take two years of the seminars given in the sequence, but they need not be taken in order. Core Concepts IV begins with the term *mizrah/ma'arav*. No tuition is charged for this course. (No credit)

- **PRO 342 Life Cycle II** *Rabbi Jeffrey Segelman*

In this course, the main focus will be on issues pertaining to divorce and death and mourning. Our discussions will examine the legal, philosophical, and practical aspects of each. Students will acquire an understanding of the rituals, procedures, and the pastoral dimensions of both. In addition, students will collaborate on creating and executing modern rituals which mark milestones in adult life such as significant wedding anniversaries, retirement, ageing and illness, and care of elderly parents. (2 credits)

- **PRO 350 Conversion** *Rabbi Heidi Hoover*

A study of conversion from historical, practical, *halakhic*, and political perspectives. We will address issues relating to preparing individuals for conversion, the process of conversion itself, and the *halakhic* and political implications of the conversion process. (1 credit)

- **PRO 420 Rabbinic Leadership: Personality and Text** *Linda Rich*

This course examines how personality theory and Jewish texts illuminate the rabbi's role and enables students to cultivate and embody our own authentic leadership style. By experiencing a variety of self-assessment tools and receiving individualized feedback, students will recognize their own tendencies and potential vulnerabilities, appreciate individual differences, and expand their repertoire of available approaches. We will cover how personality impacts communication, relationships, teamwork, motivation, conflict, and engagement. We will also examine research around personality in terms of clergy and congregations, and how people differ when it comes to sermons, religious study, the practice and experience of prayer, and approaches to spirituality. Several sessions will be devoted to relevant text study, examining how our tradition sheds light on issues of leadership and individual differences. This course will partially fulfill the Entrepreneurial and Community Planting requirement. (2 credits)

- **PRO 700 FWSS** *Cantor Michael Kasper*

This seminar group focuses on 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 mandatory for 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 credit is given for this seminar. (No credit)

- **RAB 110 Introduction to Midrash** *Rabbi Jill Hammer*

In this introductory class, we will examine the forms, methods, and vocabulary of rabbinic midrash and explore the function midrash plays in rabbinic interpretation of Torah. We will learn some basic midrashic strategies and become familiar with a variety of midrashic collections from the talmudic to the medieval period. This is a text-based class and we will spend time during each session reading midrashim in Hebrew to improve our fluency. (2 credits)

- **RAB 230 Introduction to Talmud** *Rabbi Jeff Hoffman*

Students will acquire the skills needed to identify the component parts of the talmudic *sugya* and the relationships between them. These skills includes the ability to recognize the elements and functions of the talmudic argument, especially the *kushia* (objection) and the *terutz* (resolution). This also includes the ability to distinguish between tannaitic, amoraic, and anonymous passages. Additionally, students will learn the basics of talmudic terminology, vocabulary, and grammar. Students are expected to prepare texts with the help of dictionaries, Hebrew commentaries, and vocabulary lists, with the limited use of English translations. Prerequisite: Introduction to Mishna. The *Havruta* session is required of all students. (2 credits)

- **RAB 430 Intermediate/Advanced Talmud** *Rabbi Will Friedman*

This course will be a study of the dialectical flow, literary-historical structure, and theological content of selected *sugyot* in Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi. Additionally, this course will include the study of selections from the secondary literature relating to the critical study of the Talmud. Prerequisite: Three semesters of Talmud. The *Havruta* session is required of all students. (2 credits)

- **SPI 355 Mindfulness in the Bible and the Far East** *Dr. Job Jindo*

This course introduces students to a comparative study of biblical religion and Zen Buddhism, revolving around the themes of mindfulness and the human condition. We will particularly focus on a distinct quality of awareness that each of the foundational texts is designed to cultivate in its readers. Although historically unrelated, this course will show the two religious traditions share features and concerns that prove fruitful for a trans-cultural dialogue. The questions we will explore include: According to each tradition, what are some of the essential cognitive qualities that constitute an optimal mode of being human? How does each tradition understand some of the major pitfalls in achieving such quality of consciousness? What relevance, if any, does this inquiry have to our general life in modern societies? No prior knowledge of biblical studies, Judaism, Hebrew, or Buddhism is required. This course fulfills the Spirituality requirement, or can count as a Bible elective. (2 credits)