



COURSE DESCRIPTION Summer 2018

- **BIB 250 Secrets of Parshanut: Introduction to Medieval Biblical Exegesis**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course introduces students to the treasure world of medieval Jewish biblical exegesis. Selections, mostly from the Torah (esp., Genesis), will be examined to compare and contrast opinions of major commentators, such as Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Radak, and Ramban. We will also explore insights into the human condition as reflected in their interpretations. By the conclusion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate: (1) a mastery of the essential skills in reading medieval commentaries; (2) an informed understanding of the methodologies and exegetical goals of each exegete; and (3) a deeper appreciation of the commentators in their own historical and theological context. Students will also become familiar with other features and interpretive tools found on the pages of rabbinic Bibles (Mikra'ot Gedolot). No prior knowledge of biblical studies is required. This course will fulfill the Parshanut requirement, or can count as a Bible elective. (2 credits)

- **BIB 320 Sex And The City In The Bible: Ruth, Esther, And Lady Jerusalem**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course is a close critical reading of Ruth, Esther, and Lamentations (if time allows, also the Song of Songs), revolving around the themes of gender, belonging, and otherness. By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to articulate: (1) the structure, purposes, and theological outlook of each text; (2) the theology of gender as reflected in each text; and (3) three examples where the texts discussed in class is a source for understanding the human condition in our own day. The subjects we will discuss include: "rights discourse vs. identity discourse," "eclipse of God and human agency," "empathy and justice," "enticement and manipulation," "hatred and metonymic thinking," "identity and violence," "love and forgiveness," "politics and strangers," "primordial identity and multicultural identity," "the sense of the transcendent," "kosher adultery," and "Lekha Dodi." Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible or permission of the Dean. This course can count as a Bible elective. (2 credits)

- **HAL 401 Intro 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 476 Halakhot of Marriage and Qiddushin**

Dr. Tzemah Yoreh

This class will offer a legal history of the Jewish wedding from the biblical period through the Modern day. Some of the issues we will tackle are the differences between biblical and rabbinic marriages, the problematic notion of acquisition at the basis of halakhic marriages, how this was dealt with throughout history, modern day alternatives, and the issues of mutuality and consent. We will then segue to sexual consent within marriage and outside of marriage from a Jewish legal perspective throughout the ages. Prerequisite: Introduction to Codes or permission of the Dean. This course can fulfill the Codes or the Critical Issues Halakhah requirements. (2 credits)

- **HIS 401 Great Ideas and Debates of Jewish History**

Eric Miller

The second part of this two-trimester course will examine the new ideas and the great debates that affected Jewish belief, culture and society from the Early Middle Ages up through Early Modern Times. This trimester will focus on the new ideas, perspectives, innovations, and debates of the Babylonian Jewish community under Islamic rule, followed by the growth of the Spanish Jewish community and the exciting developments created in that context. The development of the Ashkenazi Jewish community, as well as its unique understanding of Torah, will be explored, along with the influences and cultural exchange between Judaism and the Medieval Christian World, leading into the period of European Enlightenment and the Early Modern World. This course may be taken without having taken the first trimester course. (2 credits)

- **INT 331 Sacred Arts /Circus Arts**

Ayal Prouser and Dr. Ora Horn Prouser

How do we read text differently with our bodies?. In this class we will pursue this idea as readers, teachers, artists, and fun loving individuals. We will approach the topic through the lens of circus studies, education, and inclusion. We will engage in the academic study of the new field of Circus Studies, a multifarious field with many discrete methodologies that all join in the pursuit of elevating the study of circus to scholarly levels. We will understand the value of the arts in education, and the importance of opening up our sacred literature to those who often feel disenfranchised by the traditional form of Jewish text study. We will study text through the vehicle of circus arts, such as human pyramids, partner acrobatics, juggling, rolla bolla, tightwire, and more. As we progress through the trimester, we will grow as educators and as artists, while also enhancing our ability to bring even more people into the study of text. This class will be co-taught by instructors in text study and in circus arts, with several visiting instructors joining us throughout the trimester. Open to all ages, abilities, and fitness levels (we really mean it!!) This class will fulfill the Sacred Arts requirement, or can be counted as a Bible elective or a spirituality elective. (2 credits)

- **PHI 311 Medieval Philosophy**

Dr. Len Levin

How did Jewish thinkers in previous ages respond to the tension between traditional Jewish faith and rational models of inquiry? This course offers a great-books approach. It starts with the roots of the Western religious philosophical tradition in the Bible, Plato, and Aristotle. Students will then read the basic texts of the major classical and medieval Jewish philosophers — Philo, Saadia, Ibn Gabirol, Halevi, and Maimonides. The focus will be on seeing how these thinkers sought to integrate the complementary outlooks from the Jewish religious tradition with the dominant models of general thought in their time, and how they can be exemplars for our own similar quests. (2 credits)

- **PRO 338 Bread and Butter Nusah: The Joys of Hol and Shabbat**

Cantor Michael Kasper

This course will offer all participants an opportunity to learn, practice, and become proficient in the basic *nushaot* of the *Birkhot HaShahar*, *Pesukei D'Zimrah*, *Shaharit*, and *Ma'ariv* services for Hol and Shabbat. This course is designed to offer a good foundation for anyone wanting to learn how to proficiently lead a minyan or congregation. (2 credits)

- **PRO 312 Homiletics/ Divrei Torah**

TBA

An exploration into the structure and content of a sermon or *d'var Torah*, both those that are delivered orally and those that are written. Particular attention will be paid to various nontraditional varieties of pulpit discourse as well as to available resource materials in the sermonic field. Primary methodology: the creation, presentation and critique of sermons assigned to course participants. This course will fulfill the Homiletics and the Parashat Hashavua requirements. (2 credits)

- **PRO 326 What is Synagogue Education Today**

Susan Werk

By the end of this course the students will be able to:

Describe the unique culture that surrounds Synagogue Education and articulate the different needs of the learners in the institutions;

To cite examples of “Best Practices” of the different “teams” in synagogue life, for example: professional team, lay leadership/professional team, teaching staff/youth team;

To practice leadership skills, in order to apply these skills to creating meaningful and innovative programs;

To demonstrate the technique of Reflective Practice as a tool that will assist in the running of the education system;

And, to become familiar with the current trends and innovative ideas surrounding synagogue education. (2 credits)

- **RAB 231 Introduction to Talmud. (Continuation of RAB 230)**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

In this second half of the two-trimester Introduction to Talmud course, students will continue to develop their skills in decoding the dialectic of the talmudic discourse. Study of basic Aramaic terms, Talmudic organic logic, the structure of *sugyot*, and modern critical methodologies of Talmud study will resume. The content will be the various halakhic and theological approaches to the *Amidah* found in Tractate *Berakhot*, chapter 4. The *Havruta* session is required of all students. Prerequisite: one trimester of Talmud. (2 credits)

- **RAB 111 Midrash II**

Rabbi Iscah Waldman

In this second trimester of Midrash we will delve more deeply into a number of locations where the genre known as Midrash makes an impact: Halakhah, Talmud, and in well known collections such as Midrash Tanhuma, Breishit Rabbah, and Pesikta D'Rav Kahana. We will explore Midrash in its original language, with an emphasis on the way the rabbinic authors treated the sacred Biblical text reverently even while turning it on its head. Prerequisite: one trimester of Midrash. (2 credits)

- **RAB 43 I Intermediate/Advanced Talmud - Damage, Responsibility, and Restitution**

Joshua Schwartz

This trimester, we will be working our way through *perek ha-chovel*, the chapter on damages (*Bava Metzia*, ch. 8), one of the classics of a *yeshiva* education. The main theme of the chapter is how to assess various kinds of damages and how to assess what it will take for restitution. However, beyond the technical details, the chapter is about how to live out the responsibility that is inherent in every human relationship, how to take responsibility for oneself, and how to keep those relationships alive when damage has been done. While the details in the talmudic passages may appear antiquated (oxen galore!), the kinds of thinking this chapter outlines are still immensely relevant today.

The main focus of our learning will be on understanding the mechanics of the *sugya*, not just what it says, but how it says its positions. We will pay especial attention to the dialectic (*shakla v'tarya*), especially as it plays out between different historical layers in the text. Rashi will be our main textual collaborator, with choice *tosafot* peppered throughout the course of the trimester. In addition, we will learn how to use the *Mishneh Torah* not just as a legal text but as a record of how Maimonides read the *Gemara*. *Havruta* period is required. Prerequisite: two trimesters of Talmud. (2 credits)