



Course Descriptions Summer 2019

- **BIB 140 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, and Ramban. We will also explore insights into the human condition as reflected in their interpretations. By the conclusion of this course, the student will also 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*). Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible.

(2 credits)

- **BIB 348 Becoming Israel in the Wilderness: Studies in the Book of Numbers**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course is a close critical reading of Numbers, revolving around the themes of identity, holiness, and the transformation of peoplehood. By the conclusion of this course, the student will learn: (1) the structure, purposes, and theological outlook of Numbers; (2) the significance of identity, holiness, and peoplehood as reflected in Numbers; and (3) how to teach the book of Numbers to contemporaries with AJR values (i.e., critical rigor, inclusivity, commitment to the pluralistic, contemporary Jewish and broader communities). This course will count as a Bible elective or as *Parashat Hashavua*. Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 318 Cantillation I**

Cantor Robin Joseph

This course is part one of the two-course cantillation program. It is an in-depth study of Eastern European cantillation for Torah, *Haftarah* and *Yamim Nora'im*. In addition to learning the history, function, and art of cantillation, participants will work to demonstrate a proficiency in recognizing and chanting the various cantillation phrases for these three tropes. Please note that while this class meets twice a week, it will provide only three credits based on its reduced classroom hours, class will not meet certain weeks. (The specific schedule will be clear on the course syllabus) This course is open to both rabbinical and cantorial students.

(3 credits)

- **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 510 Advanced Codes**

Dr. Matt Goldstone

This course will focus on Joseph Karo's *Shulhan Arukh*, the major medieval code of Jewish law that continues to inform contemporary practice. We will study many of the most important laws related to the observance of *kasbrut* and *avelut* (Jewish dietary practices and laws of mourning), with secondary readings that offer more diverse perspectives for modern forms of observance and commemoration. Prerequisite: two trimesters of Introduction to Codes.

(2 credits)

- **HEB 350 Intermediate Hebrew IIA**

Ilana Davidov

Students will almost finish Hebrew from Scratch B (עברית מן ההתחלה ב'). Students will learn new grammatical topics including passive *binyanim* and noun declension; develop strategies for reading comprehension and word recognition, and practice conveying ideas and opinions in both speech and writing. Prerequisite: Hebrew 251 or the equivalent.

(4 credits)

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

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 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 305 Shabbat Liturgy**

Rabbi Rob Scheinberg

Through analysis of the *siddur* and selected rabbinic and medieval primary sources, students will become familiar with the major components of the liturgy for Shabbat (both statutory liturgy and the best-known *piyyutim*), their themes, structure, theology, various theories regarding their historical development, and how they are expressed in a wide variety of siddurim across the Jewish spectrum. Students will have the opportunity to reflect deeply on the meaning and function of many passages from the Shabbat liturgy and how these ideas can be transmitted to a community. Prerequisite: Introduction to Liturgy or permission of instructor. (2 credits)

- **MEC 130 Mechina**

Yifat Avner

This course is a continuation of Mechina Hebrew II and will build upon the foundational grammar covered last trimester. The students will continue to work on developing communication skills in Modern Hebrew. They will be introduced to more advanced grammatical patterns, new vocabulary and continue to improve their writing, reading, and conversational skills. (No credit)

- **PHI 475 Personal Theology**

Dr. Len Levin

Through taking this course, each student will: 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)

- **PRO 002/006 Core Concepts II and VI**

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 II begins with *nefesh/neshama* and Core Concepts VI begins with the terms *avot/imahot*.

(No credit)

- **PRO 348 Pastoral Responses to Death, Dying, and Bereavement**

Rabbi Naomi Kalish

One of the most important roles of a clergy is pastoral leadership at times of bereavement and loss. This course will examine tools and techniques available to the rabbi or cantor in supporting and counseling the bereaved, creating meaningful funerals, and maximizing the spiritual and emotional benefits of *shiva* and mourning observances. This course will count as a Spirituality elective.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 355 Are the Citizen and Stranger Alike? A Practicum in Conversion to Judaism in 21st Century America**

Rabbi Bronwen Mullen

This intensive will survey the complex landscape of spirituality, ideology and practice with regard to conversion to Judaism across the movements. We will begin by examining the boundaries and ambiguities of “Jewish citizenship” according to the Torah and Talmud through the medieval codes and *teshuvot*. We will then reexamine those same materials in light of the critical late 19th -early 20th century Jewish thinkers who drew new boundaries of movement and affiliation, nationality and peoplehood, complicating the discourse on conversion to this very day. Infused throughout will be a study and deconstruction of traditional rituals and customs for conversion with contemporary reflection and creativity. At the heart of our work together will be the hardest question to explore—as a spiritual leader of the Jewish people, what are my deepest held convictions about Jewishness, and in what ways do I both open and close doors for others? (1 credit)

- **PRO 490 Difficult Conversations**

Rabbi David Schuck

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 532 Teaching *Tefillah***

Susan Werk

How do we teach *Tefillah* to every age and every stage? This course will give practical lessons on how to teach meaning and understanding of our core prayers to early childhood through adults. The curriculum could be used in supplementary schools as well as general synagogue education. This course will count toward the Education requirement.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 560 Counseling II**

Cantor Michael Kasper

Counseling II builds on concepts developed in Counseling I (PRO 215) and will emphasize effective ways for clergy to assess and respond to difficult life transitions, complicated family situations, illness (both physical and psychological), personal and community crises, addictions, and conflicts that arise in everyday life. Students will begin to discern the difference between situations appropriately handled by clergy and ones that call for referrals to other counseling professionals. Prerequisite: Counseling I

(2 credits)

- **PRO 700 Field Work Support Seminar**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

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 credit is given for this seminar.

(No credit)

- **RAB 231 Introduction to Talmud II**

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: Introduction to Talmud I or the equivalent.

(2 credits)

- **RAB 361 Midrash: Rabbis and Wives**

Rabbi Bronwen Mullen

This course will examine rabbinic wife tales from the Talmud and midrashic collections including Rachel, the wife of Akiva; Beruriah, the wife of Rabbi Meir; and many unnamed wives who nurture, agitate, and educate our rabbinic ancestors about the *lived* experience of the Jew. Traversing a complex way of life, *halakha*, that links home and bedroom to the *beit midrash*, synagogue to self, the marketplace of things to the marketplace of ideas, these stories contain a healthy dose of performance anxiety, wit and wisdom. Our critical and creative readings of these texts, informed by classical and contemporary scholarship on midrash and aggadah, as well as gender construction and performance theory, will in fact reveal the existential quandary driving our storytellers—is the “religion of the rabbis”, developed behind the closed doors of the Beit Midrash, sustainable in the world outside, both in their times and in ours? This course will enhance students’ ability to read and interpret rabbinic texts in their literary and historical context while cultivating the crucial creativity necessary to continue the tradition of Oral, *lived*-Torah, in the 21st century. This course will count toward the Midrash requirement.

Prerequisite: Introduction to Mishnah.

(2 credits)

- **RAB 430 Intermediate/Advanced Talmud**

Dr. Matt Goldstone

This course will hone students’ abilities to critically read, parse, and understand Talmudic material. Emphasis will be placed on learning some of the key recurring terms and structures found in the Talmud as well as on the pedagogical application of the material that we cover. This trimester will focus on *sugyot* related to *kasbrut*, primarily from Tractate *Hullin*. Prerequisite: At least three trimesters of Talmud.

(2 credits)