

Course Descriptions

Fall 2020

- **BIB 250 – 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, will be examined to compare and contrast opinions of major commentators, such as Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, and Ramban. By the conclusion of this course, each student 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), as well as what they should be mindful of, when using such online sources as Sefaria. Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible

(2 credits)

- **BIB 412 – Second Isaiah: Tikkun Olan and the Seven Weeks of Consolation**

Dr. Job Jindo

There was once an anonymous prophet—aka Second Isaiah (author of Isaiah chaps 40–66)—who was born to an exiled family in a ghetto of ancient Babylonia. His Hebrew vocabulary was considerably limited. And yet, his scriptural knowledge, literary dexterity, and inspired ideas were exceptional, and he thereby induced a radical transformation to the meaning of biblical monotheism and the destiny of the Jewish people. What was the secret of this spiritual genius? What was his upbringing like? What pedagogical insights might parents—who raise children in a non-Jewish Diaspora environment—be able to attain from this figure and apply to the soulcraft of their own children? This course explores these and other questions, as well as his distinctive religious categories, such as universal monotheism, a light to the nations, and the new creation (or *tikkun olam*). Our discussions will revolve around the “Seven Haftaroht of Consolation” which are read successively after Tisha B'Av until Rosh Hashanah and are all taken from his writing. Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 130 – Musical Skills 1**

Stanley Dorn

The first in a series of courses designed to prepare prospective cantors for the various technical musical demands of their profession. These include the ability to sing the written literature at sight, to harmonize those melodies for choral or instrumental performance and to create their own melodies to texts they may wish to use with their congregations. The course builds on the natural musical abilities of each student and helps to focus and refine these abilities so that the cantors can achieve mastery over these techniques.

(0 credits)

- **CAN 131/230 – Musical Skills 2/3**

Stanley. Dorn

This series of courses is designed to prepare prospective cantors for the various technical musical demands of their profession. These include the ability to sing the written literature at sight, to harmonize those melodies for choral or instrumental performance and to create their own melodies to texts they may wish to use with their congregations. The course builds on the natural musical abilities of each student and helps to focus and refine these abilities so that the cantors can achieve mastery over these techniques.

(CAN 131 is 0 credit, CAN 230 is 2 credits)

- **CAN 201 – Jewish Music in Diaspora**

Samuel Torjman-Thomas

Text The purpose of this course is to explore Jewish music as an expression of diaspora identity. To understand Jewish musical expressions, this course examines Jewish culture and identity as inherently diasporic. This course analyzes different types of Jewish musical expressions, including liturgical, para-liturgical, and non-liturgical spheres of musical production. This course fulfills the Music History requirement.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 445 – Advanced Nusah**

Cantors Sol Zim & Lisa Klinger-Kantor

An in depth extensive study of the vast *Misina'i* tunes that make up the Rosh Hashannah liturgy.

Each student must develop an understanding of the various motifs and *nushaot* and how to use them in the course of *davenning*. Targil section required.

(4 credits)

- **HEB 250 – Hebrew 1A**

Ilana Davidov

Using the second volume of *Hebrew from Scratch* (**עברית מן ההתחלה ב'**), students will read and listen to texts of different genres – informative, literary and narrative – and different historical registers. A vocabulary of about 500 additional words will be presented and practiced; special attention will be given to dictionary look-up skills. Grammatical topics include nominal and possessive sentences in the future, relative and conditional clauses, the future tense of Pa'al, and declensions of various prepositions.

(4 credits)

- **HEB 351 – Hebrew 2B**

Ilana Davidov

In the beginning of this course students will complete the last few lessons of the second volume of *Hebrew from Scratch* (**עברית מן ההתחלה ב'**). It will include an intensive review of the verb system in the active **בניינים** and their gerunds, and a brief introduction to the passive **בניינים (פועל, הופעל)**, real and unreal condition, comparative and superlative sentences

(4 credits)

- **HIS 400 – Great Ideas and Debates in Jewish History**

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 credit)

- **LIT 305 – Shabbat Liturgy**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

A study of the development of the major prayers that make up all four of the *Shabbat* worship services. Special emphasis will be placed on the influence of the mystical tradition on *Kabbalat Shabbat*. Texts of central prayers will be analyzed from a historical, literary and spiritual perspective. Attention will be paid to a survey of practices of various contemporary communities representing various streams of Jewish practice as well as to congregational dynamics and effective strategies for developing effective and compelling *Shabbat* liturgy. Prerequisite: Introduction to Liturgy.

(2 credit)

- **MEC 120 – Mechina Hebrew**

Yifat Avner

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. (No credit)

- **PHI 475 – Personal Theology**

Dr. Len Levin

Through taking this course students will be able to: clarify their own theological agenda—the questions and core-concepts that are most central to their own Jewish theological vision; develop a statement of their personal theological visions, through a combination of drawing on previous paradigms and creating their 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 themselves and to their future audiences.

(2 credit)

- **PRO 419 – A Laboratory of Questioning: Jewish Identities in the 21st Century**

Dr. Yakir Englander

In this course, we will examine the different meanings of Jewish identities in the 21st century. We will delve into different aspects of identity: peoplehood, chosen and non-chosen Jewish Identities. We will also explore the identities which humans and the Jewish tradition have been assigning the Divine and the implications of the fact that we identify ourselves as a monotheistic faith. Finally, we will look at different aspects of Jewish identities in the context of the Jewish and Israeli calendars, our covenants, language and law. This course aims to give our students a better understanding and tools with which they can lead their communities, while highlighting the current challenges and opportunities this undertaking involves.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 560 – Counseling 2**

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 Jeffrey Segelman

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 100 – Intro Mishnah**

Rabbi David Almog

This course will introduce students to the study of mishnah as a traditional and academic discipline. Texts assigned will illustrate the variety of literary styles and subject matter within the mishnah. The course will also include a brief introduction to relevant scholarly issues in mishnah study, and mishnah study's place in rabbinic work and theology. Students in this course must be at the level of Hebrew I or above.

(2 credits)

- **RAB 320 – Intermediate Talmud**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

This course will continue the study of the Talmud, its structure, and concepts. Through oral and written work, students will advance in their ability to decode the dialectic of the talmudic discourse. We will study Tractate *Megillah*. *Havruta* session is required of all students. Prerequisite: The two trimesters of Introduction to Talmud.

(2 credit)

- **RAB 510 – Advanced Talmud**

Rabbi Matthew Goldstone

This course will hone students' abilities to critically read, parse, and understand Talmudic material that is relevant for understanding contemporary Judaism. This semester will focus on *sugyot* related to kashrut, which will provide students with a historical and literary understanding of the underpinnings of contemporary kashrut observances. Prerequisite: At least three trimesters of Talmud.

(2 credits)

- **SPI 362 – Life After Death**

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)

- **SPI 400 - Contemporary Midrash**

Rabbi Jill Hammer

In this course, we will explore contemporary poems and stories on biblical characters in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish, and discuss how the modern era has brought new forms of Midrash. We'll consider the biblical texts and rabbinic legends that have informed modern authors, and interpret the messages these new writings convey. We'll end the course by creating and sharing our own modern midrashim. This course can count as the Midrash II requirement.

(2 credits)