

## Course Descriptions Spring 2021

- **BIB 463 Reparations in the Bible and Rabbinic Law and Lore**

Rabbi Aryeh Bernstein

Since the official end of American slavery, there have been calls for reparations to descendants of enslaved people. In recent years, that case has amplified in public discourse as a central issue of social and racial justice, especially since Ta-Nehisi Coates's magisterial 2014 article, "The Case for Reparations". In this course, we will study abundant Torah sources, Biblical, Rabbinic, liturgical, aggadic, and halakhic, which explore the place of reparations in the mythic Jewish story of liberation from slavery; consider halakhic models for reparations in practice; and consider thorny questions in reparations debates, such as liability of one generation for the sins of its ancestors and how to distribute reparations fairly when the exploitation has been societal, and not individual. Class discussion will build on text preparation in advance of class. Texts will be available in translation for students at beginning stages of textual experience; preparation in the original is preferred and encouraged for students for whom that is appropriate. Students will submit a final project at the end of the trimester. This course can count as a Bible elective.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 131/230 Musical Skills**

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. Prerequisite: Musical Skills I or the equivalent.

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

- **CAN 366 Peace Studies: Character, Conflict and Community Leadership**

Hon. Rabbi David Markus

"It's alright for a *shul* to be a business – so long as you know what business you're really in." This cute aphorism begs a serious question: what's the real business of Jewish spiritual professionals? How can we wisely leverage character traits (flaws), moral leadership (failures), and peacemaking (conflicts) to nourish vibrant Jewish institutions? Blending traditional texts, socio-political literature and real-life case studies, this course will explore spiritual models of authority and legitimacy, *middot* (character traits) in spiritual leadership, Jewish pastoral and psycho-spiritual dynamics of conflict, and change agency in spiritual systems. Students will expand their community governance toolkits while accelerating their personal formation as spiritual leaders. This course counts as one of the Peace Studies requirements for cantorial students, and can also fulfill a spirituality elective.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 441 Advanced Nusah**

Cantors Sol Zim and Lisa Klinger-Kantor

An in depth extensive study of the vast *Misinai* tunes that make up the Yom Kippur 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)

- **CAN 561 Music of the Life Cycle**

Cantor Sol Zim

The course will address all occasions in the congregational calendar during which the cantor is officiating and music plays an important part, including life cycle events, and more.

(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 460 Intermediate Codes**

Dr. Matthew 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 Shabbat and Holidays with secondary readings that offer more diverse perspectives for modern forms of observance and celebration. Prerequisite: two trimesters of Introduction to Codes.

(2 credits)

- **HEB 251 Hebrew IB**

Ilana Davidov

This course will bring students to Chapter 8-9 of the second volume of *Hebrew from Scratch* (עברית מן ההתחלה ב'). The focus of the course is on reading comprehension of adapted informative and narrative texts in Modern Hebrew, with an emphasis on vocabulary development and dictionary look-up skills. The grammatical component of the course mostly follows the textbook. It includes Pi'el, Hitpa'el in all tenses, passive verbs in Pa'al, and more prepositions. Written and oral assignments will enhance communicative skills while improving absorption and integration of vocabulary and grammar. Prerequisite: Hebrew IA or the equivalent.

(4 credits)

- **HEB 400 Hebrew IIIA**

Ilana Davidov

The purpose of this course is to transition students from intermediate to advanced 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, presentations and listening practice, and via reading and writing assignments. Prerequisite: Hebrew IIB or the equivalent.

(4 credits)

- **LIT 274 Healing Services**

Rabbi Marcelo Bronstein

In this course students will learn to create and lead healing services for a variety of settings including sickness, divorce, miscarriage, cancer, infertility, abuse, and more. Care will be taken to pay attention to the planning of the services, the dynamics involved, and the role of

technology. The course will be run as a workshop where students can gain practical experience in this important area. This course can count toward the Tefillah and Seminar requirement.

(1 credit)

- **LIT 307 Festival Liturgy**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

A study of the liturgy of *Pesah*, *Shavuot*, and *Sukkot* from biblical origins to the present era.

Features: variations in the basic liturgy, especially in the *Amidot*; the development of *Hallel* customs; the form, function and texts of principal *piyyutim*, e.g., *Hoshanot* and *Akdanut*; *Yizkor*.

These will be studied from historical, literary, and theological perspectives. Prerequisite:

Introduction to Liturgy.

(2 credits)

- **MEC 130 Mechina**

Yifat Avner

This course is a continuation of Mechina Hebrew taught in the fall. . This course will build upon the foundational grammar covered in the 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 460 Comparative Religion: What Can the West Learn From the East?**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course offers a comparative study of eastern religions, revolving around the themes of tolerance, mindfulness, and the cultivation of humanness. Western societies are frequently identified as “argument culture” (Deborah Tannen), namely, in order to achieve anything in the public sphere, we need to accomplish it as a battle between two conflicting sides (e.g., the war on drugs, the battle of the sexes, political turf combat). Furthermore, this exclusionary, confrontational approach is often viewed as stemming from underlying monotheistic patterns of thought, which do not allow the coexistence of competing deities. In contrast, eastern cultures—in part, as they are rooted in polytheistic thought-patterns—are commonly deemed to be, by their very nature, pluralistic and peaceful. In this course, we will examine some of the major faith traditions in the East (e.g., Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Sufism) as mirrors to reflect on basic categories of “argument culture.” We will also consider the cogency

of the East-West divide and its limits. The topics we will cover include: the sense of the holy, concepts of truth, openness to other opinions, reality of evil and death, and cultivation of the ideal self. No prior knowledge of eastern religions or cultures is required. This course can be used as a general elective or as a Spirituality elective.

(2 credits)

- **PHI 515 Sefer Yetzirah**

Rabbi Jill Hammer

Sefer Yetzirah is one of the earliest works of Jewish mysticism. This brief and cryptic ancient book imagines letters as the building blocks of the universe, introduces us to the sefirot or divine realms, and focuses our attention on the components of space, time, and soul. Its goal is to allow adepts to contemplate, and even partake in, the Divine creative process interwoven with the details of the physical universe.

We will be reading the work in its entirety, plus secondary literature, to understand the meaning of Sefer Yetzirah and its potential role in contemporary Jewish belief and contemplative practice. We will also be exploring the book's meditative approach through our own exploration of its methods.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 003 Core Concepts III**

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 four trimesters of the seminars given in the sequence, but they need not be taken in order. Core Concepts III begins with the term *ahavah*. No tuition is charged for this course.

(No credit)

- **PRO 312 Homiletics**

Rabbi Scott Glass

Whether at worship services, life cycle events, interfaith gatherings, congregational meetings or

civic occasions, preaching and public speaking are ongoing responsibilities and challenges. For hundreds of years, Jewish leaders have used their words to influence their communities' actions. In this course, we will discuss sources, techniques, obstacles, and the opportunities that community leaders enjoy as they pursue this time-honored practice.

(1 credit)

- **PRO 341 Life Cycle I**

Rabbi Jeffrey Segelman

In this course, we will explore the Jewish perspective of life from birth until marriage. Our focus will be on three particular ideas.

One: Understanding the traditional ideas, ceremonies and rituals associated with these stages of life.

Two: Understanding the very practical and professional manner in which rabbis and cantors officiate at these ceremonies and rituals.

Three: Considering the ways in which we may innovate these ceremonies and create new ones for special life moments not ritualized by tradition.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 422 Entrepreneurship**

Rabbi Elan Babchuck

This cross-seminary course is for rabbinical & cantorial students who are preparing to take leadership roles in the rapidly changing landscape of Jewish life. The project-based course pulls from design thinking, innovation, social entrepreneurship, and change making leadership.

Students will learn how to pilot a project idea under the guidance of course facilitators, and upon course completion will have an opportunity to apply for funding if they choose to launch these projects. This course counts toward the Entrepreneurship requirement. Please look at the accompanying flyer for more information. There are two sections of this course:

Wednesdays 7:00 – 9:00 and Thursdays 4:00 – 6:00. This course begins on January 27<sup>th</sup> and runs on a somewhat different calendar.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 431 Torah Meets Tech**

Rabbi David Paskin

Like in 70CE when Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai took the bold step to re-envision Judaism in light of the destruction of the holy Temple, we today, face another moment in history, which

demands a re-focusing on how we connect with, learn with, pray with, mourn with and celebrate with our communities. Together we will explore some of the BIG IDEAS around using technology to enrich our worship and teaching and discover some of great TOOLS for great TORAH.

Learners will leave our class with a working knowledge of:

- Digital meeting software (Zoom, Meet, Teams)
- Streaming software and Virtual Cameras (Prezi Video, Mmhmm, Manycam, Ecamm Live, OBS)
- Collaborative Software (Google Apps including: Docs, Sheets, Drawings, Slides, Forms; Mentimeter)
- Educational Software (Wordwall)
- Creative Tools (Canva, Animaker, viewpure.com, remove.bg)
- Hebrew Tools (Nakdan, Sefaria - websites, divrei torah and trope)
- Website Tools (Weebly, Wix, Google Sites)
- Music Tools (Upbeat)
- Hardware (Computers, cameras, lights, greenscreen)

This course will count toward the Education requirement.

(1 credit)

- **PRO 470 Chaplaincy**

Rabbi Beth Naditch

Taught by a CPE Educator who is also a professional chaplain, this course will introduce students to the art and skills of spiritual care, through a Jewish lens. Through didactic material, experiential exercises, reading, and group reflection, students will learn several frameworks of spiritual assessment. Participants in this course will begin to understand how to help support another person in areas of spiritual distress, by helping that person identify and draw on their own spiritual resources. Together, we will engage in personal and theological reflection through text study, reflection on personal experience, and clinical theological tools. Students will be required to do 27 hours of fieldwork as a part of this course. (Accommodations will be made to find appropriate fieldwork during the pandemic.) This course will meet six times over the course of the trimester, dates to be announced.

(1 credit)

- **PRO 700 FWSS**

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 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 that 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.

Students in this course must be at the level of Hebrew I or above

(2 credits)

- **RAB 230 Introduction to Talmud**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

Students will acquire the skills to identify the component parts of the talmudic *sugya* and the relationships between them. This 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 *stam* (anonymous) passages. Students will also learn the basics of talmudic terminology as well as basic Aramaic 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. The *Havruta* session is required of all students. Prerequisite: Introduction to Mishnah.

(2 credits)

- **RAB 330 Intermediate Talmud**

Dr. Matt Goldstone

This course will hone students' abilities to critically read, parse, and understand Talmudic material that is relevant for understanding Judaism. This trimester will focus on material from Seder Nashim (the part of the Talmud that deals with laws related to marriage, divorce, etc.), specifically an extended series of *sugyot* in Tractate Kiddushin (29a-36a). The sources covered in this course will hopefully complement similar rabbinic material covered in other courses and

provide students with a broad view of issues related to marital and interpersonal relationships in the Talmud. This course will also focus on thinking about and teaching traditional texts that are difficult insofar as they are inconsistent with contemporary values and modes of thinking. Prerequisite: two trimesters of Introduction to Talmud. Havruta preparation is required of all students.

(2 credits)

- **SPI 385 Writing the Sacred, Writing Ourselves: Harnessing Midrashic Process for Spiritual Leadership (Sacred Arts Program)**

Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

When we engage with sacred text through writing, we can reach a deeper understanding of the text *and* a deeper understanding of our own life of the spirit. In this course we'll delve into Torah, *Nevi'im*, Psalms, Liturgy, and Lifecycles. We'll engage with these texts creatively through writing midrash, prophetic text, poetry, and prayer. We'll explore how we might use our creative/midrashic responses in spiritual service, and how we can skillfully discern when and how a new piece of creative Jewish text should be used. At the end of this course, students will have strengthened their text study skills and deepened their awareness of the psycho-emotional dynamics of this kind of textual encounter, and will have a set of literary / creative tools for text study and for their own journeys of clergy service. This course fulfills the Sacred Arts requirement.

(2 credits)