

Course Descriptions

Summer 2021

- **BIB 101 Introduction to Bible**

Dr. Ora Horn Prouser

This course will introduce the student to modern critical studies of the Bible. Selected texts of the Bible will be studied in depth while broader thematic issues will be surveyed. Various methodologies used by biblical scholars will be introduced to the students. The many meanings of the text and the centrality of the Bible in the Jewish world will be emphasized through careful study. This course is a prerequisite for all Bible study at AJR. Students in this course must be at the level of Hebrew IA or above.

(2 credits)

- **BIB 321 Erotica, Melancholia and Parodia: A Close Look at Shir Hashirim, Eikhah and Esther**

Dr. Howard Markose

If asked what literary modes of expression might be least suited for inclusion into the Hebrew Bible (considered by many to be the holiest writing of all time), one might offer parody, erotica and mourning as three of those quite questionable thematic genres. And yet, Esther, Song of Songs, and Lamentations in the Books of Writings seem to use these modes to a significant extent. In this course, we will study these three literary masterpieces, examining their content as well as the language and linguistic nuances present in each book. We will explore their historical perspectives along with the possible rationale for the insertion of these three scrolls into the Tanach. Students will come to understand the basic structure of each of these books, the noteworthy language and literary structure, as well as the profound message which each of the authors endeavored to impart to their readers/listeners. Prerequisite: In order to count this class as a biblical text class, students must have taken Introduction to Bible. Otherwise, they may count this class as an elective. Students in this course must be at the level of Hebrew IA or above.

(2 credits)

- **BIB 445 The Adventures of Monotheism: The Varieties of Religious Experience in Jewish Tradition**

Dr. Job Jindo

No Jews would deny the centrality of monotheism—the belief in one God YHWH—in their religion. And yet, when it comes to its *content*, their opinions are so diverse that you may begin to wonder if people next to you in the synagogue are actually praying to the same God. This course explores the biblical idea of monotheism and how it has served as a ground for varieties of religious experience in Jewish tradition. We will divide the history of Judaism and its interpretative tradition into four phases—biblical, rabbinic, medieval, and modern—and set forth four corresponding models for addressing the divine reality. The diversity of these models will help students develop an informed perspective on the fascinating story of this ever-evolving notion—within Judaism and beyond—and tools so vital for serving as clergy in pluralistic settings. Prerequisite: In order to count this class as a biblical text class, students must have taken Introduction to Bible. Otherwise, they

may count this class as an elective. Students in this course must be at the level of Hebrew IA or above.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 308 Introduction to Cantillation**

Cantor Robin Joseph

This course will be an in-depth study of Eastern European cantillation for Torah and Haftarah. 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 two tropes. This course is open to both rabbinical and cantorial students.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 390 Maqam, Liturgy, and Jewish Musical Identities**

Dr. Samuel Torjman-Thomas

This course explores maqam for the purposes of better understanding maqam-based music making in the Near East. Particular foci for the course include theoretical foundations of maqam, practical application of maqam, and the use of maqam in synagogue practice from the region.

(2 credits)

- **HAL 101 Introduction to Halakhah**

Dr. Matthew Goldstone

Designed for those with no background in *halakhab* (Jewish law), this course offers a brief overview of the history of *halakhab*, the major sources of *halakhab*, and how to search for answers within the corpus of *halakhab*. We will dedicate time to foundational discussions about the nature and relevance of *halakhab* for all Jewish communities and we will dive into *halakbot* related to prayer on both in-depth (*iyyun*) and broad (*bekiut*) levels. Prerequisite: HEB 251 (1B).

(2 credits)

- **HAL 402 Intro Codes II**

Rabbi David Almog

Continuation of Introduction to Codes I which was taught in the spring. Open to those who took that course or the equivalent.

(2 credits)

- **HEB 320 Biblical Hebrew**

Rabbi Peg Kershenbaum

This course is 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 Biblical, Rabbinic and Modern Hebrew) Objectives: by the end of this course, you will be able to identify all parts of speech including all the major *binyanim* in all their forms as they occur in prose passages of the Tanakh. You will be able to use BDB efficiently and accurately to find unfamiliar vocabulary by applying information learned about the forms and structures of different parts of speech. You will learn to use a biblical concordance and Sefaria.com to produce a word study and study sheet. You will be able to translate connected biblical prose passages accurately with the help of BDB and give analyses of specified words and constructions. You will be able to use major conjunctive and disjunctive cantillation signs

to aid in correct phrasing of syntactic units of the texts examined. And, if all goes according to plan, you'll even enjoy the process! Students in this course must be at the level of Hebrew IA or above.
(2 credits)

- **HEB 350 Hebrew IIA**

Ms. Ilana Davidov

This course will bring students to Chapter 12-13 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 the future tense of *Hif'il*, *Binyan Nif'al*, noun declension, prepositions, and concessive clauses. Written and oral assignments will enhance communicative skills while improving absorption and integration of vocabulary and grammar. Prerequisite: Hebrew IB or the equivalent.

(4 credits)

- **HEB 401 Hebrew IIIB**

Ms. Yifat Avner

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)

- **HEB 500 Hebrew Phonetics and Morphology for Reading Accuracy**

Ms. Ilana Davidov

This course will emphasize reading fluency and accuracy of Hebrew texts both vocalized and unvocalized. Students will practice reading selections from the Tanakh, from the Siddur and Mahzor and from modern writings. Some of the tools include the analysis of phonetic and phonology, morphology, syntax elements, the *binyanim* and their meaning, and other grammatical factors. Prerequisite: Hebrew IIB or the equivalent.

(1 credit)

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

Mr. 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. Great Ideas and Debates of Jewish History II may be taken before Great Ideas and Debates of Jewish History I.

(2 credits)

- **LIT 620 Liturgy of Yamim Noraim**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

In this course, participants will learn to:

- Identify the structure of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services.
- Articulate the historical, literary, and theological meaning of central prayers of the High Holidays.
- Articulate the meaning of the High Holiday prayers not merely as texts on a page, but also as passages experienced in actual worship.
- Discuss the ways in which the musical modes of selected prayers amplify or detract from the theological meaning of those prayers. Prerequisite: Introduction to Liturgy

(2 credits)

- **MEC 133 Mechina**

Ms. Yifat Avner

This course is a continuation of Mechina Hebrew taught in the spring. 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 480 Pluralism**

Dr. Len Levin

What is pluralism? What are its core value commitments, and how does it differ from relativism? In this class we will endeavor to clarify our core convictions regarding truth and pluralism; to determine to what extent pluralism is an authentic Jewish value; to extend and deepen our knowledge base concerning pluralism in general and the discussion over pluralism within classical and modern Judaism; to cultivate the virtues of pluralism in dealing with each other, with Jews of persuasions different from our own, and with fellow human beings of different faith communities or no faith community. We will use *Studies in Judaism and Pluralism: Honoring the 60th Anniversary of the Academy for Jewish Religion* as a study guide.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 160 Voice for Rabbis**

Cantor Lisa Klinger-Kantor

The focus of this class will be concentrated on teaching Rabbinical students how to use their voices correctly and applying that to prayer services. We will explore how simple tools can make one feel empowered to sing with confidence and joy.

(1 credit)

- **PRO 329 Lifelong Education: Realities, Possibilities, Goals**

Ms. Amy Ripps

This course will explore the world of Lifelong Education. From the youngest of children to the oldest adults, Jews continually learn. But learn ...what? How does one decide priorities, set goals, and create a vision that meets the needs of a community? And learn ... how? There will be an exploration of a variety of models, with a focus on both the benefits and drawbacks. The course includes the issue of relationships among professionals, lay partners and “clients” in the realm of

lifelong education. The course is designed for those who will be developing, collaborating, or supporting lifelong education.
(2credits)

- **PRO 342 Life Cycle II**

Rabbi Jeffrey Segelman

This course will focus on life cycle issues and rituals beginning after the marriage ceremony and continuing through death and mourning. Topics will include: innovative rituals addressing transitions in individual adult life, milestones in marriage and parenting, and concerns regarding the end of a marriage and divorce. Also included will be the topic of *bikkur holim* and issues of caregiving to elderly parents, end of life concerns, and a practical and philosophical study of the laws of death and mourning. Students in this course will be able to: create innovative rituals surrounding adult life cycle events, articulate issues and guide families with regard to end of life decisions, explain and facilitate the process and ritual of the Jewish divorce. Students will also learn how to officiate at funerals, burials, and other rituals associated with Jewish practices of death and mourning.
(2 credits)

- **PRO 362 Post Pandemic: Re-entering the Old-New Land**

Cantor Michael Kasper

The last year has been like no other our generation has known. From anxiety to scarcity, fear to terror, life to death, fatigue to protest, and trepidation to hope many of us have experienced a range of emotions we were unprepared for; each of us has been touched in ways we are yet to fully process. Every community has undergone structural change that has called on its spiritual leaders to examine and reexamine their leadership goals, methods, and styles. Clergy has had to face limitations in the amount and ways we offer help, comfort, and contact. None if this comes without real consequence, psychological and emotional consequence, both for congregants, communities, and ourselves. Life will get back to normal but what will normal look like? This course aims to examine several aspects of re-entry following our global trauma. How easy will it be to slip back into old routines? Is it permissible to remain cautious when everyone around you is ready to dive back in? If battling Covid-19 gave you a sense of purpose will you be allowed to mourn the loss of that special feeling once the battle is over? How do we lead our communities into a safe and fulfilling spiritual future? Over the course of six weeks we will examine all these feelings, and more, with experts in the field. This class will run from June 23 – July 28.
(1 credit)

- **PRO 700 Fieldwork Support Seminar**

Rabbi Scott Glass

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 trimester by Cantor Michael Kasper. Tuition is charged but no academic course credit is given for this seminar.
(No credit)

- **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 Introduction to Talmud or the equivalent.
(2 credits)

- **RAB 430 Advanced Talmud**

Dr. 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 Shabbat practices and prohibitions, which will provide students with a historical and literary understanding of the underpinnings of contemporary Shabbat observances. Prerequisite: Three trimesters of Talmud.
(2 credits)

- **SPI 375 *The Virtual and the Real: "Doing Jewish" Digitally in the 21st Century***

Rabbis Rachel Barenblat and David Markus

Rapid sociological and technological (r)evolutions mean that "doing Jewish" digitally is probably here to stay in some form. What spiritual (r)evolutions should follow suit, and how can spiritual leaders most skillfully nourish and respond to them? Topics will include ritual theory and innovation in digital contexts, emerging *halakhot* and *minbagim* of digital community, visuality's gifts and challenges in digital spaces, best practices for psycho-spiritual depth in digital and hybrid contexts, and specific applications for teaching, Shabbat, *haggim*, conversion, and lifecycle events. Participants will be asked to contribute actively, creatively and skillfully to this rapidly developing new frontier of Jewish spiritual and community life. This course will run from May 12 – June 23.
(1 credit)

