



## Course Descriptions

Fall 2016

□ **BIB 118 Parashat Hashavua** *Rabbi Jeffrey Segelman*

In this class we will explore the study of the weekly Torah portion. So as to assure that we learn different types of *parshiyot* (balancing narrative and legal content,) the class will not follow the calendar cycle, but rather, will select *parshiyot* from all five books of the Torah.

At each session, the presentation and discussion will focus on three aspects of *parashah* learning: comparing and contrasting the commentaries of various congregational *humashim*, drawing material for personal spiritual growth, and professional application of the material (including *divrei Torah*, *B'nei Mitzvah drashot*, eulogies, etc.)

Each student will be expected to prepare the assigned *parashah* with some commentaries. A final paper which will present an analysis of two *parshiyot* through the three aspects (mentioned above) will be required. (2 credits)

□ **BIB 347 Proclaim Liberty:**

**The Impact of the Hebrew Bible on the American Founding Fathers** *Rabbi Joseph Prouser*

This course will examine the profound influence that the Hebrew Bible and the biblical concept of covenant had on the first generation of American citizens, leaders, and presidents. We will examine the personal writings of the founding generation (Jefferson, Madison, Paine, etc.), as well as the significant founding documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, etc.), tracing their literary and philosophical roots to their Biblical sources. The course will explore why the Hebrew Bible provided such fertile resources for the founding fathers, and how that influence paved the way for a nation so welcoming and productive for Jews. (2 credits)

□ **BIB 405 Book of Isaiah** *Dr. Job Jindo*

This course will be a critical reading of the book of Isaiah. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to articulate: (1) the structure, purposes, and theological outlook of Isaiah; (2) the phenomenology of biblical prophecy; and (3) three examples where the book of Isaiah is a source for understanding the human condition in our own day. Special attention will be paid to literary and religious rather than historical and editorial issues. The subjects we will explore include: “justice and

holiness,” “rite and right,” “society and morality,” “election and creation,” “prophecy and poetry,” “judgment and the heavenly court,” “God’s transcendence and exclusivity,” “political prophecies,” “Jerusalem as the axis mundi,” “pride as a moral cancer,” “divine pathos and prophetic compassion,” “the suffering servant,” “revelation, tradition, and prophetic inspiration,” “dogmatism and spiritual renewal,” “the conversion of the gentiles,” and “messianism and universal monotheism.”

□ **CAN 317 Cantillation Esther and HHD** *Cantor Robin Joseph*

A continuation of the study of cantillation focusing on Esther and the High Holy Days.  
Prerequisite: CAN 308 (1 credit)

□ **CAN 481 Contemporary Repertoire** *Cantor Ellen Dreskin*

This course will include a variety of choices and approaches to contemporary musical literature (with some classics) of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy. The music will be illustrated in class by the instructor and students. The repertoire covered will be for solo cantor; cantor and/or volunteer, youth, or professional choir and communal singing, and will be accompanied by techniques for elevation, innovation, education, and contextualization within the more Liberal High Holy Day worship experience. (1 credit)

□ **HAL 480 Responsa** *Rabbi Joseph Prouser*

In this course we will conduct a close reading of rabbinic responsa from a variety of historic periods, tracing the responsa literature from its earliest origins to its 21st century expression. Selected responsa will cover a range of topics and areas of Jewish life. Contemporary responsa studied will reflect a wide spectrum of perspectives and denominational origins.  
Prerequisite: 4 credits in Talmud and 2 credits in Codes (2 credits)

□ **HEB 251 Hebrew IB** *Ilana Davidov*

This course continues with the second volume of *Hebrew from Scratch (Ivrit min HaHatchala Bet)*. Students will expand their vocabulary and advance their aural-oral skills. In grammar, the study of the future tense and major prepositions begun in the previous semester will be concluded, and new topics in syntax and the verb system will be introduced. (4 credits)

□ **HIS 310 History of Antiquities – DISTANCE LEARNING** *Rabbi Michael Pitkowsky*

The Jews of late antiquity provide an excellent case study of a community seeking to preserve its existence and its distinctive ways of life in times of rapid and bewildering change. This course will deal with the life and history of the Jewish people, and the development of the Jewish religion, over the thousand-year period of the return from Babylonian Exile to the rise of Islam. We shall begin with the biblical heritage of ancient Israel, and follow the continuing evolution of that heritage in the turbulent world of the Greeks and the Romans. The course will end with the “triumph” of Christianity on the “outside” of Jewish life and the consolidation of rabbinic leadership on the “inside.” We will also spend considerable time in detailed study of important primary documents. The goals of the course include to (1) master the basic chronology of ancient Jewish history, (2) learn the range of sources (literary, archeological, etc.) where this information can be found, and (3) improve your skills at analyzing primary and secondary historical sources. (2 credits)

□ **HIS 315 Medieval History** *Dr. Dana Fishkin*

In this course, we will examine the Jewish presence in the medieval world. As a religious minority within different host populations, the Jewish community flourished or suffered as a result of specific societal conditions. Using primary and secondary sources, we will study Jewish life as described by its medieval practitioners. The scholarly studies will expose students to academic perspectives on the medieval Jewish experience. (2 credits)

□ **LIT 305 Shabbat Liturgy** *Rabbi Jeff Hoffman*

The development of Shabbat liturgy from the time of the *Mishnah* through the contemporary period. A study of the development of: the *Amidah* for all four Shabbat worship services, the *piyyutim* of *Shaharit* such as *El Adon*, etc.; the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service and the influence of the mystical tradition. Each prayer will be studied using historical sources and literary analysis. The final step in studying each prayer is to ask: Given this prayer's history and literary meaning, how might a modern worshiper relate to its theology? Prerequisite: Introduction to Liturgy (2 credits)

□ **MEC 130 Mechina Hebrew**

*Mechina Hebrew* 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 is given for this class.

□ **PHI 311 Medieval Philosophy** *Dr. Len Levin*

The classics of medieval Jewish philosophy will be considered as efforts in the ongoing project to articulate a coherent Jewish world-outlook. How did they seek to integrate the value-orientation of the Bible with the best (Greek) "science" of their age? How might their attempts at integration serve as models for us? Texts to be studied will include: Bible, Plato, Aristotle, Philo, Saadia, Halevi, and Maimonides (with intensive attention devoted to the *Guide for the Perplexed*). (2.0 credits)

□ **PHI 347 Ethics of Technology** *Rabbi Geoff Mitelman*

What happens to "*lashon hara*" in our world of instant and global communication? What does prayer look like when we use e-readers and PowerPoint? How will big data change the meaning of privacy and modesty? In this course "Ethics of Technology" we will explore how technology is impacting *halakhab*, prayer, Shabbat and even Jewish values. (2 credits)

□ **PHI 370 Judaism and the Earth** *Rabbi Jill Hammer*

This course will survey biblical, rabbinic, and medieval texts on the relationship between Jews and the earth. We'll also explore modern writers' understandings of Jewish responsibility toward nature, including modern theory, *halakhab*, and liturgy and various approaches toward eco-Judaism. Our goal will be to develop our own theology and practice in relationship to the earth. This course fulfills

the Spirituality requirement. (2 credits)

☐ **PHI 460 Comparative Religion** *Rabbi Jill Hammer*

This course will survey the beliefs, practices, core texts, and current circumstances of a variety of world religious traditions, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and indigenous traditions, in order to consider how Jews should relate to a variety of theologies and peoples in a changing and varied world. This course can fulfill the Ethics or the Spirituality requirements. (2 credits)

☐ **PRO 215 Counseling I** *Arlene Duker*

This course is an introduction to the practice of pastoral counseling, offering both the philosophical / religious / psychological underpinnings and developing actual practical skills. Emphasis is on acquiring the ability to actively listen and assess situations, and then respond appropriately, knowing when to offer various kinds of help, and when to recommend appropriate referrals. Specific issues in this course involve counseling at life cycle events, pre-marital meetings, helping people cope with illness, losses and grief/bereavement, as well as crisis situations and the stresses of life. We explore ways to use Jewish texts, song, prayer and ritual for healing. Classes often have an experiential component. (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 point is given for this seminar. (No credit)

☐ **RAB 100 Introduction to Mishnah** *Rabbi David Almog*

An introduction to the study of Mishnah. The students will be introduced to basic rabbinical concepts that underlie the Mishnah. The structure of the Mishnah and its subject matter will be studied. Selections will be chosen to illustrate the variety of literary styles and some distinctive features of Rabbinic Hebrew that are found in the Mishnah. The course will also include a brief introduction to the scholarly issues regarding the development and redaction of the Mishnah. (2 credits)

☐ **RAB 330 Intermediate Talmud** *Rabbi Michael Pitkowsky*

This course will continue the study of the Talmud, its structure, and concepts. Tractate to be Announced. Havruta session is required of all students. Prerequisite: 4 credits in Talmud (2 credits)

☐ **RAB 428 The Rabbis on Destruction: The End of a Beginning** *Dr. Fran Snyder*

”This is a midrash course using primarily but not exclusively rabbinic texts on the Roman siege of

Jerusalem and the subsequent end of civic and religious life. The texts show the rabbinic imagination as able to invest in loss and to grow a future in hard soil. We will examine the peculiar turn of rabbinic thinking as expressed in midrash whereby enormous political loss is explained without resorting to historical default –that is, “The Romans came and did this to us!” Rather, the rabbi-authors, like the prophets before them, blame Israel’s sinfulness. This stance does not preclude expressions of rage at Rome’s might and desire for revenge; nor does it prevent the rabbis from creating a destruction literature replete with irony, parody, and wild imaginative tales. We will consider the use of female characters, especially daughters, and the feminization of Israel. The course will conclude with discussion of the vast gulf between the rabbis on the loss of Jerusalem and the Temple and the rabbis and contemporary thinkers on the loss of European Jewry during WWII. This course fulfills the Midrash requirement. (2 credits)