



## Course Descriptions

Spring 2017

- **BIB 140 Introduction to Parshanut** *Dr. Job Jindo*

This course is an introduction to medieval Jewish biblical exegesis. Selections, mostly from the Torah, will be examined to compare and contrast opinions of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Ramban and other commentators. By the conclusion of the course, each student will demonstrate competence in information literacy relevant to the topics covered. Students 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) an appreciation for 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*). (2 credits)

- **BIB 461 Divine Disability: Using Disability Studies to Read God and the Bible**

*Dr. Ora Horn Prouser*

Analyzing biblical characters as individuals with disabilities has contributed a great deal to our reading of the Bible and to our understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusiveness in the Jewish world. This becomes even more significant when we consider what it means to think about God as disabled. Using the tools of disability studies we will read biblical texts and think about the ramifications of this study for our understanding of God, the Bible, and of Jewish life. This class will reflect Dr. Horn Prouser's current area of research, and will be conducted as a seminar in which we will share and expand upon this work. (2 credits)

- **CAN 108 Choir** *Stanley Dorn*

An exploration of the rich and varied range of Jewish choral music, from centuries-old to contemporary. This class will function as a workshop: students will examine the connection between text and music, join together in song, and learn helpful techniques for rehearsing choirs. (1 credit)

- **CAN 308 Cantillation – Torah and Haftarah** *Cantor Robin Joseph*

A rigorous introduction to East European cantillation for the Torah and Prophets. A study of the detailed functions of the *ta'amim* and the way in which they explicate the structure of the text. The literature on Jewish cantillation will be discussed. This course is also open to rabbinical students seeking rigorous training in cantillation. (1 credit)

- **CAN 562 Leadership of Special Occasion and Holiday Events** *Cantor Sol Zim*  
Learn how to effectively lead Holiday celebrations including *Tu B'shvat seder*, *Pesach seder*, *Yom Haatzmaut* celebration, *Yom Hazikaron* and *Yom Hasboah* commemorations and more. This course is open to both rabbinical and cantorial students. It counts as the Diverse Musical Traditions requirement for cantorial students and the Jewish Music for Rabbis requirement for rabbinical students. (1 credit)
- **CAN 446 Advanced Nusah Yammim Noraim I** *Cantors Sol Zim and Lisa Klinger-Kantor*  
A study of the *nusah* and cantorial pieces for *Yammim Noraim* focusing on traditional melodies, prayer modes, and *Misinai* tunes. *Targil* section required. (4 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)
- **HEB 250 Hebrew IA** *Ilana Davidov*  
This course is a continuation of *Mechina*. Using the second volume of *Hebrew from Scratch (Ivrit min HaHatchala Bet)*, students will read and listen to texts of different genres. 500 additional words will be presented and practiced. Grammatical topics will include possession sentences in all tenses; causal, temporal and conditional clauses; the future tense of all active *binyanim* and the declension of various prepositions. Prerequisite: Completion of *Mechina* or passing of AJR Hebrew entrance exam. (4 credits)
- **HEB 320 Biblical Grammar** *Rabbi Peg Kershenbaum*  
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. (2 credits)
- **HEB 350 Hebrew IIA** *Ilana Davidov*  
Students will almost finish *Hebrew from Scratch (Ivrit min HaHatchala Bet)*. 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: two semesters of Hebrew I. (4 credits)
- **HEB 414 Advanced Hebrew** *Ilana Davidov*  
Building upon what has been learned from *Hebrew from Scratch (Ivrit min HaHatchala Aleph & Bet)*, this elective course will provide further practice in reading advanced material and writing about independent readings. Students will work on improving their oral and aural skills by watching Israeli videos and making oral presentations in class. Prerequisite: two semesters of Hebrew II. (2 credits)
- **LIT 101 Introduction to Liturgy** *Rabbi Jeff Hoffman*  
Through an analysis of the weekday *siddur* and selected rabbinic and medieval primary sources, students will become familiar with the major sections of the traditional weekday liturgy, their themes, structure, theology, and the various theories regarding their historical development.

Students will develop familiarity and facility with the language of the weekday *siddur* and be exposed to some of the methodological issues in the study of Jewish liturgy, as well as some challenges and best practices in developing compelling and vibrant communal prayer experiences.  
(2 credits)

- **LIT 271 Tefillah and Seminar** *TBA*

A time for the AJR community to gather for prayer, study and shared reflection. Each week, two students will be responsible for preparing *tefillah*; a seminar to discuss the experience will follow.  
(1 credit)

- **LIT 620 Yammim Noraim Liturgy** *Rabbi Rob Scheinberg*

This course for both rabbinic and cantorial students features: *halakhic*, liturgical, historical, professional and spiritual material necessary to prepare for this season; the evolution of the season from biblical through modern periods; a survey of various contemporary *mabzorum*; discussions about major prayers and prayer-cycles within the High Holiday services. Prerequisite: Introduction to Liturgy (2 credits)

- **MEC 130/131 Mechina Hebrew and Jewish Studies** *TBA*

The Mechina Program is made up of two sections.

1. One 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 is given for this class.
2. The other part is a preparatory course for the Rabbinic and Cantorial Programs. The course includes a survey of Jewish history; introduction to the *Siddur* (prayer book) for weekdays, Sabbaths and festivals, with guided reading and analysis of selected Hebrew passages; introduction to classical Jewish literature, including Mishnah and Midrash; and orientation to Jewish liturgical observances and religious and cultural institutions. The two sections may be taken separately. No credit is given for this class.

- **PHI 301 Bioethics** *Rabbi Jill Hackell, MD*

Technological advancements in medicine have brought bio-ethical issues of increasing complexity. This course will examine issues pertinent to today's bio-ethical dialogue from a Jewish point of view, including issues such as organ donation, end-of-life issues, reproduction, genetic screening, illness prevention and immunization. How does the Jewish way of looking at these issues compare and contrast with the general societal discussion? What are the governing principles of bio-ethical argument in each of these? How are ancient Jewish sources reconciled with modern technology in guiding thinking about these issues? (1 credit)

- **PHI 368 Kaplan and Heschel: Face to Face** *Dr. Job Jindo*

This course explores a series of "debates" between two towering figures of modern American Judaism, Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881–1983) and Abraham J. Heschel (1907–1972). We will discuss their differing views on Judaism as paradigms for understanding the human condition, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, in the modern era. By the conclusion of the course, each student will demonstrate competence in information literacy relevant to the topics covered. By then, students will also be able to articulate: (1) the general theological outlook of each thinker; (2) the divergences and commonalities between them; and (3) three examples where a comparison between the two paradigms elucidates the challenges of pluralistic religious life in our own day. The subjects we will explore include: God and the world, immanence and transcendence, mysticism and rationalism, the problem of evil, revelation and scripture, tradition and freedom, faith and science, traditionalism and spiritual renewal, *Halakhab* and humanism, knowledge of God and selfless love, community and the Other, peoplehood and assimilation, self-fulfillment and self-transcendence, the reality of death,

Judaism and democracy, objectives of Jewish education in a free society, Israel and Diaspora, interfaith and inter-denominational dialogue, particularism and universalism. (2 credits)

- **PHI 480 Pluralism** *Rabbi Len Levin*

What is the significance or value of a pluralistic commitment? Is it basically a practical orientation, a relativistic stance, or does it entail acceptance of certain more fundamental affirmations? In this course we will examine some of the various conceptions of pluralism that have been argued “for and against” by social and religious thinkers. Readings will include traditional Judaic texts as well as contemporary writings, especially from within the Jewish community. In addition to grappling with the theory “promising or problematic” of pluralism, we will also give attention to issues involved in making pluralism work. This course will be taught as a distance learning class. (2 credits)

- **PRO 005 Core Concepts V** *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. The student is expected first to gain a basic acquaintance with these terms and then to 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 the student may grow from an appreciation of the tradition to active and creative participation 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 V begins with the term *’ot*. No credit is given for this course.

- **PRO 371 Contemporary Denominations** *TBA*

We will examine the history, ideology, mission and major institutions of the various streams in Jewish religious life in the US and beyond, and current issues and challenges facing each stream. (2 credits)

- **PRO 470 Chaplaincy** *Rabbi Rafael Goldstein*

Professional Spiritual Care provides rabbis and cantors with opportunities to perform unlimited *mitzvot* while providing for the spiritual needs of people living with illness, their loved ones, caregivers, and community. While this course will focus on the spiritual needs of people whose lives are threatened by illness, there will also be emphasis on the spiritual impact on the visitors, the people clustered around people who are ill, and others who have spiritual needs unrelated to physical illness. This work-study mini-course introduces you to the role of the Spiritual Health Professionals (chaplains) in a variety of settings, including clinical spiritual health care experience. Students may arrange their own placements for clinical time, with staff support. Medical clearance may be required by healthcare facilities: Most facilities’ Volunteer Departments will either provide the screenings for these clearances or give you a list of requirements. (1 credit)

- **PRO 560 Counseling II** *Arline Duker*

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 also learn how to appropriately use community resources and make good referrals. Prerequisite: Counseling I (2 credits)

- **PRO 700 FWSS TBA**

This seminar group focuses upon issues that arise in the course of rabbinical and cantorial work. Participation is required of all students whose work is counting as a required internship experience. Tuition is charged but no academic credit is given for this seminar.

- **RAB 230 Introduction to Talmud** *Rabbi Jeff Hoffman*

A study of the necessary skills in language, logic and text required to read a Talmudic text with the help of dictionaries and the Steinsaltz commentary. Covers basic Aramaic terms as well as Talmudic organic logic. Students expected to prepare and submit charts of Talmudic passages each week. Prerequisite: *Mishnah* and familiarity with basic *halakhic* terminology. The *Havruta* session is required of all students. (2 credits)

- **RAB 331 Intermediate Talmud** *Rabbi Michael Pitkowsky*

Continuation of Intermediate Talmud taught in the Fall semester. The *Havruta* session is required of all students. Prerequisite: 6 credits in Talmud. (2 credits)

- **RAB 350 Three Paths into the World of Halakhic Literature** *Rabbi Michael Pitkowsky*

The world of *halakhic* literature was created over a span of centuries in diverse geographic and social contexts, but there have been a number of individuals whose work was a turning point in this genre of Jewish literature. This class will examine the lives and work of three individuals: the Rambam (Moses Maimonides), Yosef Karo, and Moses Isserles, three rabbinic scholars whose work forever changed the world of *halakhic* literature. We will examine from multiple perspectives not only their literary output, but also who they were as individuals and their lasting influence. This course can fulfill the Critical Issues Halakha requirement, or be counted as a Rabbinics or general elective. (2 credits)

- **SPI 370 Architecture of Ritual** *Rabbi Jill Hammer*

This course allows rabbinical and cantorial students to consciously explore what ritual is, what their role is in creating and performing ritual, and how ritual can be effective in the lives of modern Jews. The course will cover ritual as a phenomenon (what it is, why it exists, how it is structured, what it does for us as individuals and communities) as well as specific ritual topics (coming of age, modern mid-life passages, etc.) and the function of clergy as ritual leaders. (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 will be taught as a distance learning class. (2 credits)