



Course Descriptions Fall 2018

- **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 I or above.

(2 credits)

- **BIB 421 Religion, Politics, and Leadership Failure in the Bible: Studies in the Book of Samuel**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course will be a critical reading of the book of Samuel, revolving around two axes: (1) religion and politics and (2) leadership and the human condition (or human fallibility). By the conclusion of this course, the student will be able to articulate: (1) the structure, purposes, and theological outlook of the book of Samuel; (2) biblical insight into the relationships among politics, religion, and leadership; and (3) three examples where the book of Samuel is a source for understanding the human condition in our own day. We will also explore existential issues embodied in the text that are relevant to contemporary concerns—such as “problems of power,” “leadership and accountability,” “family and loyalty,” “gender and sexuality,” “divine and human law,” “agency and responsibility,” “cultivation of mindfulness,” “transformation of self,” and “the Other.” This course fulfills the Leadership in the Bible rabbinical school requirement.

Prerequisite: In order to count this class as a biblical text class, students must have taken Introduction to Bible. Otherwise, student may count this class as an elective.

(2 credits)

- **BIB 440 Toward a Metaphysics of the Dead in Judaism and the Far East**

Dr. Job Jindo

The present age is an age of ‘life’—wherein life is conceived as the absolute value whereas death is generally perceived as defeat and loss. Because contemporary notions of happiness frequently hide the reality of death, when we face our own death or that of our loved ones, we so often find ourselves unprepared. This course will offer a comparative exploration of

the reality of death, the soul, and the transcendent in Judaism and the Far East. The questions we will explore include: Is there an optimal attitude toward the reality of death and the dead? How do we face, and accept, the passing of loved ones? This course may be counted as a Bible elective or a Spirituality elective.

Prerequisite: In order to count this class as a biblical text class, students must have taken Introduction to Bible. Otherwise, students may count this class as an elective.
(2 credits)

- **BIB 520 Psalms**

Rabbi Jeffrey Segelman

Psalms are an important tool for the clergy. In addition to the role they play in the liturgy, psalms also set the tone and the theological context of many life cycle events. No less important, the deep emotional expression of the psalms have moved the minds and the souls of Jews for millennia. They have been a source of comfort and strength and great spiritual aspiration. In this class, students will explore a wide variety of the psalms which find their way into the regular work of the clergy. We will learn with a focus on how to best understand and communicate the messages of the psalms to others. We will also have a deep concern for how the psalms enable our own spiritual and theological growth. This course can count as a Bible elective.

Prerequisite: In order to count this class as a biblical text class, students must have taken Introduction to Bible. Otherwise, students may count this class as an elective.
(2 credits)

- **CAN 260 Concert Planning**

Cantor Sol Zim

The need for quality synagogue and Jewish communal events is great but the expertise it takes to produce these evenings can be daunting. This course is designed to give clergy the tools necessary to plan, fundraise for, and execute high level programming. Taught by master concert organizer, Cantor Sol Zim, this course will offer both cantorial and rabbinic students alike an opportunity to learn the skills necessary to produce events that will enhance community and grow appreciation for the talents of their clergy.

(1 credit)

- **CAN 430 Advanced Nusah: Shalosh Regalim**

Cantors Sol Zim and Lisa Klinger-Kantor

This course provides an in depth extensive study of the vast components of motifs, various *nushaot*, prayer modes, and *Misina'i* motifs of the *Shalosh Regalim* services. Special emphasis will be placed on the *S'firat Ha'omer*, *Hakafot*, *Hallel*, *Na'anunim* (shaking of Lulav & Etrog), *Tal*, *Geshem*, *Shaharit*, *Hoshanot & Ata Horeita Lada'at*, and *Musaf Amidah* for *Regalim*. Students will learn to master and lead the entire *Shalosh Regalim* service and participatory melodies together with the traditional *Nusah*.

(4 credits)

- **HAL 374 Gender, Sexuality, and Jewish Law**

Dr. Matthew Goldstone

This course will explore contemporary issues of gender and sexuality—including homosexuality, non-gender conformity, and non-marital intercourse—through the lens of traditional Jewish law. Primary sources will draw largely from the *Shulhan Arukh* as well as modern responsa literature from a variety of different perspectives and denominations. Special attention will be devoted to issues and questions that arise in modern Jewish communal settings. This course can fulfill the Advanced Codes or the Critical Issues Halakhah requirements.

Prerequisite: 4 credits in Talmud and 2 credits in Codes.

(2 credits)

- **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 response literature from its earliest origins to its 21st century expression. Selected response will cover a range of topics and areas of Jewish life. Contemporary response studied will reflect a wide spectrum of perspectives and denominational origins.

Prerequisite: 1 credit in Talmud, 1 credit in Codes.

(2 credits)

- **HEB 120 Mechina**

Ilana Davidov

This course provides students with the foundations of Hebrew. It covers the first half of Hebrew from scratch (*Ivrit min Ha'Hatchala*) and takes the student from learning the mechanics of reading and writing un-voweled Hebrew to an active mastery of 500 words, knowledge of the present tense, and reading comprehension of dialogues relating to everyday life, as well as short descriptive, narrative, and informative texts on Jewish and Israeli cultural topics.

(No credit)

- **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 passage of AJR Hebrew entrance exam.

(4 credits)

- **HIS 350 American Jewish History and Culture**

Jennifer Shaw

What has it meant to be Jewish in America in the modern era? It's a provocative question, and one that has many different answers depending on the time period and whom you ask. (Two Jews, three opinions, right?) This course will explore some of these answers and the debates surrounding them by examining the history and culture of the Jewish community over the past 150 years, starting with the first immigration in the 1800s, and working our way to the present day. Among the topics covered will be the different waves of Jewish immigration, the evolving role of women within American Judaism, relations with other immigrant and minority communities, and Zionism. Looking at these and other subjects will help us to understand how the community has arrived at the place it is today.

This course fulfills the American Jewish History requirement.

(2 credits)

- **PHI 420 A Laboratory of Questioning: Forging Contemporary Personal Jewish Theologies**

Dr. Yakir Englander

In each generation, people seeking fullness of life and an encounter with the divine pose their own existential questions. The twenty-first century opens with some old familiar queries dressed up in modern and postmodern garb; in addition, there are also some challenges posed that are unique to the nature and culture of our generation. This course can be seen as an existential laboratory, in the context of which Jewish leaders can face and grapple with such questions, and also design and forge the framework for new and personal Jewish theologies.

Three salient questions will be addressed in this course:

- (a) *The Meaning of the Divine*: What is *divinity*, and what does it mean, in the twenty-first century, *to believe*? What cognitive and spiritual means do we have to know the divine? Is there a uniquely contemporary way to encounter the holy?
- (b) *Religious Communities and Seekers of the Divine*: What is the relationship between the community and the individual seeker? Should we belong to a religious community? Why, or why not? What is the connection between religion and societal injustice, especially violence? What does it mean to experience a variety of religious and spiritual pathways and practices?
- (c) *Religion, Spirituality, and Intimacy*: What is the relationship between these essential aspects of human life? Does religion hinder or enhance human intimacy? How is prayer related to intimacy? What are the spiritual roles of Nature, emotion and the body? Is there a uniquely contemporary theology of intimacy that includes yearning, vulnerability, touching, sexuality and emotional integrity? Is authentic intimacy possible in today's faith groups and religious communities?

We will encounter a variety of contemporary voices addressing these complex questions, exploring both Jewish and non-Jewish perspectives. Participants will compose personal theological texts based on their learning and insights. These texts will be shared with fellow

participants, and will constitute an informed personal Jewish theology. Taken together, these texts and personal theologies will be crucial in the forging of a unique and timely Jewish way of life in the United States today.

(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.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 004 Core Concepts I & IV**

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 two years of the seminars given in the sequence, but they need not be taken in order. Core Concepts I begins with the term *emunah* and Core Concepts IV begins with the term *mizrah/ma'arav*.

No tuition is charged for this course.

(No credit)

- **PRO 215 Counseling I**

Arline 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 339 Jewish Stories and Jewish Storytelling**

Hazzan Marcia Lane

Stories have been used to transmit values, to illustrate problems, to illuminate history, and to entertain. As much as we tell stories, the stories we tell, tell about us. The goal of this course is to give students depth of knowledge about the various genres of oral stories and the development of Jewish stories and storytelling, tools to analyze stories, an overview of the existing storytelling literature, both classical and modern, and the opportunity to hone their own storytelling presentations and styles.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 425 Spiritual Entrepreneurship: Getting Ideas Off the Ground**

Rabbi Geoffrey Mitelman

Not all clergy work in pulpits—and the nature of congregational work is changing, too. How can the tools of innovation and entrepreneurship help clergy respond to the changing spiritual landscape, launch new initiatives, or even start your own organization? Taught by a rabbi who was in the pulpit for seven years and then set out on his own in 2013, and with conversations with clergy who have launched exciting projects (some of which succeeded, and some of which failed), this course will give you the basic introduction of how you can have the highest likelihood of getting your ideas off the ground.

This course fulfills part of the entrepreneurship requirement.

(1 credit)

- **PRO 700 FWSS**

Cantor Michael Kasper

This seminar group focuses on 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 mandatory for 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 credit is given for this seminar.

(No credit)

- **RAB 100 Introduction to Mishnah**

David Almog

An introduction to the study of *Mishnah*. Selections will be chosen to illustrate the variety of literary styles and subject matter within the *Mishnah*. The course will also include a brief introduction to the scholarly issues regarding the development and redaction of the *Mishnah*.

Prerequisite: Completion of Mechina or the equivalent.

(2 credits)

- **RAB 330 Intermediate Talmud**

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

Students will continue to work on the skills necessary in decoding the Talmudic *sugya*, including extensive work on the logic and the literary layers. Students will also continue to increase their knowledge of Talmudic terminology, vocabulary, and grammar.

The text for the trimester will be Tractate *Megillah*.

Prerequisite: two trimesters of Talmud. *Havruta* session required of all students.
(2 credits)

- **RAB 531 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 semesters of Talmud. The *Havruta* session is required of all students.
(2 credits)