



Course Descriptions Spring 2020

- **BIB 346 The Book of Exodus: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Blessedness**

Dr. Job Jindo

This course explores the theme of Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Blessedness through a critical reading of the book of Exodus. Special attention is paid to literary and religious rather than historical and editorial issues. The subjects we discuss include: “election and covenant,” “monological liberty and dialogical liberty,” “power and ownership,” “politics and holiness,” “slavery and political violence,” “gender and resistance,” “objective guilt and subjective guilt,” “individuality and collectivity,” “God’s transcendence and exclusivity,” “religious leader as a vessel or partner of God,” “law and the image of God,” “ritual and creation,” “identity and narrative,” “self-deification as idolatry,” “holiness of space and holiness of time,” and “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee.” Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible.

(2 credits)

- **BIB 511 Studies in the Book of Job: When Bad Things Happened to a Good Person**

Dr. Job Jindo

How should we approach when bad things happen to a good person? How shouldn’t we? And why? Where do we find resources to cope with evil? This course explores these and other related issues of human suffering through a critical reading of the book of Job. By the conclusion of this course, students will be able to articulate: (1) the structure, purposes, and theological outlook of Job; (2) biblical theologies of evil and tragedy; and (3) examples from the book of Job as a source for understanding the human condition in our own day. Readings will include works by such scholars as Mitch Albom, Viktor Frankl, Nahum Glatzer, Harold Kushner, Carol Newsom, and Rudolf Otto. Prerequisite: Introduction to Bible.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 115 Introduction to Modes**

Cantor Sol Zim

A study of the Jewish prayer modes and their application to the liturgy.

(1 credit)

- **CAN 385 Introduction to Peace Studies From a Jewish Perspective**

NY State, Asst. Attorney General Hillel Deutsch

This course, the first in a series of three, will introduce Peace Studies through the lens of Jewish sacred texts, *Tanakh, Talmud, and Halakha*, as well as in examining current events that promise conflict while searching for relief, if not resolution. Each class will have a primary text and numerous additional texts which the class will prepare. The first half of every class will be spent in presentation of the material while the second half will spent in a guided discussion.

(2 credits)

- **CAN 426 Advanced *Nusah* Shabbat II**

Cantor Sol Zim and Cantor Lisa Klinger-Kantor

This course provides an in-depth and extensive study of the vast liturgy of the Shabbat *Shaharit* and *Musaf* services. Students will develop a deep understanding and mastery of the *nushaot*, special motifs, and participatory melodies involved in both services. They will also demonstrate strong competence in these areas so as to proficiently lead a Shabbat service. Prerequisite: CAN 425 or permission of Instructor.

(4 credits)

- **CAN 563 Conducting**

Cantor Sol Zim

An in depth study on developing the many skills required to conduct an adult and/or children's choir, whether two-part, three-part, four-part or solo voice. This course will also teach the various techniques used for proper breathing, phrasing, diction and warm-up exercises for adult or children's choirs.

(1 credit)

- **HAL 480 Responsa**

Rabbi Matthew Goldstone

In this course we will conduct a close reading of rabbinic responsa from a variety of historic periods, and become familiar with their authors, 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: 2 credits in Talmud and 2 credits in Codes.
(2 credits)

- **HEB 251 Hebrew IB**

Yifat Avner

This course is a continuation of HEB 250. In this course, students will study Modern Hebrew with emphasis on both grammar and vocabulary. Conversational skills will be an integral element of the learning experience. Prerequisite: HEB 250 or the equivalent.
(4 credits)

- **HEB 300 Hebrew Reading**

Ilana Davidov

This course will emphasize reading fluency and accuracy of Hebrew texts both vocalized and un-vocalized. Students will practice reading selections from the Siddur, from the Tanakh and from modern writings. Some of the tools include the analysis of morphology, syntax elements, the *binyanim* and their meaning, and other grammatical factors.
(1 credit)

- **HEB 400 Intermediate-Advanced Hebrew IIIA**

Ilana Davidov

The purpose of this course is to transition students from intermediate into advance 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 and presentations and via reading and writing assignments. Prerequisite: HEB 351 or the equivalent.
(4 credits)

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

Jennifer Shaw

What has it meant to be Jewish in America over the past two hundred? It's a complex and nuanced question, and one that has many different answers depending on the time period and who 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 two centuries 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 give us some understanding of how the

community has arrived at the place it is today, and help us think about where we are going.

(2 credits)

- **INT 367 Illness and Healing: Sacred Text and Spiritual Practice**

Rabbi David Markus

Physical illness and healing are core spiritual concerns – and uniquely potent to focus individuals, families and communities on life's Big Questions. Our course will explore Jewish approaches to illness and healing, and what we make of them in ourselves and our roles as clergy. Using Tanakh, Talmud, Codes, Hasidut, liturgy and modern sources, we'll use tradition's riches to ask (and maybe answer) Big Questions: How does Judaism respond to illness? What is healing? What tools can we offer amidst illness and healing (or not-healing)? What do the spiritual and psycho-emotional dynamics of illness and healing (or not-healing) ask of us in our own journeys of faith, spiritual practice and clergy service? What might these dynamics – and Judaism's doctrinal and theological pluralism around them – teach about the soul and the nature of Jewish tradition itself? This course fulfills a spirituality elective.

(2 credits)

- **LIT 620 Liturgy of *Yammim Noraim***

Rabbi Jeff Hoffman

In this course, we will examine the structure and content of the traditional *Rosh Hashbanah* and *Yom Kippur* services with reference as well, to the way contemporary non-traditional *mahzorim* have modified older forms. We will study the historical, literary, and theological meaning of central prayers of each service. We will also examine the meaning of these prayers not merely as texts on a page that are read, but as passages recited in actual worship. Finally, we will 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 120 Mechina**

Michal Nachmany

This course covers the first half of Hebrew from Scratch 1 (עברית מן ההתחלה) through Lesson 14. It takes the students from learning the mechanics of reading and writing unvoiced Hebrew to active mastery of 500 words, knowledge of the present tense and reading comprehension of dialogues relating to everyday life as well as descriptive, narrative and informative texts on Jewish and Israeli cultural topics.

- **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)

- **PHI 515 Anger, Evil, and Death in the Zohar: The “Other Side” of Kabbalah**

Dr. Nathaniel Berman

Many associate the Zohar with its visions of light, on the divine, cosmic, and personal planes; but it is equally concerned with the more tragic, troubling, and sinister dimensions of existence. We will study texts from the Zohar, as well as other early kabbalistic sources, concerned with three of these: anger, evil, and death. For the kabbalists, all three are enmeshed in the “Other Side” of the cosmos, which includes the demonic as well as Otherness more generally. We will confront the existential, as well as theological, challenges that such themes provoke. We will see how the familiar Zoharic axiom – “in the manner as it is above, even so is it below” – takes on a very different meaning in the face of these topics from the “Other Side.” Prerequisite: Students in this course must be at the level of Hebrew I or above.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 318 Who is Wise?: Inspiring Models and Best Practices of Informal Education**

Rabbi Ira Downn

There’s a good chance that you’ve had a transformative learning experience at camp, in a youth movement, on a travel program, or in another informal educational setting. In this course, you’ll have the opportunity to learn models and best practices of informal education, theories of informal education, and to have informal educational experiences that you can reflect on, incorporate into your educational toolbox, and replicate in various educational settings. The material that we cover will be intentionally useful and relevant for future rabbis and cantors. You’ll be equipped to deliver meaningful and inspirational informal educational moments and programs to others.

- **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, concerns regarding the end of a marriage and divorce. Also included will be the topic of *bik'kur 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 422 Leading Through Innovation**

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.

(2 credits)

- **PRO 700 Field Work Support Seminar (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 210 Midrash II**

Rabbi Jill Hammer

In this introductory class, we will continue to examine the forms, methods and vocabulary of rabbinic midrash and explore the function that midrash plays in rabbinic interpretation of Torah. We will deepen our understanding of midrashic narrative and character development by delving into Exodus Rabbah, Deuteronomy Rabbah, Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer, and several other sources. This is a text-based class and we will spend time during each session reading midrashim in Hebrew to improve our fluency.

Prerequisite: Introduction to Midrash or permission of Instructor.

(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 430 Intermediate/Advanced Talmud**

Dr. Matt Goldstone

This course will hone students' abilities to critically read, parse, and understand Talmudic material. Emphasis will be placed on learning some of the key recurring terms and structures found in the Talmud as well as on the pedagogical application of the material that we cover. 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: At least three trimesters of Talmud.

(2 credits)

- **SPI 365 Jewish Dreamwork**

Rabbi Jill Hammer

From Genesis to the Talmud, from the Zohar to Freud, Jews have used dreams as a means of self-understanding and a vehicle for divine revelation. In this class, we will read and analyze a variety of Jewish texts, rituals, and prayers on dreaming to understand the

role of dreaming in Jewish practice. We'll also consider several contemporary Jewish dream practices. Students will keep a dream journal, learn how to remember and record dreams, and practice a variety of Jewish rituals related to dreaming. Throughout the semester, we'll hold dream circles to mine our own dreams for wisdom and spiritual growth. This course fulfills a Spirituality elective.

(2 credits)