



Pardes | פָּרְדֵּס
Institute of Jewish Studies

Course Descriptions 2021-2022 / 5781-5782

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8:30-11:30 Sunday/Tuesday/Thursday

HUMASH /TANACH

LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY

TOVAH LEAH NACHMANI

Sun., Tues., Thurs. 8:30-11:30

EXODUS: How was Pharo's final solution derailed by foreign and feminine heroism? What are some messages of a burning bush not consumed? Why was Moses chosen to lead the Jewish people? What were his greatest fears? For whom were the plagues and what messages did they convey? How are the stories of the Exodus relevant to our post-modern lives?

Through guided text study, and a close reading of the Exodus text in Hebrew, with traditional and modern commentaries, students will discover a variety of answers and even more questions.

HEBREW: Daily Hebrew instruction and home study assignments empower the students to greatly increase their Hebrew vocabulary, improve their reading and writing Hebrew as well as their ability to translate Hebrew texts, songs and prayers.

BOOKS of JONAH, ESTHER, RUTH: In their appropriate seasons -before the holidays of Rosh Hashana, Purim, and Shavuot - students will study highlights from these books, exploring their historic contexts, and focusing on key issues of moral struggle and free choice.

HUMASH

LEVEL: INTRO +

MICHAEL HATTIN

Sun., Tues., Thurs. 8:30-11:30

Sefer Shemot is the story of Israel becoming a nation. It begins with an account of the enslavement in Egypt and concludes with the narrative of the Tabernacle's construction. Its primary themes of slavery and freedom, exile and redemption, transgression and *teshuvah* continue to inspire us today. Our studies will follow the travails of the Israelites in Egypt, the triumph of their exodus, and the trials of faith that await them as they journey forth to receive the Torah at Sinai.

As we consider these foundational, famous and sometimes frustrating stories, we will be guided by careful analysis of the primary text, consideration of other relevant Biblical material, reflection on ancient and modern commentary and attention to personal meaning for ourselves. Along the way, we will work on developing the skills and methodologies that will allow us to pursue our studies with greater independence.

Required texts – a 1 volume Tanakh with English translation as well as the first volume of the Torah Chayim edition of Sefer Shemot.

TALMUD

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

RAHEL BERKOVITS

Sun., Tues., Thurs. 8:30-11:30

This class is an intensive introduction to the study of Talmud. The course will focus on acquiring basic *Gemara* skills. Students will learn to understand the structure of the Talmudic page and passage, and how to follow the flow of its complex arguments. They will acquire key terms and basic vocabulary that enable the decoding of Talmudic passages. Students will learn how to identify the smaller units of texts quoted in the *Gemara*, and will be able to ascertain if a question or challenge is being brought or a proof text or resolution to a problem is being offered. They will be able to recognize *beritot*, *meimrot* and the voice of the *Stam*. Overall, students will gain a sense of how to think about a page of Talmud and the structure of the *sugya*. Students will also encounter the literary power of the Talmud. Through critical analysis of language and structure students will examine the overarching meta-halakhic concepts and theological and philosophical messages the Sages are trying to convey in their discussions, many of which are still very relevant today.

TALMUD

LEVEL: INTERM./ADV

LEAH ROSENTHAL

Sun., Tues., Thurs. 8:30-11:30

Introduction to the intricacies of the Talmudic discourse. Careful attention is paid to the Talmud's language, terminology and structure as we follow the

discussions of the Talmud. We will strive to gain a more sophisticated understanding of the history of this text, understand some of the processes which created it, and some of the processes of transmitting it through the generations, all of which left their mark on the Talmudic text we read today. The ultimate goal of this course is to bring students as close to independence as possible in their ability to study a page of Gemara. After Sukkot, we will be studying selections from Masechet Kiddushin.

TALMUD

LEVEL: ADVANCED

NECHAMA GOLDMAN BARASH

Sun., Tues., Thurs. 8:30-11:30

We will be studying Tractate Ketubot which is fondly called the “Mini Shas” in the yeshiva world because of the broad range of topics it encompasses. The class will focus on helping advanced students gain greater fluency in vocabulary and textual skills, along with increasing students’ confidence in both unpacking a daf of Talmud and with understanding classic Rishonim, notably Rashi and Tosafot. An academic approach will also be presented when analyzing the editing process that took place when the Babylonian Talmud was redacted and in some cases, there will be comparison to the Jerusalem Talmud. Finally, the centrality and significance of gender in the tractate will be part of the ongoing classroom discussion in which the work of contemporary female Talmud scholars will be presented.

Required Books: Tractate Ketubot.

KOLLEL TALMUD AND HALAKHA

ELISHA ANCSELOVITS and DANIEL REIFMAN

<p>TALMUD - MASEKHET SHABBAT Sunday and Thursday 08:30-11:30 (Daniel Reifman)</p>	<p>HILKHOT SHABBAT Tuesday, 8:30-13:00 (Elisha Ancselovits)</p>
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The Talmud portion of this course is designed to complement the Hilkhote Shabbat class, covering many of the relevant sugyot in Masechet Shabbat. In addition to examining the key halakhic concepts, we will focus on skills needed to prepare a sugya on one’s own, including close analysis of the ways that different Rishonim resolve difficulties in the gemara text and conceive of the relationship between parallel sugyot.

8:30-11:30 Monday/Wednesday

MISHNA/TALMUD

LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY

TBA

Mon., Wed. 8:30-11:30

In this course students will be introduced to the world of the Ta'anaitic Sages through an in-depth study of their most famous and important text – the Mishna, which became the basis for all Jewish Law. During the first semester, we will focus on the Tractate of Berakhot, which treats laws of prayer, recitation of the Shema, and blessing for food and special occasions. Through this masterful text, students will meet basic Jewish concepts especially pertaining to our relationship with the Divine as well as develop skills and analytical tools to translate and decipher the conceptual categories and legal reasoning of the Mishna. The course aims to train the student to comprehend and question the text independently, through critical analysis of language and structure.

Required book: Mishnah Bahira Berakhot

MISHNA/TALMUD

LEVEL: INTRO. +

ZVI HIRSCHFIELD

Mon., Wed. 8:30-11:30

In this course students will be introduced to the world of the Ta'anaitic Sages through an in-depth study of their most famous and important text – the Mishnah, which became the basis for all Jewish Law. In this class students will develop skills and analytical tools to decipher the conceptual categories and legal reasoning of the Mishna. The course aims to train the student to comprehend and question the text independently, through critical analysis of language and structure. In-depth attention will be paid to the specifics of the law as well as the overarching meta-legal concepts and theological and philosophical messages the Sages are trying to convey in their discussions.

HUMASH**LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE****HOWARD MARKOSE****Mon., Wed. 8:30-11:30**

This course is designed to bring to the intermediate student a greater understanding and appreciation for the text that is called Shemot (Exodus). Students will gain insight into the nature of the book and its many characters, taking into consideration the book's literary, historical, archeological and linguistic nuances, using various means and sources. Medieval commentaries will be studied along with modern *parshanim*, and relevant ancient Near Eastern literature will also be introduced.

Students should be capable of reading the text with some level of fluency, and be able to translate in a manner which reflects a basic understanding of Biblical Hebrew Grammar. No previous background in Shemot is required, although it can certainly work to the student's advantage to already have studied this book of the Tanach.

Students are to bring to class both Shemot Torat Hayim (Rav Kook Publishers) and a Hebrew/English Tanach (New JPS or The Jerusalem Bible are the preferred editions, but others are certainly acceptable). Students will learn how to navigate the BDB (Brown, Driver and Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament) and the Concordance to the Tanach (either Mandelkern or the preferred Even Shoshan).

HUMASH**LEVEL: ADVANCED****JUDY KLITSNER****Mon., Wed. 8:30-11:30**

This is a skills-based class, designed to empower students to become careful and precise-- and ultimately independent and creative-- readers of the biblical text. The vehicle for our exploration will be the first half of the book of Shemot. In approaching each narrative, we will conduct close readings, utilizing the tools of literary analysis. These readings will then act as building blocks in reaching a deep understanding of the motives and actions of the biblical characters, as well as moral, philosophical and theological messages contained in the book.

An added goal of this class is to promote proficiency in reading biblical commentary, and to recognize the methods and styles of various commentators.

Course requirements:

Regular, punctual attendance twice weekly

Independent preparation and class presentation at the end of each semester

Recommended background reading:

1. Tanakh, as much as possible
2. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, Basic Books, Inc., NY, 1981.
3. J. Weingreen, *A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, Second Edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959.

Required Texts, to be purchased:

1. חומש תורת חיים, בראשית כרך א, מוסד הרב קוק, ירושלים (Humash Torat Haim, first volume of Bereishit)
2. A Tanakh with English translation (Jewish Publication Society recommended)
3. 5 books of Chumash in 1 volume with commentaries, Horev, Jerusalem

11:45-1:00 Sunday/Thursday

SIDDUR: THEORY AND PRACTICE

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

TBA

Sun., Thurs. 11:45-1:00

The siddur (Jewish prayer book) is arguably the Jewish people's greatest literary creation. In it are contained not only familiar prayers but an implicit description of our people's history, culture and linguistic development over the course of more than three millennia. The siddur is of course also the repository of our people's unquenchable yearnings for a better world.

This course will introduce the content of the siddur as it is expressed in *Shacharit* or the morning service – the longest of the daily prayers. We will follow the course of this prayer as we consider its discrete elements, their overall structure, their historical context and their deeper meaning. Along the way, we will also discuss the basic framing of the service – synagogue layout, the role of the prayer leader and the "choreography" of the service. All denominations are welcome.

PARSHAT HASHAVUA

LEVEL: EASY HEBREW

ELHANAN MILLER

FALL

Sun., Thurs. 11:45-1:00

Parshat Hashavua class will be taught in easy Hebrew and cover both the pshat (literal narrative) of the weekly Torah reading, as well as classic commentary and midrash readings of the text. We will discuss the meaning of these foundational stories to our lives today.

RELATIONSHIPS

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

TOVAH LEAH NACHMANI

SPRING

Sun., Thurs. 11:45-1:00

We all experience glitches of discord and controversy - not only with difficult people in our midst, but also with those we love - with ourselves, our family, friends and lovers. A wide range of classic to modern Jewish texts, in Hebrew alongside translations, combined with innovative reflection exercises and practical paths of application makes this course not just a learning experience, but a journey of transformation.

Required: An inquiring mind and an open heart.

TEXT AND REALITY IN JEWISH SOCIAL JUSTICE

SHMITTA AND HUMAN DIGNITY

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

MEESH HAMMER-KOSSOY

Sun., Tues. 11:45-1:00

Text and Reality in Jewish Social Justice: Shmitta and Human Dignity

Fall 2021

Great is Torah that it leads to action (Kiddushin 40b). We'll explore classic Jewish Justice texts and the way they might serve as guideposts for action in a modern context. Thus, the class stretches the walls of the bet midrash by combining two components: close reading of core texts and hearing a range of Israeli voices through guest lectures and trips.

FALL: in honor of the sabbatical year, we will spend the first part of the semester on core issues related to shmitta—the environment, sabbath, wealth distribution and capitalism, tzedakah and debt. The rest of the semester will focus on issues of human dignity including rights for marginalized Jewish populations—women, Ethiopians, Mizrachim, workers, etc. Second semester will be dedicated to issues of solidarity, universalism and particularism. Each semester will have 2 Friday morning trips in lieu of a weekday class. This class is year-long, but each semester stands independently.

SPRING:

Text and Reality in Jewish Social Justice: Solidarity and Universalism

Spring 2022

Great is Torah that it leads to action (Kiddushin 40b). We'll explore classic Jewish Justice texts and the way they might serve as guideposts for action in a modern context. Thus, the class stretches the walls of the bet midrash by combining two components: close reading of core texts and hearing a range of Israeli voices through guest lectures and trips.

“All of Israel is responsible for one another”. Questions of solidarity, universalism, humanism and particularism are more sensitive than ever before. The fact that 20% of the Israeli population is non-Jewish and that Israel is embroiled in national conflict with and maintains some degree of military control over nearly 4.75 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza strip poses unique challenges to a Jewish and democratic state as well as Jewish textual tradition. At the same time, globalism and the unprecedentedly intimate bonds of the global Jewish population with non-Jews has tested traditional Jewish solidarity and heightened calls for universalism. The Spring semester will be dedicated to exploring the complexity of our Jewish tradition as well as hearing a variety voices,

primarily but certainly not exclusively Jewish, within the State of Israel and to a much more limited extent in the Occupied Territories and globally.

Each semester will have 2 Friday morning trips in lieu of a weekday class. This class is year-long, but each semester stands independently.

FIVE MEGILLOT
MICHAEL HATTIN
Sun., Tues. 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: IN HEBREW
SPRING

This course will consider the Five Megillot of Shir HaShirim, Ruth, Eichah, Kohelet and Esther. Besides being Biblical texts, the Megillot also serve a public liturgical purpose: they are read in *Beit Knesset* as part of the prayer service, each one in its appropriate season.

We will carefully analyze the narratives of these books, approaching them as literary documents as well as considering them from the perspective of the Rabbinic Midrash, the medieval commentaries and modern scholarship. Occasionally, we will diverge to consider a specific topic in greater detail, examining other Biblical texts and materials that shed light on the matter. Our goals are to build skills and confidence, to familiarize ourselves with the commentaries and their methodology, and to appreciate the self-referential and cross-referential qualities of the Tanakh.

Required texts: a good "Mikraot Gedolot" edition of Chamesh Megillot as well as a Hebrew Tanakh. Handouts will be provided. **Instruction will be in Hebrew.**

11:45-1:00 Monday/Wednesday

BIBLICAL HEBREW GRAMMAR
HOWARD MARKOSE
Mon., Wed. 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: INTERM. - FALL
INTRO. - SPRING

The Tanakh is a text that has been analyzed and interpreted many ways throughout its existence. This course will enable the student to read and comprehend the text through the understanding of the Hebrew grammar

that is found therein. Focusing on certain Biblical selections, primarily in the Book of Breisheet (Genesis), students will learn how the various verb forms are used to express specific meaning. They will learn to read the text with proper pronunciation and accent, and explore how the Trope (the cantillation marks which provide accent, punctuation and melody) serve as an aid to the reading and studying of Tanakh. The fall course will be an intermediate level course. Students will be required to possess a rudimentary knowledge of Hebrew grammar for this semester's course. The spring course will be taught at an introductory level.

BEKIUT NEVIIM
MICHAEL HATTIN
Mon, Wed 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL

The books of the Prophets or "Nevi'im" that comprise the second (and largest) section of the Tanakh are *terra incognita* to many of us. Aside from some celebrated passages, much of this material – including historical settings, primary themes, and literary techniques – is, to quote Isaiah, "like the words of a sealed book".

In this course, we will remedy that situation by embarking upon a broad and comprehensive survey of a large narrative section of the Nevi'im, focusing on the books of Joshua/Yehoshua, Judges/Shoftim, and the first book of Samuel/Shemuel. This will necessarily entail a fair amount of weekly reading by course participants, whether in Hebrew or in translation.

In class, we will construct a geographical and historical framework, explore important themes and motifs, and trace the textual continuity that underlies the Hebrew Bible as a whole. **Along the way, we will cover about four centuries of Biblical history and encounter many of the significant characters and events in the story of the Jewish people!** We will meet two times a week and instruction will be in English. Required text: a Hebrew Tanakh with translation.

JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN MODERNITY
DAVID BERNSTEIN
Mon, Wed 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING

HOW DID WE GET HERE? How did Jews become equal citizens, develop denominations, and create a Jewish State? What were the ways in which Jews coped with modernization? How is it that Germany turned on its Jews? In what ways did Jews react? These are just some of the questions that we will deal with in trying to grapple with the major turning points in modern Jewish history, from the French Revolution through the late 20th century. Each class will usually revolve around a primary historical source.

We will also set aside a small amount of time for “Israel as Laboratory,” student reflections on “the good, the bad, and the ugly” aspects of life in Israel.

CULTIVATING SPIRITUAL RESILIENCE

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

YISCAH SMITH

Mon, Wed 11:45-1:00

The teachings of R' Kalonymous Kalman Shapira (1889-1943) have brought much needed soul nourishment to Jews around the world for decades, and are currently becoming increasingly popular. As we encounter heightened uncertainty and insecurity, his voice resonates ever more deeply with us.

R' Shapira is often known as the Piaseczner Rebbe, and also the *Aish Kodesh* (Sacred Fire), after the title of his seminal work of Torah lessons he gave over while interned in the Warsaw Ghetto between the years 1939-1942. They were buried beneath the ghetto, and after the war it was discovered and brought to light.

The Rebbe was a passionate educator and spiritual innovator. The scion of prominent Chasidic lineages in Poland, the Piaseczner's teachings are devoted to a profoundly holistic approach to the spiritual life and a Jew's *avodat Hashem*, or service of the Divine.

In the work *Aish Kodesh*, the Piaseczner addresses the situation of his fellow Jews with humility, authenticity and faith. Unafraid to encounter human suffering in all of its rawness, the Rebbe offers profound teachings and meditations on spiritually moving through times of profound despair and

uncertainty. His radical teachings hold enduring relevance for us today, especially as a source for cultivating spiritual resilience, renewal and inner redemption.

2:30-5:00 Sunday/Tuesday

RAMBAM

LEVI COOPER

Sun., Tues. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY

FALL

Maimonides may be the single most influential Jewish scholar of all time. The fascination with Maimonides – or MYmonides, as many seem to claim – transcends the divisions between different streams of Judaism. Indeed, the writings of the Rambam – as per the Hebrew acronym of his name – are filled with gems from an array of fields: Jewish law, philosophy, communal leadership, social activism. It is no wonder that every contemporary faction wants to claim him as their own.

With this in mind we will study key texts from the Rambam's magnum opus, *Mishneh Torah*. Texts will be prepared before class, and then reviewed and discussed when we meet. Parallel and complementary sources will be explored and their implication considered. Special attention will be given not only to the content of the text, but also to Maimonides the person, his style, his contribution, his place in Sephardic tradition, and his singular role in Jewish intellectual history.

This course is a golden opportunity to hone Hebrew skills, as we will examine the sources in the original – and truly accessible – Hebrew of Maimonides (who – like many of us – was not a native Hebrew speaker).

Text: *Mishneh Torah* (the one volume edition with dots is recommended)

Notebook and folder for handouts

Recommended: modern Hebrew/English dictionary

MIDRASH

LEVI COOPER

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

SPRING

The Jewish People are not really *The People of the Book*; we are **The People of Midrash!** More than any other genre, it is the *Midrash* that has fashioned Jewish collective consciousness and makes us who we are today. This path-breaking course will crack open the creative world of *Midrash* – the most significant repository of Jewish collective memory, and perhaps the most powerful tool for fashioning identity.

Midrash is often an unsung hero in the Jewish canon; at times it has been dismissed or even maligned. This course will situate *Midrash* in its rightful place as a champion of Jewish intellectual endeavours, literary efforts, and the evergreen quest for relevance and meaning.

We will explore different works of *Midrash*, the historical and geographical background of *Midrash*, the interplay between *Aggada* and *Halakha*, the relationship of the rabbis towards *Midrash Aggada*, how the sages presented philosophical ideas, the continuum between *Peshat* and *Derash*, and more. In the course of our study, we will develop working definitions for key terms, such as *Midrash*, *Aggada*, *Aggadata*, *Halakha*, and others.

The aims of the class are to understand the literary genre, to facilitate engagement with different midrashic and aggadic texts, to develop an appreciation of the genre and its goals, and to empower students to be able to begin to study *Midrash* independently.

Midrash Project: In addition to the texts studied in class, each student will embark upon a supplementary self-study venture, choosing a specific midrashic work to study throughout the semester. This undertaking will complement the classes, and provide an opportunity to see the trajectory of a volume of *Midrash*. Towards the end of the semester, each student will have an opportunity to present material from the *Midrash Project*.

Texts will be in Hebrew (with a smattering of Aramaic and a dash of Greek).

What you will need to bring to class:

Notebook and folder for handouts

A Midrash of *your* choice – to be selected by the end of week two of the course

Recommended: easy access to dictionaries

TALMUDIC HEROINES

GILA FINE

Sun., Tues. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

FALL

The female characters of the Talmud often come across as anti-feminine stereotypes, disparaging descriptions of bad women: the shrew, the femme fatale, the prima donna, and the whore. Yet a careful reading of their stories reveals that there's a lot more to them than initially meets the eye; that the women are far more complex than they first appear; and that the rabbis had rather surprising – so as not to say proto-feminist – views of marriage, childbirth, female power, and sex. In working to unmask the heroines of the Talmud, there's a great deal we can learn – about how to read the characters of a text and, ultimately, how to treat the characters in our lives.

This course serves as an introduction to *Aggada* (Talmudic stories) and requires no prior knowledge.

Hilkhot Kiddushin

Rahel Berkovits

Sun 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: HIGH INTERM./ADVANCED

FALL

This class is an in-depth examination of the halakhic literature surrounding the traditional wedding ceremony (*kiddushin, sheva berakhot, nissuim, kesubot*). We will study the classical laws central to the concepts of marriage and will briefly touch on divorce/*gittin* when relevant. The source material will be from the Talmud, *Rishonim*, and Rabbinic legal codes in their original language (without translation). We will try to understand how the canon of Rabbinic literature conceptualized and thought about marriage and weddings and where those views intersect with and challenge modern notions of partnership and

relationship. Towards the end of the course we will discuss and examine modern innovations to the wedding ceremony.

Sexuality and Sanctity:

Towards a Jewish Sexual Ethic

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

Rahel Berkovits

SPRING

Sun, Tues 2:30-5:00

What does Judaism have to say about issues surrounding sexuality? What values and challenges can the rabbinic texts impart for us living with the modern sexual norms of the twenty-first century? In this class we will examine, analyze and openly discuss rabbinic texts from the Torah and Talmud through to the modern responsa and different Jewish denominational responses on topics connected to sexual conduct such as marital sex, pleasure and positions, consent, the laws of *niddah*, Gay sex, premarital/Non-marital sex, masturbation and birth control. We will also examine the topics of transgender and intersex individuals in rabbinic literature (even though those topics are not related to issues of sex- they nonetheless interest students.) The classroom will be a safe space for students of diverse backgrounds, orientations, and practices. All sources are provided in both Hebrew and English and the course is open to all levels and genders.

PASKENING RESPONSIBLY

LEVEL: KOLLEL

ELISHA ANCSELOVITS

Tuesdays 2:30-5:00 PM

This class draws on Talmudic material (and earlier) through Halakhic material centered around Hoshen Mishpat and Yoreh Deah on judicial and rabbinic decision making. It examines rules and debates over the rules of *pesak* in order to identify the competing considerations that one must keep in mind in order to reach responsible - wise - decisions.

What you will need to bring to class:

Class sourcebook

2:30-5:00 Monday/Wednesday

HALAKHA
MICHAEL HATTIN

LEVEL: INTRO./INTERM.
FALL

Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

This course will focus on practical Halakha - the "what" and "how" of mitzvah observance. We will utilize some of the classical Halakhic texts such as Rambam, the Shulchan Aruch and selected commentaries such as Mishna Berura as we investigate specific areas of practice. Along the way, we will gain basic familiarity with Halakhic codes and how to navigate them.

Areas of study will include Jewish holidays (as appropriate) as well as some important areas of Shabbat practice.

Handout will be provided. There is no expectation of commitment to Halakhic observance.

HALAKHA
HAIM OVADIA

LEVEL: INTRO./INTERM.
SPRING

Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

This course will focus on the practical aspects of the Laws of Kashrut. We will utilize some of the classical Halakhic texts such as Tur, Beth Yosef, and Shulchan Aruch, which will allow us also to analyze some Talmudic texts, as well as later works such as Arukh HaShulhan and contemporary poskim. Students will get familiarized with the main Halakhic codes and will be introduced to the development of Halakhic literature. We will put a special emphasis on understanding the context of the Halakha, its Seat in Life, and on the inclusion of modern Sephardic Poskim.

Handouts will be provided. There is no expectation of commitment to Halakhic observance.

WOMEN & HALAKHA: PAST TRADITIONS & FUTURE DEVELOPMENT
RAHEL BERKOVITS

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

In this course, we will explore and discuss women's role in ritual practice, both personal and communal, through the study of classical and contemporary Jewish legal texts. Questions of custom vs. law, societal and historical influences, and future development and change will be addressed. We will examine the topics of women's obligation in and exemption from certain *mitzvot*: *kiddush* on Shabbat, Grace after Meals and *zimmin*, *tefillin*, *tzitzit*, and issues surrounding prayer in the synagogue, such as reading from the Torah and counting in the *minyan*. The course will focus on textual analysis and interpretation. All sources are provided in both Hebrew and English and the course is open to all levels and genders.

CYCLES: ANNUAL AND LIFE

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

ZVI HIRSCHFIELD

Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

Cycles is a course that will explore the meaning and development of Jewish Holydays and selected lifecycle events. Learning a wide range of texts from the Tanakh and Rabbinic sources through Medieval and modern texts, we will see how core themes are developed and created around the celebration and observance of these special times in our year and our lives. In addition to a textual and philosophical approach, we will include processing at the end of each unit to help us identify the opportunities for personal growth and religious relevance in each Holyday, and deepen our personal understanding and connection to these moments. Sources will be in both English and Hebrew and the course is open to all levels.

SEMINAR IN MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

ZVI HIRSCHFIELD

SPRING

Mon, Wed. 2:30-5:00

This course will explore how leading Jewish thinkers address the great challenges of modernity to Judaism and Jewish identity. Issues to be explored will include: Rabbinic authority, nationalism, feminism, ethics, and the goal of being a Jew. Students will be asked to formulate their own views and present them to each other in seminar style.

**STRANGERS IN STRANGE LANDS:
TALES OF TRAVELING RABBIS
GILA FINE**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING**

Mon. Wed. 2:30-5:00 Mon., Wed

Who is the rabbi whose immigration to Babylon results in cruel humiliation? Why does a great scholar not understand a word when arriving at his new yeshiva? How does a journey into the future destroy the most celebrated leader of his time? And what happens when a Babylonian student outshines an Israeli rabbi?

The Talmud is riddled with travel narratives, stories of rabbis who journey through space – and time – in search of Torah. Leaving their former lives behind, these once-revered leaders set out into the unknown, disoriented in unfamiliar territory, disparaged by unfriendly locals. This course looks at a number of such tales; subjecting each story to close literary analysis, and reading it in light of related intertexts (from Jewish and Western culture), we will explore the trials and tribulations of the traveling rabbis, and the lessons they must learn before they can arrive at their destinations.

**TALMUDIC SKILLS
DANIEL REIFMAN**

LEVEL: INTERM/ADV.

Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

This course is designed for students who want to develop textual proficiency in Talmud and basic rishonim. We will concentrate on techniques for parsing the Talmud text and constructing the logical flow of the *sugya*, with the goal of allowing students to read an average *sugya* independently by the end of the course. Additionally, we will discuss the way different *rishonim* comment on and seek to resolve problems in the Talmud text. Students should have strong Hebrew language skills and some prior experience studying Talmud.

Evening Classes

**HASIDUT
LEVI COOPER**

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

Sun., Tues. 5:15-7:00

Hasidism – or *Chassidus* – is a movement that continues to provide inspiration, fascination, and at times bewilderment or even revulsion.

In this course we will walk the spiritual path of Hasidut, meeting central personalities, becoming familiar with key ideas, and developing an appreciation for the historical and social evolution of a movement that has given so much to Judaism, and promises to continue playing a significant role in the Jewish world.

Approximately half the classes will be dedicated to passages found in foundational hasidic texts. In the other classes we will learn about the history, thought, and development of the movement. Hasidic songs – *niggunim* – will also be introduced, discussed, explored, and sung. Sections of the course will be dedicated to contemporary Hasidic phenomena. Each week, participants will be assigned tasks – “*spiritual homework*” – connected to the passages discussed. The spiritual homework will be completed outside class and then discussed in a safe but intimate “*spiritual havruta*” space during the following class.

A source book will be available for purchase.

Sources will be read in Hebrew from the original text and translated.

Hebrew is not a prerequisite; flexibility, openness, commitment to the class space, aims, atmosphere, and vibe are requirements.

TORAH TROPE

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

ELISA PEARLMAN

Mondays 5:20-6:20

The word *ta'am* means flavor, and the *ta'amei hamikrah* (trope marks) not only show us how to chant each word in the Tanakh, but also add ‘flavor’, i.e. enhance the text, too. During this course students will acquire the tools to chant any part of the Torah, while also looking at how the trope functions as an interpretation to the text. We will look specifically at the texts of Breisheet (The Creation) and the portion read at Rosh Hodesh. No previous experience necessary.

MEGILLAT ESTHER
ELISA PEARLMAN
Mondays 6:20-7:20

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

Learn to chant this special trope in preparation for our annual readings at Purim.

NIGHT SEDER (SEDER EREV)
RAHEL BERKOVITS
Monday 7:30-9:30 PM

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

Seder Erev provides a unique opportunity for students to use the resources of the *Beit Midrash* at their own pace, outside the regular hours, in a relaxed atmosphere. Students can take advantage of this once-a-week opportunity to investigate a particular area of interest, strive over the year to complete a *sefer*, or review material studied during the regular program. This is a sterling opportunity to fulfill the Divine precept of Talmud Torah during the quiet hours.

Seder Erev will also provide an opportunity for first year students to study with more advanced students including Fellows and PEP. This is also a chance for people on different levels with common interests to study together. Pardes faculty will be on hand to provide guidance and to answer questions.

UNPACKING THE SAGES
ELISHA ANCSELOVITS
TUESDAYS: 5:15-7:15 pm

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

“You may polish up common sense, you may contradict [it] in detail, and you may surprise it. But ultimately your whole task is to satisfy it.” Alfred North Whitehead

In this course, we learn to read a traditional text, and especially religious legal texts, from the Bible through the Talmud and today by understanding what the author tried to communicate rather than reading words as

self-defining. In that way, we learn to discover past people's insights on real life. We use such study, in turn, to learn how to make our own ethical/policy decisions based on inductive and intuitive insights -- rather than by pigeonholing issues into principles or values.

R. Elisha Ancselovits (Yadin Yadin), PhD

SCRIBAL ARTS

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

DOV LAIMON

Wednesdays 5:15-6:45 pm (There is an extra charge for this course.)

In this hands-on seminar, students will learn the script used in writing Sifrei Torah, tefillin, and mezuzot, how to make a quill and write on parchment. The course will provide an introduction to determining when a letter is kosher, and how tefillin and mezuzot must be written, as well as an investigation of the deep meaning of the alef-bet in classical texts.

There is a charge for materials for this class.