



Pardes Winter Learning Intensive Peer-led classes

Tuesday 4:15-5:00

Mindful, embodied prayer: bring your full self to your davening

Do you bring your full conscious self to your davenen, or are you praying "From the neck up"? Cantor Kate Judd, MAmSAT, is a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. She will offer a brief, hands-on introduction to applying ideas from the Alexander Technique to the practice of davening (prayer). (With Kate Judd)

The Jewish Roots of Identity Politics

'Identity Politics' has become a charged term detached from specific historical context: a radical vision of collective liberation that was articulated by Black lesbian feminists in the late 1970's. A textual history uncovers the deeper meanings of this history, and the vital role Jewish women in it. (With Isaac Brosilow)

Whose Conversion is it Anyway?

Whose community and which interpretation? Conversion to Judaism has been documented in our sacred texts for millennia. However, the exact process and authority have changed over time. In this class, we will look at some of the historical notions of conversion, the development of Halacha on the subject, and take a look at some of the modern developments in conversion and their implications for the entire Jewish people. (With Branden Johnson)

"All my Bones will Sing": Finding Identity through Jewish Somatic Experiencing

The question of identity, and specifically a Jewish one, involves multiple aspects of an individual's being: cultural, communal, mental, emotional, and spirituality. However, there is another important aspect of one's definition of Self that is often forgotten about: the Somatic. What do Judaism and the sages have to say about the importance of the body-connection in figuring out who we are and finding our way in life? Can the body help guide us in our search for identity? While, Somatic Experiencing is an effective therapeutic technique for healing trauma, can it be useful in dealing with questions of identity as well? Through text study and guided somatic experiencing, this class will explore these questions. (With Benji Elson)

Jewish Identity and its Boundaries Then and Now

We will be talking about how the Bible creates identity including who boundaries of who is in and who is out. We will also be tracing the changing concepts of our long history. A class discussion on intermarriage will follow. (With Manny Samuels)



THE MANY FACES OF ME

Exploring Identity in a Post-Modern World

A Pardes Winter Learning Intensive



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Wednesday Afternoon 2:30-3:15pm

From Migdal Bavel to Betzalel: Conformity to Creativity

Together, we will study texts and create art as we explore two contrasting paradigms in Chumash: the conformity and erasure of individualism in the story of Migdal Bavel, and Betzalel's creative expression and proactive choices in constructing the Mishkan. We will gain a nuanced understanding of how both in-group belonging and individual expression contribute to our own understanding of identity. (With Elizabeth Dunoff)

Finding Myself and Gratitude

We will be combining mindfulness practices centered around self discovery/awareness and how gratitude plays a role in how we view ourselves. We will interact with texts through Hevruta study and discussion. (With Barry Rosekind and Tamy Cohen Jacobs)

Deception, Authenticity and Community Building

How do we relate to 'the other'? A text based exploration of Biblical figures and how they choose to conceal and reveal their full selves when joining new communities. Why did Avraham pretend Sarah was his sister? Why did Joseph pretend he didn't know his brothers? What can we learn from their experiences when we ourselves enter diverse communities today. Using case studies from the humanitarian world, we will consider challenges of community building in times of crisis. (With Hannah Gaventa)

Let's Talk About Israel

Complicated feelings about Israel? You aren't alone. In this session, we'll work through a framework for discussing political and social issues, including but not limited to the capital-C Conflict. The goal will be to grapple with the complexities of Israel and examine your personal relationship with Israel as it connects to your Jewish identity. (With Valerie Brown)



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Pardes Winter Learning Intensive Peer-led classes Wednesday Evening 5:15-6:15pm

Only a lunatic would sleep in a cemetery! : Disability Identity as a lens to reframe our understanding of the Shoteh

In this session, we will study a text on the halachic category of shoteh in order to understand how the Rabbi's conceptualized difference and disability in their time. We will then place the text of the Talmud into conversation with the work of a modern disabled thinker in order to reframe our understanding of the shoteh. We will consider questions such as: Who defines rational behavior? What identities and behaviors do we as a community embrace and respect, versus stigmatize and marginalize? We will strive to go deep, thinking about how we understand and relate to disability in our daily lives, and how this session might challenge us to relate differently. (With Tali Cohen Carrus)

Faith in a New World: The Role of Sermons in the Construction of Jewish-American Identity

(This class deals with Jewish-American identity, and is primarily geared towards students from the United States. Of course, all are welcome!) Around the turn of the 19th century, Jewish community leaders in the United States delivered hundreds of public addresses that endeavored to shape the way American Jews understood their place in American society and Jewish history. The oratory had a simple agenda: to help American Jewry fit into the existing American culture, and to develop the legitimacy of "American Judaism" in the minds of American Jews and the wider Christian public. It attempted to answer a host of questions: How could Jews maintain their distinctive and inherently separate religious traditions in a country founded on Protestant values and aesthetics, without appearing disloyal? And what would it look like to enjoy and celebrate the freedoms afforded to Jewish-American communities while maintaining the traditional prayer for the conclusion of the diaspora? This class will explore how the American Jewish experience was articulated by its earliest leaders, and how the public rhetoric of that generation still reverberates today. (With Joe Blumberg)