



Course Descriptions 2019-2020 / 5779-5780

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

HUMASH /TANACH
TOVAH LEAH NACHMANI
Sun., Tues., Thurs. 8:30-11:30

LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY

EXODUS: How was Pharaoh's final solution derailed by foreign and feminine heroism? What are some messages of a burning bush not consumed? Why was Moses, a foreigner to the Israelites, chosen to lead the Jewish people? What were his greatest fears and how did he develop as a leader? 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
MEIR SCHWEIGER
Sun., Tues., Thurs. 8:30-11:30 (switches to M/W in the Spring)

LEVEL: INTRO +

The goal of this course is to give students the ability to analyze a section of *Chumash* with the classic medieval commentaries. For this class, students are expected to have a working knowledge of Hebrew and some formal training in the study of Biblical texts.

The focus of the class will be two-fold:

1) To develop the student's skills in reading and analyzing the classic commentaries. Students will be expected to become familiarized with the different approaches of the various commentators by carefully reading each one and comparing/contrasting their styles and content. Students will be encouraged to read the Biblical text carefully, to see the "gaps" and difficulties, which generate a variety of responses by the different commentators.

2) To deal with the issues and concepts raised by both the Biblical text and commentaries. Although the class will be grounded in the development of skills, it will encourage students to pursue the depth of the text and commentaries, to explore concepts and themes that impact

on one's life. Discussion of themes will be the culmination of a rigorous analysis of the text rather than a substitute for it.

Texts - We will study Chapters 1-20 of *Shmot*, focusing on:

- 1) The enslavement of the Jewish people,
- 2) The Ten Plagues
- 3) The First Seder and the Exodus
- 4) The Miracle of the Reed Sea
- 5) The Desert Experience
- 6) The revelation at Sinai
- 7) The personal and public life of Moshe, and how it interfaces with the fate of the nation

All students will be expected to purchase and bring to class the following books:

- 1) *Shemot Mikraot G'dolot* (preferably Mossad HaRav Kook edition- *Torat Chayim*)
- 2) Hebrew-English TaNAkh – JPS or Keter
- 3) Hebrew-English Dictionary (preferably Alkalay)

TALMUD

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

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. 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 Masechet Bava Kama.

TALMUD

LEVEL: ADVANCED

ZVI HIRSCHFIELD

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

This course is intended for those who have experience with Talmud study and want to increase their knowledge and skill level. Our goal will be to become more familiar with the structure and ideas present in Talmudic discourse, and begin to develop ideas about Halakha and how it operates. We will attempt to incorporate both traditional and modern approaches to Talmud study.

TALMUD AND HALAKHA
ELISHA ANCSELOVITS and DANIEL REIFMAN

LEVEL: KOLLEL

TALMUD–MASECHET KETUBOT Sunday and Thursday 08:30-11:30 (Daniel Reifman)	HILKHOT AVEILUT AND NIDDA Tuesday, 8:30-13:00 (Elisha Ancselovits)
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The Talmud portion of this course is designed to complement the Hilkhot Ketubot class, covering many of the relevant sugyot in Masekhet Ketubot. 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
MEESH HAMMER-KOSSOY
Mon., Wed. 8:30- 11:30

LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY

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
RAHEL BERKOVITS
Mon., Wed. 8:30-11:30
(switches to S/T/Th in the Spring)

LEVEL: INTRO. +

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. In the second half of the year we will begin learning the *Gemara* on one of the chapters of Mishnah which we have studied.

HUMASH
JUDY KLITSNER
Mon., Wed. 8:30-11:30
(MICHAEL HATTIN in SPRING)

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE
FALL

We will study selected topics in the book of Shemot in an attempt to reach an appreciation of the biblical medium and its message. The former will be reached by means of close readings and literary analysis, i.e. by close attention to formal elements such as structure, context, grammar, syntax, tone, sound, convention, repetition, and imagery; and to aspects of content such as theme, motif, metaphor, and character analysis.

This heightened sensitivity to textual nuance will be combined with an introduction to the classical commentaries. Students will work on improving independent reading skills and on familiarizing themselves with the various hermeneutical principles and methodologies used by the commentators in resolving textual problems.

This is primarily a skills class, with emphasis placed on empowering students to become independent readers of the biblical text and its commentaries.

This class aims to cover some of the major themes in the book of Shemot, such as: subjugation and enslavement, racism and genocide, conscientious objection, leadership, redemption, and the birth of a nation.

Course Requirements:

1. Regular, punctual attendance (8:30 a.m., twice weekly).
2. A reasonable working knowledge of the basics of Hebrew grammar, particularly the *binyanim*.
3. At the semester's end, students will be required to offer class presentations on a selected biblical topic, using the skills acquired in the class.
4. While there will be opportunities to use computers to enhance the learning process in this class, use of computers will be restricted to non-*shiur* time. If there is a specific need for computer use in class itself—e.g. for note-taking—students should arrange for that possibility directly with the teacher.

Recommended Reading:

1. The Five Books of the Chumash (the rest of Tanakh is recommended, too.)
2. Robert Alter, The Art of Biblical Narrative, Basic Books, Inc., NY, 1981.
3. 4. J. Weingreen, A Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew, Second Edition, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1959.

Required Texts (to be purchased):

1. *Chumash Torat Chaim* (תורת חיים), Shemot Volume 1, מוסד הרב קוק, ירושלים.
2. A Hebrew-English Tanakh. Jewish Publication Society Tanakh recommended, but not required.

HUMASH: SHEMOT/EXODUS
HOWARD MARKOSE
Mon., Wed. 8:30-11:30

LEVEL: ADVANCED

This course is designed to bring to the advanced 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)

11:45-1:00 Sunday/Thursday

BEKIUT NEVI'IM RISHONIM
MICHAEL HATTIN
Sun., Thurs. 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL/SPRING

Navigating the Bible

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 the material that constitutes the prophetic works – including their historical setting, 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 the first, narrative section of the Nevi'im, namely the books of Joshua/Yehoshua, Judges/Shoftim, Samuel/Shmuel and Kings/Melachim. This will necessarily entail a fair amount of preparatory 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 a thousand years of Biblical history as we encounter every significant character and event in the story of the people of Israel!** We will meet two times a week and instruction will be in English. Required text: a Hebrew Tanakh with translation.

**RELATIONSHIP INTIMACY
TOVAH LEAH NACHMANI
Sun., Thurs. 11:45-1:00**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL**

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

**JEWISH EXPERIENCES IN MODERNITY
DAVID BERNSTEIN
Sun., Thurs. 11:45-1:00**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL**

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.

**ENCOUNTERING THE DIVINE PRESENCE WITHIN
YISCAH SMITH
Sun., Thurs., 11:45-1:00 pm**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING**

Rabbi Akiva would say, "How beloved it is that the human being was created in the image of G-d; how even more beloved it is that one knows that one was created in the Image." Pirkei Avot 3, 14

This class will explore the teachings of R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, the Piaseczna Rebbe, the Aish Kodesh. We shall examine texts that describe Jewish living and tradition as the cultivation of a spiritual practice. His inspiring and progressive ideas discuss the spiritual nature of our body, mind and heart, how we awaken to the Divine presence within us, and how we can integrate these components and expressions of the Jewish experience into one whole healthy being.

TALMUDIC PERSONALITIES
LEAH ROSENTHAL
Sun., Thurs. 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING

The class will read classic rabbinic texts focusing on different Mishnaic or Talmudic personalities. As we read, we will attempt to gain insight into the literary character and ideological representation of each great figure. The goal of the class is to create a multi-dimensional context which will inform our reading of rabbinic texts.

11:45-1:00 Monday/Wednesday

SIDDUR- Theory and Practice
MICHAEL HATTIN - Fall
ZVI H. - Spring
Mon., Wed. 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

The Siddur is arguably the Jewish people's greatest literary creation. In it are contained not only familiar prayers but a record 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 consider the content of the siddur as 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 structure, historical context and deeper meaning. Along the way, we will discuss how parts of the classic liturgy have been adapted, amended or rejected with the rise of denominationalism. Devotees of all (or no) denominations - with their respective *siddurim* - are welcome.

TALMUDIC HEROINES
GILA FINE
Mon., Wed. 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING

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.

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.

PARSHA IN HEBREW
MEIR SCHWEIGER
Mon., Wed. FALL 11:45-1:00
Sun., Thurs. in SPRING

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

The purpose of this class is to give students an in-depth understanding of the parsha (weekly Torah portion), together with an opportunity to hear and speak Hebrew. We will examine major themes in the parsha, with an emphasis on the classic medieval commentaries, and make every effort to have all discussion be in Hebrew, translating words as needed. Students are expected to read through the parsha before class and to bring a Torat Chaim/ Mikraot Gedolot with them to each session.

CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL
JAMIE SALTER
Mon., Wed. 11:45-1:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING

On the one hand, the State of Israel is the culmination of a dream, or more precisely, many different dreams. On the other hand, the reality of Jewish sovereignty in its own land has led to some difficult realities. This course will examine historical, sociological, economic, religious, and political changes and challenges that have created the present Israeli reality. We will look at different topics in-depth using a variety of sources and methodologies in a sensitive attempt to understand this complicated country a little better. Each class will also include a brief "Israel as Lab" segment, in which students will be encouraged to share aspects of their own contemporary Israel experiences – the good, the bad, the beautiful, and the ugly.

Included in the different topics that we will cover this semester are:

- The Declaration of Independence and its relevance today
- Nationalism, Religion, and Identification in a Jewish State

- 'Church' (or synagogue) and State
- The Political System in Israel
- The 'People's Army' - those who serve and those who don't
- A tribal society? Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and many more...
- Non-Jews in a Jewish State - the 'minorities' of Israel
- The Modern Peace Process (from 'Oslo') and its Impact on Israeli Society

2:30-5:00 Sunday/Tuesday

RAMBAM
LEVI COOPER
Sun., Tues. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: INTRO.
FALL

Maimonides may be the single most influential Jewish scholar of all time. The fascination with Maimonides – or *MY*monides, as many seem to claim – transcends the divisions between different streams of Judaism. Indeed, the writings of Maimonides, or “Rambam” as he is known in Hebrew, are filled with gems in 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, contribution, his place in Sephardic tradition, and unique 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

**SOCIAL JUSTICE TRACK/
 JEWISH SOCIAL JUSTICE
 MEESH HAMMER-KOSSOY
 Sun., Tues. 2:30-5:00**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
 FALL**

We all want to build a better world, but how should that world look? How should we get there?

This class is open to all levels. All sources will be provided in both Hebrew and English. Because one of our major goals is to see how Jewish values are being translated into social issues in Israel today, students enrolling in this course are

also committing to attend supplementary lectures and field trips, as described below.

What we hope to achieve:

- To define a Jewish Vision(s) of Social Justice through Jewish text.
- To give current and future activists the tools to use Jewish text to inform and inspire their work.
- To learn about the state of the field and the specific challenges in the State of Israel with the help of supplemental guest lectures and field visits.

What we will do to get there:

- A close study of Jewish texts, primarily Talmud and codes, around issues of the environment, economic justice, democracy, treatment of minority groups within and outside the Jewish community in Israel.
- Supplementary lectures by experts in the field, in both governmental and non-profit sectors. Most of these lectures will be during lunch before the class or on Tuesday during “Critical Issues.”
- Field trips: many will be on Sunday or Tuesday afternoons (during, before and after class), with a few at other times.
- Students are strongly encouraged to take a leadership role in the community service component of the Pardes program.
- The service component of the Pardes program (Thursday afternoon volunteering) is mandatory.

FIVE MEGILLOT
MICHAEL HATTIN
Sun., Tues. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: INTERM/ ADV.
FALL

This course will consider some concise books in Tanakh that, besides being Biblical texts, also serve a public liturgical purpose. That is to say that they are read in *Beit Knesset* as part of the prayer service, each one in its appropriate season. We will begin by studying Sefer Yonah and then go on to consider the five Megillot: Shir HaShirim, Ruth, Eichah, Kohelet and Esther.

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: good “Mikraot Gedolot” editions of Trei Asar (for Sefer Yonah) and Chamesh Megillot (for the rest) as well as a Hebrew Tanakh. Handouts will be provided.

THE CHALLENGE OF ABSTRACT CONCEPTS IN TORAH LITERATURE

ELISHA ANCELOVITS

Tuesdays 2:45-4:15 PM

KOLLEL LEVEL

This class covers the range of traditional Torah literature. It focuses both on learning the skill of interpreting a term or concept in its actual variant uses (a return to authorial thrust) and on finding the commonality of meaning between variant uses (which exists for most of Jewish history).

SEXUALITY AND SANCTITY

RAHEL BERKOVITS

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

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

SPRING

Sexuality and Sanctity: Towards a Jewish Sexual Ethic

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.

JUDIASM AS A SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

DANIEL SILVERSTEIN

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

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

SPRING

What is the legacy of Jewish wisdom and spiritual technology that we can harness to live the best possible life? In this course we will touch the depth and breadth of Judaism's profound spiritual and mystical conversations, which span millennia and which shed a fascinating light on many of our contemporary individual and societal challenges.

We will study text, learn some of its historical and spiritual context, and experience for ourselves many of the spiritual practices suggested by our some of our greatest teachers. The course will include a built-in spiritual havruta (partner/buddy) component and will offer two simultaneous structural approaches to Jewish spirituality: living deeply with the calendar and the development of the Jewish spiritual conversation over millennia. Each class will also have a practice component

MIDRASH
LEVI COOPER
Sun., Tues. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE
SPRING

The Jewish People are not the People of the Book; we are the People of the *Midrash*. More than any other work, it is the *Midrash* that fashions Jewish collective consciousness and makes us who we are today. This path-breaking course will crack open the creative world of *Midrash*.

We will explore different genres 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 of key terms, such as *Midrash*, *Aggada*, *Aggadata*, *Halakha*.

The aim of the class is 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.

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

In addition to the texts studied in class, each student will embark upon a supplementary on a self-study project, choosing a specific Midrash to learn throughout the semester.

What you will need to bring to class:

Notebook and folder for handouts

A Midrash of *your* choice

recommended: Hebrew/English dictionary

2:30-5:00 Monday/Wednesday

HALAKHA
ZVI HIRSCHFIELD
Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00
(MICHAEL HATTIN IN SPRING)

LEVEL: INTRO./INTERM.

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

Areas of study will include Jewish holidays (as appropriate) as well as the laws of **Shabbat (first semester) and Kashrut (second semester)**. Handouts will be provided. There is no expectation of commitment to Halakhic observance.

WOMEN & HALAKHA: PAST TRADITIONS & FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

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

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL

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 *mitzvoth*: *kiddush* on Shabbat, Grace after Meals and *zimmun*, *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.

STRIVING FOR THE DIVINE
MIKE FEUER
Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL

Whether one looks without or within, seeking the absolute is an act of *avodah*, Divine service. In this class we will explore the book of Genesis and other classical texts in order to develop a language which can make such service relevant to our lives and communities. Together with the text, we will engage our own dreams and desires as we ask the question, *what does it mean to strive for the Divine?*

GREATEST SUGIYOT OF THE TALMUD
NECHAMA GOLDMAN-BARASH
Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL

This class will examine a wide range of some of the most famous sections in the Talmud in order to appreciate the literary depth and structure that makes up the different sub-units (*sugiyot*) of Talmudic discourse. Rabbinic stories and halakhic analysis intertwine to make up a fascinating and very influential dialogue that has relevance for us today in matters of practice, belief and interpersonal relationships. Students will learn to listen to the voices in the Beit Midrash of the Sages and join their own to an ongoing 2000-year-old conversation. We will examine the *sugiyot* (topics) with an eye to building a solid Talmudic foundation for future study. In addition to focusing on fine-tuning skills, such as Talmudic terminology and methodology, we will also explore the conceptual framework of each and every topic and, in some cases, the practical legal ramifications as well. There will be a source booklet that everyone will be required to purchase.

SEMINAR IN MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT
ZVI HIRSCHFIELD
Mon, Wed. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING

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.

RAV KOOK: SONG OF THE SOUL
MIKE FEUER
Mon., Wed. 2:30-5:00

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING

Rav Kook is called one of the spiritual giants of the 20th century. In this class we will explore his approach to Divine service and his thoughts on fundamental questions which arise from learning Torah in a post-modern world. Our focus will be on unpacking these texts in their intellectual and cultural context, but we will also engage them as examples of a life lived in intimacy with the Divine.

Evening Classes

HASIDUT
LEVI COOPER
Sundays 5:15-7:15 PM

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

Hasidut – or *Chassidus* – is a movement that continues to provide inspiration, fascination, and at times 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 a foundational hasidic text. 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 *havruta* at the beginning of the next class.

Text: *Derekh Pikudekha* (to be purchased or downloaded; editions in “Rashi” script can be downloaded from hebrewbooks.org).

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.

TALMUD SKILLS INTENSIVE
DANIEL REIFMAN
Mon., Wed. 5:15-7:15 pm

LEVEL: INTERM./ADV.

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.

TORAH TROPE
ELISA PEARLMAN
Mondays 5:10-6:10

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

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 Torah, while also looking at how the trope functions as an interpretation to the text. We will look specifically at the texts of Bereishit (The Creation) and the portion read at Rosh Hodesh. No previous experience necessary.

MEGILLAT ESTHER
ELISA PEARLMAN
Mondays 6:15-7:15

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
FALL SEMESTER ONLY

Learn to chant this special trope in preparation for Purim. No previous experience necessary.

HAFTARAH TROPE
ELISA PEARLMAN
Mon. 6:15-7:15

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL
SPRING

During this course, students will acquire the tools to chant any Haftarah, while also looking at how the trope functions as an interpretation to the text. We will be looking specifically at the Haftarah read at Simchat Torah.

NIGHT SEDER (SEDER EREV)
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

JEWISH MEDITATION: TEXTS & PRACTICES
MIRA NICULESCU
Tuesdays 7:15-8:45 PM

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

Jewish spiritual practices have been at the core of the Jewish tradition for millennia. Reserved to an elite and transmitted orally, they were little known until the middle of the twentieth century. Today, thanks to renewed interest in meditation and the publication of Jewish meditation sources, Jews now learn and practice a variety of Jewish contemplative techniques. In this class, we will explore experientially the world of Jewish meditation, from text to practice. While the main focus will be on modern Chassidut, especially around the work of The Piaczesner Rebbe, we will have sessions on Maimonides, Abulafia, Cordovero, Jewish mindfulness, and more.

Details: All levels, co-ed. Each session is comprised of text study, guided and silent meditation, a teaching, and nigunim.

Class is by donation. Suggested donation of 25 NIS (minimum).

Contact: miraneshama@gmail.com <https://www.miraneshama.com/>

**SCRIBAL ARTS
DOV LAIMON**

LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL

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.