



## Course Descriptions 2022-2023/ 5782-5783

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9:00-12:00 Sunday/Tuesday/Thursday

**HUMASH/TANACH**

**LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY**

**TOVAH LEAH NACHMANI**

**Sun., Tues., Thurs. 9:00-12:00**

**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.

**GENESIS:** Students will learn how to engage in a close and careful reading of the most exciting and foundational stories in the book of Genesis / Beresheit - in Hebrew - and to mine the depths of the text for nuance and meaning. We will seek the wisdom of classic and modern Jewish commentaries together with the tools of literary analysis in Hebrew, to give students a stronger footing and a deeper desire to continue to uncover the layers of understanding which are not apparent in translations of the text.

**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.

**TALMUD**

**LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE**

**RAHEL BERKOVITS**

**Sun., Tues., Thurs. 9:00-12:00**

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. 9:00-12:00**

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 Bava Kamma.

**TALMUD**

**LEVEL: ADVANCED**

**NECHAMA GOLDMAN BARASH**

**Sun., Tues., Thurs. 9:00-12:00**

Messechet Ketubot

We will be studying the second half of 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.

**TALMUD AND HALAKHA**

**LEVEL: KOLLEL**

**ELISHA ANCSELOVITS and DANIEL REIFMAN**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>TALMUD–MASEKHET BAVA KAMA</b><br/> <b>Sunday and Thursday 09:00-12:00</b><br/> <b>(Daniel Reifman)</b></p> | <p><b>HILKHOT AVEILUT AND NIDDA</b><br/> <b>Tuesday, 09:00-12:00</b><br/> <b>(Elisha Ancselovits)</b></p> |
|--|---|

The Talmud portion of this course will study Masekhet Bava Kama, beginning with chapter 7, which addresses the laws of *geneivah* (theft). In addition to examining the key halakhic concepts, we will focus on skills needed to prepare a sugya on one's own, including analysis of how different commentators resolve difficulties in the gemara text and understand the relationship between parallel sugyot.

**9:00-12:00 Monday/Wednesday**

**MISHNA/TALMUD**

**ZVI HIRSCHFIELD**

**Mon., Wed. 9:00- 12:00**

**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

**HUMASH**

**MICHAEL HATTIN**

**Mon., Wed. 9:00- 12:00**

**LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE**

The book of Genesis is about beginnings: the dawn of the world, the emergence of the first human beings and the origins of the people of Israel as told through the story of their progenitors. However, beginnings are often challenging, and the book of Genesis is full of challenges. This means that the narratives of Sefer Breisheet are relevant for us as well!

In this course, we will study foundational, famous and sometimes frustrating stories as we follow the arc stretching from the creation of the cosmos in chapter 1 through the drama of the *Akeda* ("binding of Isaac") at Mount Moriah in chapter 22. Our studies will be guided by careful literary 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 one-volume Tanakh with English translation as well as the first volume of the Torat Chaim edition on Breisheet.

**HUMASH**

**JUDY KLITSNER**

**Mon., Wed. 9:00- 12:00**

**LEVEL: INTERM./ADV.**

**FALL ONLY**

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 Bereishit. In approaching each narrative, we will conduct close readings, utilizing many tools of literary analysis. Our 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.

Please note: this class will meet in the first semester only.

**Course requirements:**

Regular, punctual attendance twice weekly

Independent preparation and class presentation at the end of the 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:**

חומש תורת חיים—Bereishit, volume 1

A Tanakh with English translation (Jewish Publication Society recommended)

**Recommended:**

Mikra'ot Gedolot, 5 volumes of Chumash in one volume, with commentaries, Horev Publisher

**HUMASH**

**LEVEL: ADVANCED**

**HOWARD MARKOSE**

**Mon., Wed. 9:00- 12:00**

This course is designed to bring to the student a greater understanding and appreciation for the text that is called Breisheet (Genesis). 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 a relatively high level of fluency. They will learn to translate using English translation as well as a basic use of Biblical Hebrew Grammar. No previous background in Breisheet is required, although it can certainly work to the student's advantage to already have studied this book of the Tanakh.

Students are to bring to class both Breisheet 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 Tanakh (either Mandelkern or the preferred Even Shoshan).

**VAYIKRA**  
**ELHANAN MILLER**  
**Wednesdays only 9:00- 12:00**

**LEVEL: HEBREW**  
**FALL**

The Book of Vayikra (Leviticus) is considered one of the most challenging books of the Torah, as much of it deals with sacrifices and issues of sanctity dependent on Temple worship. In this class, which will take place in Hebrew and English, we will delve into the fascinating world of temple ritual and holiness through the lens of midrash and classic commentary.

**HUMASH**  
**ELHANAN MILLER**  
**Mon., Wed. 9:00- 12:00**

**LEVEL: INTERM./ADV.**  
**SPRING**

We will study Humash and develop reading skills in classic Torah commentary and midrash with a focus on language and literary form, relying greatly on the Hebrew text.

**1:15-2:30 Sunday/Thursday**

**CULTIVATING SPIRITUAL PRACTICE**  
**YISCAH SMITH**  
**Mon., Wed. 1:15-2:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

This class will explore teachings from Rabbi Kalonymus Kalmash Shapira, the Piaseczner Rebbe, that view Jewish living and tradition as a spiritual practice. He himself was a mystic, pioneering educator and highly evolved spiritual guide. 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. This awareness of one's inner being cultivates an expanded and higher consciousness, affording the practitioner an imminent, unique and direct encounter with the Divine.

The class will focus on two areas of cultivating a spiritual lens through which the student can begin to view the world we live in.

First, this class is designed to provide the necessary tools that will enable the student to discover the inner-self and to hear the soul's unique "still small voice." Learning various Jewish meditative and contemplative practices and practicing them through guided sits is the first component of the course.

Second, this class will focus on experiencing Talmud Torah as a spiritual practice. The body of the Torah, the external dimension, conveys sacred laws and narratives, which inspire us

and guide us how to behave. However, the soul of the Torah, the internal dimension, invites us to enter a different realm. Less the realm of knowledge and doing, and more the realm of being and experience.

Cultivating receiving this inner Torah activates a consciousness beyond our intellect, whereby learning Torah becomes a personalized, unique and private encounter with the Divine. Receiving Torah in this way now becomes a mystical and intimate experience, whereby the Divine teaches the individual one's own personal and unique Torah. Learning the Torah as a spiritual practice helps the student sense unity within oneself and beyond in the world at large... which for many is in fact the religious experience that many yearn for.

### **TEXT AND REALITY IN JEWISH SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**ECONOMIC JUSTICE**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**MEESH HAMMER-KOSSOY**

**FALL**

**Sun., Thurs. 1:15-2:30**

#### **Text and Reality in Jewish Social Justice: Economic Justice**

Fall 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.

This semester we will focus on economic justice—how to translate Jewish attitudes towards money and economic systems on the interpersonal and public level. We will study issues like consumption, debt, capitalism, poverty and tzedakah, the role of the state, democracy, globalization and global poverty, and worker's rights. The semester will have 2 Friday morning trips in lieu of a weekday class and 2 Sunday trips that span into lunch time, as well as shorter interactions with outside experts.

**BEKIUT NEVIIM**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**MICHAEL HATTIN**

**FALL**

**Sun., Thurs. 1:15-2:30**

#### **The Emergence of an Ideal State**

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 significant narrative section of the Nevi'im, focusing on the

lengthy books of Samuel/Shemuel and the first book of Kings/Melachim. 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. We will begin by constructing a broad outline for the books of Joshua/Yehoshua and Judges/Shoftim, before tracing the emergence of the monarchy through the complicated lives of Samuel, Saul and David. **Along the way, we will cover many centuries of Biblical history and encounter 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.

**THE SOUL OF SHABBAT IN PRAYER AND SONG**  
**TOVAH LEAH NACHMANI**  
**Sun., Thurs. 1:15-2:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**  
**SPRING**

Students in this interactive course will study the Shabbat texts in the original Hebrew including Kabbalat Shabbat, prayers from the traditional Siddur and beloved Shabbat songs and *nigunim*, all of which were composed to express and to arouse the soul, or the many souls of Shabbat.

Students will also gain a broad exposure to Jewish thinkers, ancient to modern, around the many themes of Shabbat, and will be encouraged to share their own understandings and experiences of Shabbat by writing personal reflections of their own.

All texts will be in Hebrew alongside translations.

**CYCLES: ANNUAL AND LIFE**  
**ZVI HIRSCHFIELD**  
**Sun., Thurs. 1:15-2:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**  
**SPRING**

Cycles is a course that will explore the meaning and development of Jewish holy days 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 Holy day, and deepen our personal understanding and connection to these moments. Sources will be in both English and Hebrew.

**1:15-2:30 pm Monday/Wednesday**

**ULPAN LA-INYAN**  
**Mon, Wed 1:15-2:30**

**LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY**  
**FALL**

Introductory Hebrew. There will be an extra charge for this class.

**SIDDUR/TEFILLA**  
**AMIRIT ROSEN**  
**Mon, Wed 1:15-2:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**  
**FALL**

The Siddur: Structure, Meaning and Practice

The Siddur, the Jewish prayer book, might be described as "the book of Jewish life". It contains the set order of the prayer service, starting from the moment we wake up, continuing with daily prayers, Sabbath prayers, prayers for festivals and other important prayers Jews have chosen to have handy in their prayer book. The Siddur reflects layers of historical and cultural development together with linguistic and ideological changes that have been consolidated into the Jewish prayer book, over almost 2000 years.

The prayers within the Siddur express a sense of identity and history, a longing for God's presence, expressions of both historical suffering together with yearnings for a better future. The Siddur also provides an educational and emotional framework leading the person praying through stations and sources that enhance the individual's dialogue with oneself, with God and with the world surrounding them.

This course will introduce the central prayers that make up the daily morning prayer – Tefilat Shacharit, as it appears in in the Siddur. We will follow the course of the prayers as we understand their structure, their historical context and their meaning. Along the way, we will also discuss the basic framing of the service, the role of the prayer leader and the "choreography" of the service.

The course will include opportunities for personal and group expression, enabling mental, emotional and spiritual exploration of the prayers and of the inner world of the students. As the Siddur is a creative expression of the Jewish people over time, this course sees the students as a continuation of this creativity. The input of those present infuses the spiritual and historical texts with the Divine meaning of our current realities.

**BIBLICAL HEBREW GRAMMAR**  
**HOWARD MARKOSE**  
**Mon., Wed. 1:15-2:30**

**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.

**PARSHAT HASHAVUA**  
**ELHANAN MILLER**  
**Mondays only 1:15- 2:30**

**LEVEL: HEBREW**  
**FALL**

The 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.

**CONTEMPORARY ISRAELI SOCIETY**  
**JAMIE SALTER**  
**Mon, Wed 1:15-2:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**  
**SPRING**

On the one hand, for many 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. Some classes 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 Oslo Peace Process and its Impact on Israeli Society

**SEFER BAMIDBAR**  
**MICHAEL HATTIN**  
**Mon., Wed. 1:15-2:30**

**LEVEL: HEBREW**  
**SPRING**

Sefer BeMidbar is the story of the journey towards the Promised Land. The events of the book transpire over the course of almost forty years as the people of Israel make their way from Mount Sinai to the Plains of Moav, covering not only geographical ground but much existential distance as well. It is a book full of challenge and setback, marred by failure and disappointment, but also infused with hope and anticipation.

We will consider the book as a complete unit and then carefully analyze some selected narratives. We will study these with the perspective of the rabbinic *midrash* and the medieval commentaries and then view them through a more modern lens as literary documents that possess structure, plot progression, theme and character development.

Our goals are to build skills and confidence, to hone our skills of careful reading in the original Hebrew, to familiarize ourselves with the commentaries and their methodology, and to appreciate the self-referential and cross-referential qualities of the Tanakh. Along the way, we will continue to develop a coherent methodology for the study of any Tanakh text, using Sefer BeMidbar as our template. Instruction will be in Hebrew.

Required texts: The Torat Hayim edition of Sefer BeMidbar or an online version such as AlHaTorah.org. as well as a Hebrew Tanakh.

### **3:00-5:30 Sunday/Tuesday**

**RAMBAM**

**LEVI COOPER**

**Sun., Tues. 3:00-5:30**

**LEVEL: INTRODUCTORY**

**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 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, *Mishne Torah*. Texts will be prepared in *havruta* 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: *Mishne Torah* (the one volume edition with dots is recommended)

Notebook and folder for handouts

Recommended: modern Hebrew/English dictionary

**WOMEN & HALAKHA: PAST TRADITIONS & FUTURE DEVELOPMENT**

**RAHEL BERKOVITS**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**Sun., Tues. 3:00-5:30**

**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 *mitzvot*: *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.

**SEMINAR IN MODERN JEWISH THOUGHT**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**ZVI HIRSCHFIELD**

**FALL**

**Sun., Tues. 3:00-5:30**

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.

**HALAKHA: Yoreh Deah**

**LEVEL: ADVANCED**

**DANIEL REIFMAN**

**FALL**

**Sun., Tues. 3:00-5:30**

Yoreh Deah.

**PASKENING RESPONSIBLY**

**LEVEL: ADVANCED**

**ELISHA ANCSELOVITS**

**Tuesdays 3:00-5:30**

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

## **SEXUALITY AND SANCTITY: TOWARDS A JEWISH SEXUAL ETHIC**

**RAHEL BERKOVITS**

**Sun., Tues. 3:00-5:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**SPRING**

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.

## **HALAKHA AND HISTORY**

**LEVI COOPER**

**Sun., Tues. 3:00-5:30**

**LEVEL: INTERM./ADV.**

**SPRING**

The Jewish legal system – *Halakha* – is often perceived, portrayed, and studied as disengaged and disconnected from its historical contexts and social realities. Some people laud Jewish law as a system that transcends the vicissitudes and vagaries of history; others condemn it as a legal system out of touch with reality. These perceptions are nothing more than illusions. Every legal system, every norm, every judicial opinion is rooted in time and place, influenced by its immediate surroundings and swayed by its wider cultural context. Halakha is no exception.

This class will explore the interactions between Jewish law and evolving realities in various contexts from the invention of the printing press until contemporary times. How did major historical events – on the world stage and in Jewish communities – shape, influence, and affect Halakha and the administration of the Jewish legal system? What were the reactions of Jewish legal scholars to inventions, cultural change, and new realities? What legal tools were used to bridge gaps between law-on-the-books and law-in-action; between traditional Halakha and effervescent life.

Topics that will be discussed may include the scientific revolution, enlightenment, popularisation of mysticism, splitting of Judaism into competing denominations, relationship to non-Jews, the food industry, world wars, nationalism, feminism, technology, digitisation, and more.

**Vicissitudes of Halakha Research Project:** In addition to the topics explored in class, each student will be encouraged to embark upon a supplementary self-study venture. This will involve selecting a specific issue at the beginning of the semester, and tracing the halakhic

literature from the earliest sources through to contemporary times. This undertaking will complement the classes, and provide an opportunity to implement the tools and methods discussed, and assist in gaining familiarity with the halakhic bookcase. Towards the end of the semester, there will be a forum for students to present their research and receive feedback.

Texts will be in Hebrew.

What you will need to bring to class:

Notebook and folder for handouts

Recommended: easy access to dictionaries

**ADVANCED HALAKHA: HILKHOT POALIM  
MEESH HAMMER-KOSSOY  
Sunday 3:00-5:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL  
SPRING**

אמר [רב יהודה](#) האי מאן דבעי למהוי חסידא לקיים מילי דנדיקין

[Rav Yehuda](#) says: **One who wants to be pious should observe the matters of tractate *Nezikin*,**

בבא קמא ל ע"ב

How much should you pay your childcare worker when under COVID quarantine? How much danger is it permitted to undertake for work? Should Jewish institutions hire non-union employees? Under what conditions may emergency workers go on strike? How do you fire an employee in a halakhically acceptable manner? We are sure to wrestle in our life with ethical issues as both employers and employees.

In this class, we'll balance between learning core halakhic principles in *Nezikin* such as *minhag, dina demalkhut dina, adam muad leolam, tanai bemamon*, etc., and their modern manifestations on topics such as labor law, unions, COVID, foreign workers, insurance, worker privacy, minimum and living wage. Using modern responsa as our jumping point, we'll return to the original biblical and Talmudic precedents. With Divine help, the result will be big picture understanding of the development of halakha, facility with responsa literature, traditional attitudes towards labor, money, power and responsibility and more. Additionally, we'll gain invaluable guidance for improved ethical conduct in the workplace.

**3:00-5:30 Monday/Wednesday**

**HALAKHA  
MICHAEL HATTIN  
Mon., Wed. 3:00-5:30**

**LEVEL: INTRO./INTERM.  
FALL**

**The Laws of Shabbat: Observances, Rituals and Customs**

Shabbat is one of the cornerstones of Jewish identity; it has been an integral part of the Jewish experience for thousands of years. After a thorough exploration of the foundational *meaning* of Shabbat, we will embark upon the study of practical *Halakha* - the "what" and

"how" of Shabbat observance. We will utilize some of the classical *Halakhic* texts such as Rambam and the Shulchan Aruch, as well as selected modern commentaries, to investigate specific areas of practice. Along the way, we will gain basic familiarity with *Halakhic* codes and learn how to navigate them.

Areas of study will include important aspects of Shabbat practice such as candle lighting, Kiddush/Havdala, "Melacha" and its definition as well as the laws of cooking. Along the way, we will also consider *Halakhot* of the Jewish holidays as they come up (Rosh HaShana, Yom Kippur, Succot and Chanuka). Handouts will be provided. **There is no expectation of commitment to Halakhic observance.**

**TALMUDIC HEROINES**  
**GILA FINE**  
**Sun., Tues. 3:00-5:30**

**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.

**TALMUDIC SKILLS**  
**DANIEL REIFMAN**  
**Mon., Wed. 3:00-5:30**

**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.

**HALAKHA**  
**MICHAEL HATTIN**  
**Mon., Wed. 3:00-5:30**

**LEVEL: INTRO./INTERM.**  
**SPRING**

**The Laws of Kashrut: How to Set Up and Maintain a Kosher Kitchen**

For thousands of years, the Jewish dietary laws – “Kashrut” – have shaped Jewish life. To this day, Kashrut is a definer of our cultural and religious identity. After we familiarize ourselves with some foundational interpretations of the *meaning* of Kashrut, we will turn our attention to practical *Halakha* - the "what" and "how" of the dietary laws. We will utilize some of the classical *Halakhic* texts such as Rambam, the Shulchan Aruch and selected modern commentaries as we investigate Kashrut practice. Along the way, we will gain basic familiarity with Halakhic codes and how to navigate them.

Our studies will cover the process of of kosher food preparation and consumption: the kosher species and their slaughter, mixtures of meat and milk, mix-ups in the kitchen, *koshering*/immersion of vessels, and many more related topics. We will also consider the *Halakhot* of the Jewish holidays as they come up (Purim, Pesach and Shavuot). Handouts will be provided. **There is no expectation of commitment to Halakhic observance.**

**STRANGERS IN STRANGE LANDS:  
TALES OF TRAVELING RABBIS  
GILA FINE  
Mon. Wed. 3:00-5:30**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL  
SPRING**

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.

### **Evening Classes**

**HASIDUT  
LEVI COOPER  
Sun., Tues. 5:45-7:30 PM**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

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, 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.

This year, 5783 (2022/23) will be dedicated to studying *Yosher Divrei Emet*.

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 5:40-6:40**

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**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**ELISA PEARLMAN**

**FALL**

**Mondays 6:45-7:45**

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

**HAFTARAH TROPE**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**ELISA PEARLMAN**

**SPRING**

**Mondays 6:45-7:45**

Learn to chant the beautiful melody for the Haftarah. We will be looking specifically at the Haftarah read at Simchat Torah.

**NIGHT SEDER (SEDER EREV)**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**RAHEL BERKOVITS**

**Mondays 6:15-8:15 PM**

*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: 5:45-7:45 pm**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**  
**FALL**

“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**  
**DOV LAIMON**

**LEVEL: OPEN TO ALL**

**Wednesdays 5:45-7:15 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, learn 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.