 **Date:** Sep. 2015

Course Name:

**Chapters of the Fathers** **I & II (Pirke Avot)**

**Type of course:** Lecture

**Year of Studies:** 2015-2016 **Semester:** Fall & Spring **Hours/credits:** 2

**Course Description:**

Students learn *Pirke Avot* (*Ethics of the Fathers*), and investigate concepts in Jewish philosophy and ethics. The goal of the course is for students to clarify what the Talmud says about these issues, and develop their own thinking.

**Topics will include:**

1. Independent thinkers vs. cult followers
2. Jewish psychology: The three core personality traits
3. What is true idealism?
4. Creating a Jewish home
5. How many true friends can you have?
6. Choosing a neighborhood to live in
7. Success comes with a work ethic
8. Hillel vs. Shammai
9. What is free will and is it an illusion?
10. Study vs. action

**Course requirements**

* Regular attendance – a maximum of 2 absences will be allowed per semester, including absence due to illness. Excessive absences will result either in lowering of your course grade, or in no credit for the course.
* 2 late appearances will constitute 1 absence.
* All writing assignments must be submitted on the announced due date. Late papers will be docked at least one full letter grade. If you cannot attend class on the day a paper is due, be sure to have someone else bring the paper to class for you.
* Participation in class discussion.
* There will be monthly quizzes.
* The final exam will have three parts: Identification of quotations, short essays and a longer essay on a new quote.

**Pre-requisites**

**Requirements/ Assignment/Tasks**

**Grade Components (Number grade or pass/fail)**

#### Bibliography: (Required/ Elective)

**Required textbooks, other textbooks**

Pirke Avot (Ethics of the Fathers).

The text, in both Hebrew and English translation, will be handed out in class.

**Required material for the final**