 **Date: Fall – Winter 2021-22**

***Transformative Figures in Jewish History - Meir Balofsky***

**Year of Studies: Semester: Hours/credits**

**The courses objectives:**

*Participants will become familiar with the people and institutions that make up the contemporary North American Jewish world.*

**Course Description:**

* *First semester will focus on the post-temple era through the end of the 19th century. Figures will include Rabbi Judah the Prince, Maimonides, Rashi, Baal Shem Tov, Moses Mendelssohn and Herzl. Themes will include the origins of the siddur and prayer, the evolution of the oral law and various renaissances in learning, including Kabbalah and Chassidism. The birth of the modern Reform movement will be discussed.*

**The Process of the Course: Semester 1**

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| Primary Focus | Topic of the Lesson | Lesson |
| *Introduction.* What are the institutions and experiences that make up the Jewish World today? What is the value in understanding where these came from and who were the people behind them? | | 1 |
| *The “new” challenges of the Diaspora* | The survival of Torah and scholarship. The Oral Law & Rabbi Judah the Prince. | 2 |
| *Amram Gaon / Saadia Gaon* | Siddur. How do we pray? Why the siddur is the way it is. | 3 |
| *Rashi and RambamI* | Commentary and Accessibility. The influence of the commentators and expanding the Horizons of Learning. Maimonides. | 4 |
| *13 Principles of Faith*  *Part I* | Maimonides - the impact and significance of the 13 principles of faith | 5 |
| *13 Principles of Faith*  *Part II* | Maimonides - the impact and significance of the 13 principles of faith | 6 |
| *The Shulchan Aruch* | Practical Judaism. Bringing scholarship to the masses. Rabbis Karo and Isserles. | 7 |
| *The Arizal and Safed* | Emergence of Safed. Kabbalah | 8 |
| *Origins of modern Kiruv* | Chassidic Movement and the *Mitnagdim*. Baal Shem Tov, Vilna Gaon and the legacy of Shabbtai Tzvi. | 9 |
| *Moses Mendelssohn,*  *Isaac Mayer Wise* | Emancipation & Enlightenment. The Reform movement. | 10 |
| *Vilna Gaon, Herzl, Rav Kook, The Agudah* | Modern Zionism and the Orthodox Jewish community. | 11 |
|  | Review | 12 |

**Course requirements**

*Semester 2: Final Exam 50%*

*Assignment 25% Choose a theme from this semester. Research a deeper dive into the theme*

*and its current state in the Jewish world. Project two possible and realistic*

*futures of this subject for the next two generations.*

*Participation / Attendance 25%*

**Grade Components** Number Grade

**Required textbooks, other textbooks -** all content will be provided