Date: Sep. 2021 

Course Name:

Jewish Literacy

**Type of course:** Lecture

2 Credits

**Year of Studies:** 2021-2022 **Semester:** Spring **hours/credits:** 2

**Instructor**: Rabbi A. Yablok

**The courses objectives: (Overall Objectives/ Specific Objectives)**

1. To equip students with answers to the most fundamental questions concerning life as a Jew - drawing from classic and contemporary Torah sources
2. To engage students in an interactive dialogue surrounding these questions, enabling them to explore the different facets of these issues as well as their own personal orientation towards them
3. To activate students’ creative energies, empowering them to independently explore solutions to core religious and spiritual challenges

**Course Description:**

Each class will be centered around one core question related to God, existence, religious faith and practice, and others. Several classic sources will be presented offering several opinions on the matter, which will guide a classroom discussion. Several creative projects will be assigned, where students will have to explore challenging topics of their own choosing and present the class with creative solutions to them.

**Detailed Lesson plan:**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Lesson #** | **Topic** | **Sources** |
| **1** | Is Judaism a Religion? | **Rabbi Shimshon Rafael Hirsch –** Exodus 6:6  Definition of religion |
| **2** | Why so many rules?  Understanding the role of Mitzvot | **Horev**; *Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch; introduction*  **Guide to the Perplexed**; *Rambam*; 1:34 |
| **3** | How many Torah’s are there? Exploring the dynamic between the written and oral Torahs | **Rashi -** Tractate Berachot 6b **The Vilna Gaon** on the difference between written and Oral Torah  **Rambam** – Introduction to the commentary on the Mishnah |
| **4** | Defining Modern Orthodoxy | **Dr. Chaim Waxman** – Modern Orthodoxy vs. Behavioral Orthodoxy |
| **5** | Vashti’s Tale – The story within a story of Purim | **Tractate Megilah 12b**  **Tractate Sanhedrin 96a**  **Commentary of the Chofetz Chaim** |
| **6** | The Jewish Definition of Happiness | **Pirkei Avot** 4:3  **Dr. Erving Goffman** – the Presentation of Self in Everyday Life |
| **7** | Pesach – Celebrating the Questioning of Our Faith | **Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik** – Pesach as a crash course in Torah  **Michtav Me’Eliyahu, Rabbi Eliayhu Eliezer Dessler** – Volume 2  **Sifsei Chaim, Rabbi Chaim Freidlander** – Holidays Volume 2 |
| **8** | Midterm Project Presentations |  |
| **9** | Defining Kedusha | **Mesilat Yesharim, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato** – Chapter 26 |
| **10** | What we can learn from the Zionist community | Class discussion |
| **11** | What we can learn from the Charedi Community | Class discussion |
| **12** | The relationship between Judaism and the secular world | **The Jews in the Modern World**, H. Rubinstein, 2002 **Rabbi A.I Kook** on Chanukah |

**Course requirements/assignments:** Attendance, participation in class discussions and homework assignments, 1 Midterm project, 1 Final Project

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

**Bibliography:**

Katz, Jacob, Divine Law in Human Hands: Case Studies in Halakhic Flexibility, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press , 1998.

Steinzaltz, Adin, The Essential Talmud, Basic Books Inc., 1976, pp. 3-10, 56-64, 89-101.

Krupnuck, Eliyahu, Gateway to Learning, Feldheim Publishers, 1981.

Lampel, Zvi L., Maimonides’ Introduction to the Talmud, Judaica Press, 1975, pp. 35-41, 73-155.

Berkovits, Eliezer, Not n Heaven: The Nature and Function of Halakha, Ktav Publishing House, 1983, pp. 47-64, 85-100, 113-119.

Schimmel, Harry C., The Oral Law: The Rabbinic Contribution to Torah She-B’al Peh, Feldheim Publishers, 1973, 32-43, 65-71, 87-94.

Schachter, Jacob J., The Student’s Guide Through the Talmud by Z.H. Chajes, Feldheim Publishers 1960.

Bergman, Meir Zvi, Gateway to the Talmud, Mesorah Publications, 1985.

The World of Hirschian Teachings, Feldheim Publishers, 2008, pp. 153-171.

Levi, Yehudah, Torah Study: A Survey of Classic Sources on Timely Issues, Feldheim Publishers, 2002.

Keleman, Lawrence, Permission to Receive, Targum Press, 1996.

Jaffee, Martin S., Fonrobert, E., The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature, Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp. 99- 143.

Neusner, Jacob, The Halakhah: Historical and Religious Perspectives, Koninklijke Brill NV, The

Netherlands, 2002, pp. 134-158.

Wein, Berel, The Oral Law of Sinai, Jossey-Bass, 2008.

Besdin Kraut, Penina, Did Vashti Have a Tail? Reflections on Teaching Midrash Aggadah, Ten

Da’at, Vol. 1, No. 2, 1987, http://www.lookstein.org/articles/vashti.htm[25/02/2013 22:51:35]

The Path of the Just, Rabbi M.C. Luzzato, Feldheim Press, 2002

Commentary on the Chumash, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Feldheim Press, 2007

Dilemmas of Modern Orthodoxy: Sociological and Philosophical, Chaim . Waxman, Judaism and Secular Culture, Aronson Press, 1986

Maimonides Introduction to the Commentary on the Mishnah, Mosad Harav Kook Press, 1965

The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life, Dr. Erving Goffman, 1975

Bomberg ed., Talmud Bavli, Tractate Brachot, 5b.

Bomberg ed., Talmud Bavli, Tractate Hulin, 28a.

Bomberg ed., Talmud Bavli, Tractate Gittin, 60b.

Bomberg ed., Talmud Bavli, Tractate Shabbat, 86a-87b.

Bomberg ed., Talmud Bavli, Tractate Eruvin 54b.

Bomberg ed., Talmud Bavli, Tractate Megillah 12b.

Bomberg ed., Talmud Bavli, Tractate Sanhedrin 96a.