

Introduction to the Jewish Experience

Meir Balofsky

The courses objectives:

Participants will gain a strong familiarity and understanding of major figures, texts and aspects of ritual observance.

Course Description:

The Process of the Course:

Semester 1

Lesson	Topic of the Lesson	Comment
1	Age of the Universe – Creation. The Jewish Year and timeline.	<i>Age of the universe</i>
2	From Adam to Abraham – The Flood	<i>Relative Morality</i>
3	The Patriarchs and Matriarchs	<i>Understanding the “Tent” of Avraham</i>
4	Patriarchs and Matriarchs II	<i>Relationships</i>
5	Joseph Narrative	<i>The Kippa conversation</i>
6	Slavery of Egypt	<i>The Nazi Playbook</i>
7	The 10 Plagues	<i>How & why we celebrate</i>
8	Revelation at Sinai – 10 commandments	<i>Purpose of Mass Revelation</i>
9	Spies – 40 Years. End of the Torah.	<i>What are the 5 books of the Torah?</i>
10	Joshua – Judges – King David	<i>Tribal lands – Role of King</i>
11	First Temple – Aliyah L’Regel	<i>A world with the Temple</i>
12	Review	

Semester 2

Lesson	Topic of the Lesson	Comment
1	Jewish Life Cycle 1	<i>Birth / Brit / Pidyon, Bar- Bat Mitzvah</i>
2	Jewish Life Cycle 2	<i>Weddings</i>
3	Jewish Life Cycle 3	<i>Death and Mourning</i>
4	Rosh Chodesh – Lunar Calendar	<i>What does it mean that the holidays are “late this year”</i>
5	Purim – Part 1	<i>Who were the Jews? The Purim Story</i>
6	Purim – Part 2	<i>How we celebrate today</i>
7	Passover 1	<i>The Haggadah – content and structure. Seder Experience</i>
8	Passover 2	<i>Seder Experience continued. Ritual & Kashrut</i>
9	The Omer and Shavuot	<i>Why is Shavuot the least popular of the major holidays?</i>
10	Shabbat in practice	<i>Cooking / Timers / Eruv</i>
11	Fast days and Tisha' B'Av	<i>How do we mourn for something we didn't experience?</i>
12	Kashrut	<i>The spiritual and the practical</i>

Course requirements

Requirements/ Assignment/Tasks

Semester 1: Final exam: 50%
Participation/ Attendance: 50%

Semester 2: Final Exam 50%
Participation / Attendance 50%

Grade Components (Number grade or pass/fail) .

Number Grade.

Required textbooks, other textbooks - all content will be provided

Required material for the final – all content will be provided