

Transitional Figures in Jewish History

Meir Balofsky

The courses objectives:

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

Semester 1

Lesson	Topic of the Lesson	Primary Focus
1	<i>Introduction.</i> What are the institutions and experiences that make up the Jewish World today? The Kotel. The Walls of Jerusalem	Herod's expansion of the Temple. The Temple mount
2	The survival of Torah and scholarship. The Oral Law & Rabbi Judah the Prince.	<i>The "new" challenges of the Diaspora</i>
3	The Establishment of the Jewish Calendar as we know it	<i>Hillel the Younger</i>
4	Siddur. How do we pray? Why the siddur is the way it is. The Hebrew Language	<i>Amram Gaon Ben Naftali and Ben Asher</i>
5	Maimonides - the impact and significance of the 13 principles of faith	<i>13 Principles of Faith Part I</i>
6	Maimonides - the impact and significance of the 13 principles of faith	<i>13 Principles of Faith Part II</i>
7	Practical Judaism. Bringing scholarship to the masses. Rabbis Karo and Isserles.	<i>The Shulchan Aruch</i>
8	Emergence of Safed. Kabbalah	<i>The Arizal and Safed</i>
9	The messianic idea and cult followings	<i>Shabtai Tzvi</i>
10	Chassidic Movement and the <i>Mitnagdim</i> . Baal Shem Tov,	
11	Emancipation & Enlightenment. The Reform movement. Part I	<i>Moses Mendelssohn, Isaac Mayer Wise</i>
12	Review	

Semester 2

Lesson	Topic of the Lesson	Comment
1	Emancipation & Enlightenment. Conservative and Modern Orthodox. Part II	<i>Solomon Schechter Rav S. R. Hirsch</i>
2	Jewish diversity in Ashkenazi North America	<i>Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist; New Hybrids</i>
3	Israel Alliance Spectrum	<i>How different sects of Jews connect and relate to Israel ideologically and practically</i>
4	The Post-Holocaust Culture	<i>Elie Wiesel. Holocaust identity Judaism over the 4 generations since the war.</i>
5	The Jewish Day School (primary/secondary)	<i>Rav Soloveitchik. Assessing the success and challenges as alumni</i>
6	Jewish Summer Camp	<i>Foundation for Jewish Camp. Experiential education</i>
7	Jewish Music. What makes music Jewish?	<i>Shlomo Carlebach, Debbie Freidman Modern Artists – Israeli and Hassidic</i>
8	Sephardic Halachic World	<i>Influence of Rav Ovadiah.</i>
9	Women Learning & Leadership in Orthodoxy	<i>Sarah Schenirer, Nechama Leibowitz, Maharat / Rabbah Programs</i>
10	Middot & Tikkun Olam / Jewish Social Justice	<i>Heschel: Learning social justice form Torah, not Torah from social justice</i>
11	Intermarriage and Assimilation	<i>Where do we draw the lines? Where did we draw the lines? Where should we draw the lines?</i>
12	Review	

Course requirements

Requirements/ Assignment/Tasks

*Semester 1: Paper - Final. 40%
Participation/ Attendance: 60%*

*Semester 2: Paper - Final. 40%
Participation/ Attendance: 60%*

Grade Components Number Grade

Required textbooks, other textbooks - all content will be provided