Aug. 2025 

Syllabus - Teaching Program for the Course

**Pirkei Avot**

**Rabbi Yitzie Klapper**

**07-1310-01**

**07-1312-01**

**05-216-80**

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| --- | --- |
| **Course Type:** | Lecture |
| **Scope of credits:** | 1 |
| **Year of study:** | 2025-2026 |
| **Semester:** | Fall |
| **Day & Time:** | Thursday 9am-10:30am |
| **Reception:** | Building 411 room 106 |
| **Lecturer Email:** | ravklapper@israelxp.com |
| **Moodle Site:** | lemida.biu.ac.il |

**Course Abstract**

The objective of the course is to enhance our knowledge and understanding of various ideas found in Pirkei Avot. We will discuss important issues and see various points of view on the major ideas that are essential to a Torah lifestyle.

**Learning objectives**

In each lesson, we will delve into different philosophical topics, engaging in lively discussions on the values and morals that are essential to Jewish life. Students will be presented with thought provoking questions and situations thereby encouraging them to think critically about life's most important concepts.

Having completed the course, students have a basic knowledge of foundational topics that are essential to living a Torah lifestyle. They will possess the skills to functionally perform many of the actions necessary to fulfill various Mitzvot. Finally, they will truly value the centrality of mitzvah observance in day to day life.

**Knowledge**

1. Learners will learn the source of our ethics and morals.
2. Learners will learn about the 3 pillars of the world.
3. Learners will understand the Torah approach to healthy relationships between men and women.
4. Learners will understand the depths behind the commandment for us to perform mitzvot.
5. Learners will truly grasp the various reasons as to why it is crucial to keep kosher.

**Skills**

Learners will possess the skills to live a functional, positive, upbeat, and practical Torah life.

**Values**

Upon completion of the course, students will not only have gained knowledge and skills, but they will have reshaped the values by which they live their lives. Ethics, morals, healthy relationships, mitzvot, and kosher will play a larger role in how students choose to live.

**Lessons plan**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Lesson No. | Topic | Active learning |
| 1+2 | What is ethical | Collaborative learning |
| 3 | Pillars of the world | Collaborative learning |
| 3+4 | Healthy Relationships | Collaborative learning |
| 5+6 | Responsibility | Collaborative learning |
| 7+8 | Essence of Mitzvot | Collaborative learning |
| 9+10 | Power of Environment | Collaborative learning |
| 11+12 | kosher | Collaborative learning |

**Final grade**

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| --- | --- |
| Requirements | Weight in the final score |
| Final Exam | Will account for 80% of final grade |
| Assessment Interview | Will account for 20% of final grade |

**Course** **Requirements**

Attendance - Students attend the class regularly.

Assessment Interview- Students must sit down with professor at the end of the semester for an oral exam.

**Bibliography**

* Amos: 5:15
* Bava Kama 8:1
* B. Herring, *Jewish Ethics and Halakhah for Our Times: Sources and Commentary*, 2 vol. (1984–89)
* Deutoramy 16:18-20
* Dietary Laws, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 6, 26-45
* Exodus 23:1-2
* Exodus 23:8
* Leviticus 9:1-11:47
* Leviticus 22:27
* M. Lazarus, *Ethics of Judaism* (1900)
* Micah 6:8
* N. Amsel, *Jewish Encyclopedia of Moral and Ethical Issues* (1994)
* Pirkei Avot, 1:2, 1:5
* Proverbs 25:21-22
* S. Bernfeld, *Foundations of Jewish Ethics* (1967)