Aug. 2025 

Syllabus - Teaching Program for the Course

**Pirkei Avot**

**Rabbi Yitzie Klapper**

07-1311-02

07-1313-02

05-2216-80

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| **Course Type:** | Lecture |
| **Scope of credits:** | 1 |
| **Year of study:** | 2025-2026 |
| **Semester:** | Spring |
| **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 understand the uniqueness, depth, and beauty of Purim.
2. Learners will learn about major concepts about the laws, practices, and history of Pesach.
3. Learners will understand the laws, customs, rules, and history of Sefirat HaOmer.
4. Learners will understand the wisdom of the Rambam’s approach to life: the middle path.
5. Learners will understand the uniqueness, depth, and beauty of Shavuot.
6. Learners will delve into the importance of choosing our words carefully as well as the power of our words on ourselves and others.

**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. Purim, Pesach, Sefirat HaOmer, Rambam’s middle path, Shavuot, and the power of our words will play a larger role in how students choose to live.

**Lessons plan**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Lesson No. | Topic | Active learning |
| 1+2 | Purim | Collaborative learning |
| 3+4 | Pesach | Collaborative learning |
| 5 | Sefirat HaOmer | Collaborative learning |
| 6 | Rambam’s Middle Path | Collaborative learning |
| 7 | Shavuot | Collaborative learning |
| 8+9 | Power of Speech / Honesty | Collaborative learning |
| 10+11 | Lashon Hara | 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 exams.

**Bibliography**

* Aristotle, "The Nicomachean Ethics Book 4, Chapter 3 (1123a36-1125a35) Summary." *Shmoop*. Shmoop University, Inc., 11 Nov. 2008.
* Belsky, Piskei Harav Belsky page 122
* https://www.haggadot.com/clip/persian-dayeinu-tradition
* Mansour, Rabbi Eli , - http://www.dailyhalacha.com/Display.asp
* Rimon, Rav Yosef Tzvi https://www.etzion.org.il/en/sefirat-haomer-biblical-or-rabbinic-obligation-0
* Shechter, R’ Herschel “Inyanei Purim”
* Shternbuch, Rav Moshe, Moadim UZmanim (Vol 4 Siman 286 pg 46)
* Shternbuch, Rav Moshe, Teshuvot Vihanhagot, 1:555
* Stepler, Purim in a new light,
* Soloveitchik, Rav Yosef Dov "Sacred and Profane," in Gesher III: 1 (1966), p.16.
* Yosef, Rav Ovadia, Chazon Ovadyah (pg 55)