

Date: Aug. 2025

Syllabus - Teaching Program for the Course

**Women in Jewish Law**

**Miriam Schwartz**05-241-80

05-242-05

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| **Course Type:** | Lecture |
| **Scope of credits:** | 1 |
| **Year of study:** | 2025-2026 |
| **Semester:** | Fall |
| **Day & Time:** | Monday Morning |
| **Reception Time:** | By appointment |
| **Lecturer Email:** | miriam@rybtech.com |

**Course description and learning goals.**

**Course Abstract**

This course is a survey of Women in Jewish Law. The first semester will be an overview of a woman’s obligations regarding prayer, Torah study, and time bound mitzvot. Also, we will discuss a woman’s role in Orthodox Judaism.

**Learning objectives**

**Knowledge**

1. Learners will define women's obligations in Jewish Law
2. Learners will demonstrate comprehension of Jewish Feminism and the challenges inherent in modern society and a traditional role of a Jewish woman in society.

**Skills**

1. Learners will analyze how the role of women in Judaism has adapted over the years.

**Values (if applicable)**

Learners will be able to formulate their own beliefs about their role in Jewish society and their ability to contribute to their communities.

**Active learning –** **lessons plan:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Lesson No. | Topic | Active learning | Required reading | Assessment |
| 1 | Introduction: The Philosophy of Mitzvot |  |  |  |
| 2 | Women’s Obligation in Mitzvot |  |  |  |
| 3 | Time Bound Mitzvot |  |  |  |
| 4 | According to His Will |  |  |  |
| 5 | Significance of Prayer and Torah Learning |  |  |  |
| 6 | Prayer Explained |  |  |  |
| 7 | They Too Were Part of the Miracle |  |  |  |
| 8 | Jewish Feminism Part 1 |  |  |  |
| 9 | Jewish Feminism Part 2 |  |  |  |
| 10 | Philosophy of Modesty |  |  |  |
| 11 | Laws of Modesty |  |  |  |
| 12 | Hair Covering |  |  |  |
| 13 | Final Exam |  |  |  |

**Final grade**

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| --- | --- |
| Description of the learning product | Weight in the final score |
| Final Exam | 65% of final grade |
| Class Participation | 35% of final grade |

**Course** requirements

Final Exam

80% Attendance is required.

Class participation

**Bibliography: Up-to-date** **reading, viewing, and listening content items**

Sourcebook to be distributed to students at the beginning of each semester.

**Lesson 1: Introduction: The Philosophy of Mitzvot**

Talmud Makot 23b

Shadal on Vayikra 11:1

Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 16

Rabbi Dr. Aharon Lictenstein: Mitzva: A Life of Command

Batya Ivry-Friedman “Judaism is a science”

**Lesson 2: Women’s Obligation in Mitzvot**

Talmud Kiddushin 29 – 35 with Rashi, Tosafot, and Ritva

Sefer Abudaraham – Blessings for Commandments and Their Laws

Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, on Leviticus 23:43

Igrot Moshe Responsa, Orach Chaim 4 Chapter 4

Rabbi Dr. Aharon Lictenstein: Mitzva: A Life of Command

**Lesson 3: Time Bound Mitzvot**

Tosafot on Gemara Kiddushin 31a

Rabbeinu Nissim, Gemara Rosh Hashana 9b

Maimonidies Laws of Tzizit Chapter 3 Law 9

Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 17:2, 589:6

**Lesson 4: According to His Will**

LookJed - SheAsani K’Ritzono – Rabbi Aharon Frazer and Rabbi Uri Cohen

Rabbi Dr. Asher Meir - “Who has made me according to His will”

**Lesson 5: Significance of Prayer and Torah Learning**

Sifrei Devarim Chapter 41

Rambam, Hilkhot Tefillah 1:1

Ramban, Commentary to Sefer ha-Mitzvot, Positive Precept no. 5

Hilkhot Rav Alfas, Berakhot 62

Talmud Brachot 20b

**Lesson 6: Prayer Explained**

Talmud Brachot 6a, 13b, 32a, 30b, 35b

Talmud Shabbat 4b, 118b

Michnah Brurah 46:1

Rambam Hilkhot Tefillah 7:7, 7:12

Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 46:8, 60:5, 61: 4-5

Professor Chaim Halperin – Shema Yisrael

Ramban, Commentary to Sefer ha-Mitzvot, Positive Precept no. 5

**Lesson 7: They Too Were Part of the Miracle**

Talmud Kiddushin 29a, Shabbat 23a, Pesachim 108a, Megillah 4a

Rashi and Tosafot Megillah 4a

Rashbam Pesachim 108b

Igros HaGrid Halevi, Laws of Hanukkah 4:9-11

**Lessons 8 & 9 : Jewish Feminism**

Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller - Feminism and Judaism

Mishle Chapter 31

Dr. Joel B. Wolowelsky – Women, Jewish Law,

Rabbi Mordechai Willig “To Women, Two Songs”

**Lesson 10: Philosophy of Modesty**

Micha Chapter 6 Verse 8

Rabbi Marc Angel - A Modesty Proposal: Rethinking Tseniut

Wendy Shalit - Modesty Revisited

**Lesson 11: Laws of Modesty**

Pninei Halacha– Hilchot Tzniut

Rav Elionson The Modest Way p130-131

Divrei Chamudot Brachot 116

Rabbi Mordechai Willig Am Mordechai 67

**Lesson 12: Hair Covering**

Talmud Ketubot 72a, 72b

Rambam Hilchot Ishut 24:12

Shiltei Giborim Ketubot 72

Responsa Terumat ha-Deshen 242

Igrot Moshe Even Haezer 1:58, 1:114, 2:12