Professor Rabbi Shula Stevens Calmann
Mendocino Hall 2022
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HRS 141            Introduction to Judaism         Fall 2015
GE Area C2
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9am -10:15am
Mendocino Hall 4004

Catalog Description
Survey and analysis of the fundamental tenets of Judaism set within the context of the historical and intellectual development of the Jewish People.

Course Description
Built on the three classic defining “pillars” of Judaism - G-d, Torah and the People Israel - Humanities 141 is a lecture/discussion survey of Jewish ideology, practice, culture and historical development. The core of Judaism derives from the Hebrew Bible; through exploration of its textual roots, particular emphasis will be on understanding the development of Jewish thought and practice, and Judaism’s resultant impact on society in general. Students will also have multiple opportunities to “experience” Judaism through class and extra credit activities.

Curricular Details
Although an upper-division class, this course is designed to welcome students of all levels and backgrounds. Course prerequisite: a love of learning!

Learning Goals
Our over-arching goals are: 1) To develop a good working knowledge of Jewish theology & practice; 2) Use of all course materials and experiences in the service of “learning to think”; 3) Enhanced writing skills, and 4) to set in motion ongoing reflection on the role and relevance of religious traditions and spiritual practice, both personal & communally.

“What is the hardest task in the world? To think.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson
**Required Texts/ Materials**

- blank journal
- Morinis, *Everyday Holiness: The Jewish Spiritual Path of Mussar* [Trumpeter] (Hornet Bookstore or used)
- *TANAKH: The Holy Scriptures* (Hornet Bookstore or used)
  *The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* [The Jewish Publication Society]
- Course Reader (required) (Hornet Bookstore only)

- no other personal expenses required, except perhaps movie rental, cost of a used book or two, and/or transportation costs for field trip to a local synagogue (if you choose these extra credit options).

**Course Requirements**

**Punctual**, regular attendance and class participation (key to success in this class)
- 1 reflection paper (3 page limit)
- Course journal
- Term paper (minimum 8 pages)
- Midterm (take home)
- Final Exam
- Attending a Jewish service, watching a Jewish movie, book report (extra credit)

**Grading Policy**

Attendance and participation 20%
Reflection paper, journal and Midterm 30%
Term Paper 20%
Final 30%

*I help my students develop good academic manners and abilities:*

**Attendance**

Showing up for class, on time, is crucial to your success. If, however, you can’t be in class, I ask that you let me know, preferably in advance.
Papers & Exams
When it comes to your writing, I grade carefully on both form (presentation, spelling, grammar) and content (the depth of your ideas and the excellence of their expression). Writing well is an essential life-skill; I will stress this (and help you) consistently throughout the course. The pay-off: You will be a better writer by the end of this class! I accept only original work; anything ‘pasted’ from the Internet will be instantly disqualified.

I encourage you to make use of the Student Writing Center, a great campus resource: http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/

Late Work
Late work accepted on a case-by-case basis, under genuine, compelling circumstances, and is subject to point reduction.

Other Policies
Strict, no cellphone/texting in class policy!
Class sessions may be recorded for review.
Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are contrary to both the subject matter of this class and CSUS campus policy, and will not be allowed. See (http://www.csus.edu/admbus/umanual/UMA00150.htm) and (http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?padeID=353)

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Yehoshua the son of Perachya says:
“Find yourself a teacher,
acquire a friend,
and judge all individuals charitably.”

*Pirke Avot (Chapters of the Fathers) 1:6*

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Class Content, Reading Assignments, Papers & Exams

The Jewish People are often called “The People of the Book”.
As such, any class in Judaism means a lot of reading!
In order to succeed in this class, the wisest course of action is to keep on top of the reading assignments. To help you, below is a detailed checklist of the reading assignments. Have your reading (and any questions you may have) prepared by the date under which the listings appear.
Papers, exams, and their due dates are highlighted in blue.

You will also keep a Reflection Journal throughout the semester;
This will be due on the last day of class.

UNIT ONE
JEWISH BELIEFS

SEP 1 – Getting acquainted: Welcome to the Yeshiva (class one)
Introduction to the study of Judaism; Kahal and Chevruta - the scholarly community; pooling our knowledge; setting a kavanaa.

- Reader, p.1-4, “Kavanah for Study”; “On Jewish Scholarship”; “Shehecheyanu” and “Study is Prayer”
- Reader, p.4-8, “Does Judaism Have an Essence?”
- Reader, p.9-10, “Love Your Neighbor”

SEP 3 – G-d, Torah & Israel (class two)
The Nature of G-d; Good and evil; holiness.

- Living Judaism, pp.1-top of 31
- Exodus, Ch. 34:1-11, JPS TaNaKH, pp.138-139 (13 Attributes)
- Leviticus, Ch. 19, JPS TaNaKH, pp.185-186 (Golden Rule)
- Reader, p. 12, “Understanding the Shema”

SEP 8 – Bridging Heaven and Earth (class three)
Mitzvah; Ethical Monotheism; The Messianic Concept; Repairing the World; shoresh.

- Living Judaism, pp. 31-54
- Deuteronomy, Ch. 5:1- 6:9, JPS TaNaKH, p. 284
  (Retelling of 10 Commandments & Shema/V’ahavata)
- Reader, p.13-17, “The Hebrew Shoresh” & “The Hebrew Alphabet”
- Reader, p. 18, “On Tikkun Olam. . .”
- Reader, p. 19-23 “What Does the Concept of Messiah Mean Today?”
UNIT TWO
THE JEWISH PEOPLE

SEP 10 – **What’s Your Name? (class four)**
Hidden Secrets of Names; Conversion to Judaism.
- *Living Judaism*, p. 55-71
- *Genesis*, Ch. 32: 23-33, *JPS TaNaKH*, p. 52 (*Ya’acov-Yisrael*)
- *The Book of Ruth*, *JPS Tanakh*, pp. 1419-1424
- Reader, p.24 “Are Names Really That Important?”
- Reader, p.25-26 “Your Name is Your Neshama”, etc.
- Reader, p.27 “A Hasidic Tale
- Reader, p.28-37, “Where Our Names Come From”

SEP 15 – **Full Spectrum: Jewish Denominations (class five)**
- Reflection paper due: *Tikkun Olam*

UNIT THREE
JEWSH LITERATURE

SEP 17 – **Black Fire on White Fire: Torah (class six)**
- *Living Judaism*, p. 73-91
- *JPS TaNaKH*, Preface, p. xv‐xxi
- *Deuteronomy*, Ch. 30:11‐20, *JPS TaNaKH*, pp. 322‐323 and Ch. 31:7‐13, p. 324 (“choose life!” & Moses writes the Torah)
- Reader, p. 38, “Torah Terms”
- Reader, p. 39‐45 “The Torah Scroll & Haftarah”
- Reader, p. 46‐47 “A Look at the Hebrew Alphabet” and optional Hebrew quiz (extra credit if you take it!)

SEP 22 – **The Keys to the Garden (class seven)**
Unlocking the Text: Hebrew, the *Alef-Bet* and the *Ta’amim*.
- *Genesis* Ch. 1:1‐12:9, *JPS Tanakh*, pp. 3‐18
- Reader, p. 48‐79, “*Sofer*” (we will address p.80 in class!)
- Reader, p. 81‐82 “A Modern Day Scribe”
- Reader, p. 83‐84 “A Sample Aliyah” (to be discussed in class)
SEP 24 – Standing on the Shoulders: Commentaries upon Commentaries upon Commentaries . . . (class eight)

Prooftext; PaRDeS; the art of Biblical commentary.
- Reader, p. 85, “Study is Prayer, Prayer is Study”
- Reader, p. 86-88 “An Orchard of Delicious Words” & “PaRDeS”
- Reader, p. 89-93, “P’shat and Derash”
(no need to read this last item; it will be studied in class!)

SEP 29 – Eat this Scroll! (class nine)

Prophets and Prophecy.
- Reader, p. 103, “Chart of the Hebrew Bible”
- Reader, p. 104-108 from The Prophets, R. A. Heschel
- Reader, p. 41-45, re-read “Haftarah”
- Ezekiel Ch. 1:1–3:27, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 893-897
- Isaiah 58: 1-14, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 741-743
   (Haftarah, YK Shacharit)
- The Book of Jonah, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 1037-1040
   (Haftarah, YK Mincha)

OCT 1 – To All Your Songs I am a Harp:
Novels, Love Stories, Songs & Wise SayingsT (class ten)

The Writings.
- 3 Psalms of your choice, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 1109-1284
- Proverbs, Ch. 31, JPS TaNaKH, p. 1337
- The Song of Songs, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 1405-1417
- The Book of Ecclesiastes, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 1441-1456

OCT 6 – Why Moses Was Up on the Mountain for So Long (class eleven) Simchat Torah!

The Oral Law: Mishna, Gemara, Talmud; Codes and Responsa.
- Living Judaism, pp. 93-113
- Reader, p. 109, “The Layers of Biblical Commentary”
- Reader, p. 110-113, “Moses received . . .” & “from Chapters of the Sages”

OCT 8 – **Huge Birds and Flying Chariots (class twelve)**
*Midrash; Zohar; Kabbalah; the Centrality of Story-Telling.*
- *Living Judaism,* pp. 114-118
- Reader, p.123-126 “Midrash and the Power of Storytelling”; “Why Noah Chose the Dove”
- Reader, p. 127, “Solomon and the Ant”
- Reader, p. 128-129 “The Ziz”
- Reader, p. 130-133 Advanced Midrash from Talmud
- Reader, p. 134 Zohar: “The Creation of Elohim”

OCT 13 – **Holy Sparks and Invisible Pathways: A Closer Look at Kabbalah (class thirteen)**
The Sefirot; Alphabet Mysticism; The Nature and Variety of Mystic Experience; Hasidism, Mussar.
- Reader, p. 135, “Chart of the Sefirot”
- Reader, p. 136-139, “The Aleph-Bet of Creation”
- Reader, p. 140-142, “Mystical Qualities of Lamed” and “Practical Kabbalah: How to Meditate on a Hebrew Letter”
- Reader, p. 143-145, “In the Beginning” & “The Life of a Mystic”

**UNIT FOUR**

**JEWISH DAYS AND HOLIDAYS**

OCT 15 – **Wheels Within Wheels (class fourteen)**
Jewish Time; the Sacred Calendar; The Importance of Rest: Shabbat.
- *Living Judaism,* pp. 119-top of 130
- Exodus Ch. 31:12-18, *JPS TaNaKH,* pp. 134-135 (Sabbath)
- Deuteronomy Ch. 5:12-15, *JPS TaNaKH,* p. 283 (4th Commandment)
- Reader, p. 146, “The 39 Categories of Sabbath Work”
- Reader, p. 147-150, “Sabbath Blessings”
MIDTERM DUE: *PaRDeS* (take home)

OCT 20 – **The Days of Awe (class fifteen)**
- *Living Judaism*, pp. 130-top of 151
- Leviticus, Ch. 23:23-44, *JPS TaNaKH*, pp. 193-194 (G-d decrees the holidays)
- Reader, p. 151, “From the High Holy Day Liturgy”
- Reader, p. 152, “Vidui, Confession of Sin”
- Reader, p. 153-163, Full Orthodox Confession with commentary
- Reader, p. 164, Hasidic story, “Ten Letters”

OCT 22 – **The Flaming Almond Tree (class sixteen)**
Chanukah and Tu B’Shevat
- *Living Judaism*, pp. 151-top of 156
- Leviticus, Ch. 24:1-4, *JPS TaNaKH*, p. 194 (the Menorah)
- Numbers, Ch. 8:1-4, *JPS TaNaKH*, p. 220 (the Menorah)
- Reader, p. 165-166, “Lighting the Menorah” & melody
- Reader, p. 167, “On the Four Levels of Celebration”
- Reader, p. 168-171 “The Power of Light”; “Words to Live By”; “From the Talmud”
- Reader, p. 173-178, “A Tu b’Shevat Seder”

OCT 27 – **Songs of the Bold Women (class seventeen)**
Special Sabbaths, Purim
- *Living Judaism*, pp. 156-161
- Exodus, Ch.13:17-17:16, *JPS TaNaKH*, pp. 104-112 (*Shirat HaYam*)
- Judges, Ch. 4:4-5.31, *JPS TaNaKH*, pp. 382-387 (*Haftarah* for Sabbath of Song)
- The Book of Esther, *JPS TaNaKh*, pp. 1457-1468 (*Purim*)
- Reader, p. 179-181, “Queen Esther”

OCT 29 – **From Slavery to Sinai: Every Exile Bears the Seeds of Redemption (class eighteen)**
Passover; Counting of the Omer; Shavuot
- *Living Judaism*, pp. 162-top of 181
- Exodus 18:1-20:23, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 112-116 (The 10 Commandments)
- Leviticus 23:1-22, JPS TaNaKH, p. 191-192 (G-d institutes Passover, the Omer & Shavuot)
- Reader, p. 182-183, “In Every Generation . . . “
- Reader, p.184-188, “49 Gates”; “Day 18”; “Week Three, Day Four”

NOV 3 – The Dark Times (class nineteen)
Holocaust Remembrance Day; Tisha b’Av: Kristallnacht
- Living Judaism, pp.181-199
- The Book of Lamentations, JPS TaNaKH, pp.1425-1440
- Reader, p. 189-191, “The Three Eggs”

UNIT FIVE
JEWISH WORSHIP

NOV 5 – Prayer: The Sacrifice of the Heart (class twenty)
History and Development of Jewish Prayer; The Bracha; The Prayer Service; The Four Types of Prayer; Communal and Personal prayer.
- Living Judaism, pp. 201-220
- Ezekiel, Ch. 11:16-20, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 905-906
- Reader, p. 192-194, “From the Hasidic Masters”
- Reader, p. 195, “The Reform Jewish Worship Service”
- Reader, p. 196, “What to look for during the service” (bring this with you on our synagogue field trip!)

NOV 10 - Know Before Whom You Stand: The Synagogue (class twenty-one)
- Living Judaism, pp. 210-220
- Exodus Ch. 35:1-40:38, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 141-151 (Building the Tabernacle/Mishkan)

NOV 12 – The Threads of Light (class twenty-two)
Ritual Garments; Worship Practices
- *Living Judaism*, pp. 221-245
- Numbers, Ch. 15:37-41, *JPS TaNaKH*, pp. 233-234 (G-d commands the tzitzit)
- Reader, p. 207-210, Four Teachings on the Tallit
- Reader, p. 211-215, “Tallit”

UNIT SIX
JEWSH LIVING

NOV 17 - Acts of Lovingkindness: Everyday Holiness
(class twenty-three)
Mezuzah, Chanukat HaBayit, Tzedakah, etc.
- *Living Judaism*, pp. 247-256; 274-284
- *Everyday Holiness*, p. 3-42 and 249-281
- Choose your middah for term paper on Mussar – turn in one paragraph describing our choice.
- Reader, p. 216, “Inside the Mezuzah”
- Reader, p. 217, “Tzedakah Story”

NOV 19 – Spiritual Disciplines: The Laws of Purity
(class twenty-four)
Kashrut, Mikveh, Family Purity
- *Living Judaism*, pp. 256-273
- Leviticus, Ch. 11:1-47, *JPS TaNaKH*, pp. 168-170 (Kashrut)
- Reader, p. 218-221, “The Holiness of Sex”
- Reader, p. 222-224, “The Shekinah”

NOV 24 (Reading day) & 26 (Thanksgiving)
Thanksgiving Week – no class

UNIT SEVEN
THE JEWISH LIFE CYCLE
DEC 1 – Childhood (class twenty-five)
Birth, Bar & Bat Mitzvah.
  □ Living Judaism, pp. 285–top of 295

DEC 3 – The Intricate Twining of Two Souls (class twenty-six)
Marriage.
  □ Living Judaism, pp. 295–middle of 300
  □ Reader, p. 225-227 “Two Ketubot: Orthodox and Modern”
  □ Reader, p. 228-229 “Structure of a Traditional Jewish Wedding” & “The Seven Wedding Blessings”

DEC 8 – To Comfort the Bereaved: The Jewish Approach to Loss and Sorrow (class twenty-seven)
Divorce and Death.
  □ Living Judaism, pp. 300-322

UNIT EIGHT
THE JEWISH LAND

DEC 10 – The Ideal: Living in a Higher State & Siyyum: Rejoicing in the Yeshiva (class twenty-eight)
A few words about Israel real and imagined; Review and Party!
  □ Living Judaism, pp. 323-355
  □ Deuteronomy, Ch. 26:1-19, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 313-315
  □ Deuteronomy, Ch. 30:1-20, JPS TaNaKH, pp. 313-315
  □ Term Paper & Reflection Journal due
  □ Reader, p. 235-236, Traditional prayers for a siyyum (Bring your now beat-up and dog-eared reader to class!)

FINAL

DEC 15 – Final exam, 10:15am – 12:15pm