

**Spring 2013 Syllabus**  
**Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary**  
**Introduction to Judaism: Jewish Ideas and Beliefs**  
 Rabbi David Ariel-Joel

**Course Description and Learning Outcomes**

The transition from the Israelite religion, as depicted in the Hebrew Bible, to Rabbinic Judaism, which unfolded from the 2nd Century before the Common Era to the 6th Century of the Common Era, was revolutionary. This course will explore the dominant values and practices of what became traditional Judaism. This exploration will be conducted primarily through encounters with primary texts such as the Talmud, Jewish philosophy and Biblical commentary. After an examination of the innovations of Rabbinic Judaism as it developed through the Middle Ages, we will focus on contemporary expressions of Judaism. As a part of the course, students will visit two services representing different movements (Reform, Conservative).

At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Discuss a particular aspect of the history of the transition from Biblical Judaism to Rabbinic Judaism (relates to semester project).
2. Use Jewish commentary on our sacred scripture and demonstrate understanding of Jewish ways of interpreting the Bible and other Jewish sources (relates to the semester project).
3. Describe and analyze contemporary Jewish worship (relates to paper on Jewish worship).

**Semester projects**

The semester project will consist of a written term paper covering a relevant topic agreed upon in discussion with the instructor. Written work is due on the last day of classes. A satisfying written presentation is an essay of 5 pages, not including an annotated research bibliography (not exclusively relying on internet sources). You are strongly advised to submit a draft before the final due date of the paper (last day of classes).

Students are also required to attend services at both The Temple and at Adath Jeshurun synagogues and write a 2-page describing of your visit. This paper is due on the last day of class.

**Recommended Textbooks**

David S. Ariel, *What Do Jews Believe? The Spiritual Foundations of Judaism*, Schocken Books, New York, 1995

Arthur A. Cohen/Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought. Original Essays on Critical Concepts, Movements, and Beliefs*, New York: Scribner, 1987 (abbr. CMF)

Kertzer, Morris N. *What is a Jew?* rev. ed. Revised by Lawrence A. Hoffman. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Trepp, Leo. *Judaism: Development and Life*. 4th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2000.

Israel Knohl, *The Divine Symphony, the Bible's Many Voices*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 2003

Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, Harvard University Press, 1997

A.J. Heschel, *The Sabbath*, Harper Collins, Canada 1979

*Tanakh* – the Hebrew Bible with the JPS (Jewish Publication Society) translation

**Recommended web sites**

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/index.htm?VI=481003041026>

<http://ccarnet.org/resp/>

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**PLEASE BRING THE JEWISH BIBLE WITH YOU TO ALL THE CLASSES!**

**A. - What is Judaism?**

*Reading:*

Trepp 1-9; Kertzer 7-9

Paul Stroble, *What Do Other Faiths Believe*, Nashville 2003, pp.21-32

**B. Monotheism the Biblical revolution**

*Reading:*

Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel, From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, Univ. of Chicago Press; one volume abridged edition (June 1960), pp. 60-78

**C. Jewish Law and the Oral Torah**

Judaism is a scripture-based religion. Jewish tradition teaches us that God's will is revealed in sacred texts. We will study together the structure and nature of the Jewish Commentary to the Torah. We will try to understand what the Oral Torah includes and what the term means. What can we learn of the development of Jewish law? How did it evolve? What is its nature and structure? We will look at different ways to interpret the law and at what is called *the culture of argument* in Jewish life. We will also try to understand different views on the purpose of Mitzvot (laws and precepts).

**C1. Halacha (Law).**

*Readings:*

David S. Ariel, pp. 159-185

Kertzer, 52-55, 71-75

Menachem Elon, *Jewish Law*, JPS, Philadelphia 1994, vol. 1, pp. 1-13

**C2. Law and Narrative in the Jewish Sacred Scriptures** – the narratives of forgiveness and Tsedakah.

*Readings:*

Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, Harvard University Press, 1997 pp. 27-31

Leviticus 16:29-34

Mishnah Yoma (The Day – i.e. Yom Kippur).

TB Yoma 87a

TB Ketobot 66a

**C3. Our Sacred Scriptures** - The Jewish Bible & the emergence of the Oral Torah and Rabbinic Thought (The Mishna, The Midrash and The Talmud)

*Readings:*

*The Torah, A Modern Commentary*, W. Gunther Plaut, UAHC Press, New York, 1981, pp.xviii-xxv  
 Michael Katz & Gershon Schwartz, *Swimming in the Sea of Talmud*, The Jewish Publication Society, 1998, pp. 3-31  
 Michael Katz & Gershon Schwartz, *Searching for Meaning in Midrash*, The Jewish Publication Society, 2002, pp.3-13  
 Trepp 32-33, 260-263; Kertzer 19-20, 39-51  
 Trepp 267-275  
 Deut 11: 8-11 (including Rashi & Ramban), 30:11-16

**Mishna:**

Avoth, 1:1-8  
 Rosh Hashanah Chapter 2: 8-9  
 Makkot Chapter 3: 16  
 Shevith Chapter 10:3-4

**Talmud:**

Baba Metsia 59a-b, 83a  
 Menahot 22b  
 Rosh Hashanah 29b

**C4. The Truth and *The Culture of Argument****Readings:*

Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*, Harvard University Press, 1997 pp. 50-71  
 TY Sanhedrin 4:2  
 TB Kidushin 30b  
 TB Ketubot 16b-17a  
 TB Eruvin 13b  
 Ethics of our Fathers Chapter 5, Mishnah 17  
 TB Baba Metzia 86a  
 TB Berachut 64a

**C5. The Place of the Ethical in Religious Life – The ABCs of Jewish Ethics.***What is Hateful Unto You, Do Not Do To Your Neighbor*

1. TB Berakoth (blessings) 5a
2. Leviticus 19:1-2
3. TB Shabbat 31a
4. Leviticus 19:18, 33-34
5. TB Gittin 55b-56a
6. Jonah 3:10-4:11

*This is the Whole Torah*

1. Rashi to “What is Hateful to You....”
2. JT Sota chapter 3: 19a
3. BT Megillah (the scroll of Esther) 3b
4. Isaiah 1:10-17

*Knowing the Good*

1. Genesis 18: 16-26

2. JT Baba Metzia 8c
3. BT Yoma 67b
4. S.R. Hirsch Genesis 2:9

*Beyond the Requirement of the Law*

1. Ramban Deuteronomy 6:8
2. Maimonides, Law pertaining to slavery 9:8
3. TB Baba Metzia 30b
4. TB Baba Metzia 83a

*Desecrating God's Name*

1. TB Yoma (The day – Yom Kippur) 86a
2. Exodus 32:7-14
3. Ethics of our fathers 2:1 + Notes
4. TB Berakhot (Blessings) 19b-20a
5. TB Baba Kama 37b-38a

*You Must Not Remain Indifferent*

1. Exodus 23:4-5
2. Deuteronomy 22:1-3
3. Toseftah Baba Metzia 2:28
4. TB Sanhedrin 73a

*We will watch the movie V'Ahaveta – You Shall Love - about conflicts between Jewish ancient law and modern life in Israel.*

## **C6. God- In the Eyes of Talmudic and Post-Talmudic Scripture**

*Readings:*

Maimonides (Rambam), Introduction to Perek Helek – The 13 Principles of Faith.  
 BT Berakhot (Blessings), 3a  
 BT Babah Metzia 59a  
 BT Gittin (Divorce) 56b  
 BT Berakhot 31b-32a

## **D People – Land – G-d**

### **D1. The Value of Peoplehood and The Question of Sovereignty**

*Readings:*

Arthur A. Cohen/Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), s.v. "People of Israel" (Alon Goshen- Gottstein), pp. 703ff

### **D2. The Connection between the People of Israel, G-d and The Promised Land - The Land of Israel.**

Why is this land different than any other land? What makes it holy?

Can Jews live outside of Israel – Diaspora Jews vs. Israelis? - Israel Today.

*Readings:*

Trepp 285-291; Kertzer 117-127

Trepp 158-159; Kertzer 179-180;

Trepp 159-176; 155-171; Kertzer 25-32, 180-196;

Arthur A. Cohen/Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), s.v. "Zionism" (Ben Halpern), pp. 1069ff

s.v. "Culture" (Paul Mendes-Flohr), pp. 119ff

**D3. The Israeli Palestinian Conflict – from early Zionism until today.***Readings:*

Divisive History - The Israeli Palestinian Conflict in a nutshell.

*We will watch the movie **Promises**.*

**E. - The Jewish Year**

We will learn the history and practices of the Jewish calendar. By understanding these Jewish holidays, we will begin to see some parallels between them and holidays of other religions.

**E1. Shabbat:***Readings:*

Kertzer 209-213

A.J. Heschel, *The Sabbath*, Harper Collins, Canada 1979, pp. 13-14, 16, 18, 28.

**Bible:**

Gen. 2:1-3, Ex.16:22-30, 20:8-12, 23:13, 31:16-17, 34:21, 35:2-3, Lev.19:3,  
Numbers 15:32-36, Deuteronomy 5:12-15, 12:16, Isaiah 56:2-7, 58:13-14, 66:23,  
Jeremiah 17:19-27, Ezekiel 20:10-12, Nehemiah 15-22

Mishna, Hagiga Chapter 1 Mishna 8, Shabbat 7, Mishna 2

Midrash, Genesis Rabba 11:8, Sefer Haagada 381:22

Talmud, Shabbat, 119a, 49b

Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Shabbat Laws, 30:2-5, 7-14

**Rosh Chodesh – The Jewish Month***Readings:*

Kertzer 205 -207,

Bible, Numbers 10:10, Samuel I 20:5

Mishna, Rosh Hashanah 1:7, 2:2-3, 20:6

**E2. Other Holidays***Readings:*

Trepp 350-377; Kertzer 205-208, 219-224, 227-230

Bible: Lev. 23, Psalms 81: 4-5, Micah 7:19, Lev. 16:5-24

Ex. 23: 14-17, 37: 5-8, 12: 3-11, 34:22, Deut. 16: 8-16, Num. 28: 26, Nehemiah 8: 14-15.

Talmud, Pesahim 109a, Rosh Hashanah 16a, Suka 28b

Mishna, Bikurim, Chapter 3 Mishna 1-9

**The High Holy Days***Readings:*

Kertzer 213-218

**E3. Pesach -We will experience a model Seder.***Readings:*

Kertzer, 225-226

*Passover Haggada – A Different Night*, Noam Zion and David Dishon (ed.), Hartman Institute, Jerusalem, 1997.

## **Hanukkah**

### *Readings:*

(Trepp 15-23, 249-256)

We will learn about two periods in Jewish history (from the Exile 586 B.C.E. to the Maccabees and Judah under the Romans to 70 C.E.).

### *Readings:*

Trepp 23-32; Kertzer 18-19,

Noam Zion & Barbra Spectre, *A Different Light – The Big Book of Hanukkah*, Devora Publishing, New York 2000, pp. 55-80

## **F. Jewish Prayer**

The structure of Jewish prayer and how it evolved. Spontaneous worship vs. structured worship. Special traditions. The synagogue.

### *Reading:*

David S. Ariel, 186-210

Kertzer 83-87, 172-173

*My People's Prayer Book*, Vol. II, ed. Hoffman

Different prayer books

## **Practical Experience: Styles of Jewish Worship**

Students will visit two services representing different movements (Reform, Conservative).

## **Policy Statements Included on Syllabi**

### **Use of Inclusive Language**

In accordance with seminary policy, students are to use inclusive language in class discussions and in written and oral communication by using language representative of the whole human community in respect to gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, age, and physical and intellectual capacities. Direct quotations from theological texts and translations of the Bible do not have to be altered to conform to this policy. In your own writing, however, when referring to God, you are encouraged to use a variety of images and metaphors, reflecting the richness of the Bible's images for God. See for further assistance,

[http://www.lpts.edu/Academic\\_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp](http://www.lpts.edu/Academic_Resources/ASC/avoidinggenderbiasinlanguage.asp)

### **Academic Honesty**

All work turned in to the instructors is expected to be the work of the student whose name appears on the assignment. Any borrowing of the ideas or the words of others must be acknowledged by quotation marks (where appropriate) and by citation of author and source. Use of another's language or ideas from online resources is included in this policy, and must be attributed to author and source of the work being cited. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism, and may result in failure of the course. Multiple occurrences of plagiarism may result in dismissal from the Seminary. Students unfamiliar with issues relating to academic honesty can find help from the staff in the Academic Support Center. For the Seminary policy, see The Code of Student Conduct, 6.11; the Student Handbook, p. 19.

### **Special Accommodations**

Students requiring accommodations for a documented physical or learning disability should be in contact with the Director of the Academic Support Center ([kmapes@lpts.edu](mailto:kmapes@lpts.edu)) during the first two weeks of a semester and should speak with the instructor as soon as possible to arrange appropriate

adjustments. Students with environmental or other sensitivities that may affect their learning are also encouraged to speak with the instructor.

**Citation Policy**

Citations in your papers should follow the Seminary standard, which is based on these guides:

Turabian, Kate. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 7th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

*The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Copies of these guides are available at the library and in the Academic Support Center.

**Attendance Policy**

According to the Seminary catalog, students are expected to attend class meetings regularly. In case of illness or emergency, students are asked to notify the instructor of their planned absence from class, either prior to the session or within 24 hours of the class session. Six or more absences (1/4 of the course) may result in a low or failing grade in the course.