

JUDAISM

Rel/JSP 135
Fall 2016
T/Th 12:30-1:50, 202 HL
Eggers 010

Zachary Braiterman

office: HL 509
office hours: W 11:00-12:00 (or by appointment)
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The course provides a broad (but selective) survey of Jewish religious thought and practice from the biblical period through the modern. Readings focus on the way diverse Jewish thinkers have reshaped Jewish identity by reconfiguring the way in which they imagine the divine, interpret texts, and structure community. We pay particular attention to how Jewish interpreters have constructed a changing textual tradition as an integral part of that process. This class introduces students to the Hebrew Bible, Talmud and Midrash, medieval philosophy and mysticism, and to German Jewish existentialism and American Jewish feminism in the 20th century. Special note is paid to the modern period and the role of women.

Texts: (available at bookstore):

TANAKH (Hebrew/"Old Testament") (at bookstore or bring your own)
Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*
Michael Brenner, *A Short History of the Jews*
Heschel, *The Sabbath*
Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*
Course Reader (at Campus Copies @ Marshall Sq. Mall)

Requirements:

Active class participation
1 page weekly critique of course readings (due Tues) (mandatory, but not for grade)
3 take-home writing exercises (5 pages each)
take-home class final exam essay

Please note:

All written work for credit is to be submitted by hardcopy to the instructors and electronically to "Turnitin"
No laptops, cellphones, or any electronic device in class w/o prior permission from the instructor

Readings:

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS

8/30 (no assignment)

THE HEBREW BIBLE

- 9/1 Family Saga:
Bible: Genesis chapters 12, 16-22, 27-35
Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, p.15-32, 61-3, 67-9
Klagsburn, "Ruth and Naomi, Rachel and Leah" in *Reading Ruth* in COURSE
READER
- 9/6 Liberation, Revelation, & Law
Bible: Exodus chapters 1-23, 35
Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, p.33-49, 86-8
- 9/8 Priests and Cult
Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, p.188-92 & 196-8 & 201-2
Bible: Exodus chapters 25-31, 39:32-40:38. Leviticus chapters 8-17
- 9/13 Covenant & Prophecy
Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, p.89-100, 101-7, 117-18, 130-2, 135, 136-40, 144-5
Deuteronomy chapters 27, 28, 30. Jeremiah chapters 1, 7, 11, 17, 31

RABBINIC JUDAISM

- 9/15 Rabbinic history:
Brenner, chps.3-5
- 9/20 Rabbinic texts: Talmud
TBA
Selections from Bava Kama in COURSE READER
- **** 1st PAPER DUE ****
- 9/22 Rabbinic texts: Talmud
Selection from A.J. Heschel, *God in Search of Man* in COURSE READER
Selections from Shabbat in COURSE READER
- 9/27 Rabbinic texts: Midrash
TBA
Neusner, "Genesis and Genesis Rabbah" in *The Midrash: An Introduction* in
COURSE READER
Selections from Genesis Rabbah in COURSE READER
- 9/29 Themes in rabbinic literature: Revelation
Scholem, Gershom "Revelation and Tradition" in *The Messianic Idea in
Judaism* in COURSE READER
Selections on Rabbinic Theology in COURSE READER
- 10/4 NO CLASS: ROSH HA-SHANAH

10/6 Themes in rabbinic literature: Politics
Rachel Adler, "The Jew Who Wasn't There" in *On Being a Jewish Feminist*
in COURSE READER
Selections on Rabbinic Politics in COURSE READER

10/11 NO CLASS: YOM KUPPUR

MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY & MYSTICISM

10/13 Introduction to medieval Judaism
Brenner, chps. 6-7, TBA

10/18 Philosophy: God and the Hebrew Bible:
TBA
Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, material on "God" in COURSE
READER

*** 2nd PAPER DUE TODAY ***

10/20 Philosophy: The Commandments
Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*, material on "Law" in COURSE
READER

10/25 Mysticism: The Structure of God
Seltzer, *Jewish People, Jewish Thought*, pp.419-50 in COURSE READER
Selections from Zohar, "Account of the Chariot" in COURSE READER

10/27 Mysticism: The Commandments
Selections from Zohar, "Sabbath & Holidays" in COURSE READER
Arthur Green, "Bride, Spouse, Daughter" in *On Being a Jewish Feminist* in
COURSE READER

MODERN JUDAISM (I): 19th CENTURY ORIGINS OF JEWISH MODERNITY

11/1 Emancipation:
Brenner, chps.8-11

*** 3rd PAPER DUE ***

11/3 Reform Judaism
Brenner, chps. 12-13
Abraham Geiger in COURSE READER

11/8 Modern Orthodox Judaism
Samson Raphael Hirsch in COURSE READER

Conservative Judaism
Zecharias Frankel in *The Jew in the Modern World* in COURSE READER

11/10 Jewish Prayer and Modernity
The Siddur in COURSE READER
Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer*, chp.9 in COURSE READER

MODERN JUDAISM (II): 20th CENTURY JEWISH THOUGHT AND CULTURE

- 11/15 Kaplan: selection from *Judaism as a Civilization* in COURSE READER
11/17 Heschel, *The Sabbath*
11/29 The State of Israel
Brenner, chp. 16
A.B. Yehoshua, *Between Right and Right*, pp.21-74 in COURSE READER
12/1 Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*, chapter 2
12/6 Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*, chps. 3-4
12/8 Greenberg, selections from *On Women and Judaism* and Hartman, *A Living Covenant* in COURSE READER

FINAL EXAM: TAKE HOME ESSAY, DUE LAST DAY OF EXAM WEEK