

JUDAISM
Rel/JSP 135
Fall 2009
T/Th 12:30-1:50; HL 202
Zachary Braiterman

office: HL 509
office hours: T/TH 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 understand ritual life. 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?*
Jaffee, *Early Judaism*
Heschel, *The Sabbath*
Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*
Course Reader (#1002 at Campus Copies @ Marshall Sq. Mall)

Books held on Reserve at Byrd Library:

Milgrom commentary on Leviticus.
Hyam Maccobi, *Ritual and Morality*
Neusner, *Judaism: The Evidence of the Mishnah*
Nuesner, *Ancient Israel After Catastrophe*

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
All written work for credit is to be submitted by hardcopy to the instructors and electronically to "Turnitin"

Readings:

INTRODUCTION TO THE CLASS
9/1 (no assignment)

THE HEBREW BIBLE

- 9/3 Family Saga:
Bible: Genesis chapters 12, 16-22, 27-35
Friedman, Who Wrote the Bible?, p.15-32, 61-3, 67-9
Francine Klagsburn, "Ruth and Naomi, Rachel and Leah" in Reading Ruth in
COURSE READER
- 9/8 Liberation, Revelation, & Law
Bible: Exodus chapters 1-23, 35
Friedman, Who Wrote the Bible?, p.33-49, 86-8,
- 9/10 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
- 9/15 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

- 9/17 Rabbinic history:
Jaffee, Early Judaism, Introduction (pp.9-25), chp.1
- 9/22 Rabbinic texts: Talmud
Jaffee, Early Judaism, chps.2, 6
Selections from Bava Kama in COURSE READER
- 9/24 Rabbinic texts: Talmud
A.J. Heschel, God in Search of Man in COURSE READER
Selections from Shabbat in COURSE READER
- **** 1st PAPER DUE ****
- 9/29 Rabbinic texts: Midrash
Jaffee, Early Judaism, chps.3-4
Neusner, "Genesis and Genesis Rabbah" in The Midrash: An Introduction in
COURSE READER
Selections from Genesis Rabbah in COURSE READER
- 10/1 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
- 10/6 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

MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY & MYSTICISM

- 10/8 Introduction to medieval Judaism
Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, in COURSE READER pp.323-48

10/13 Philosophy: God and the Hebrew Bible:
Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pp.393-98 in COURSE READER
Maimonides, Guide of the Perplexed, material on "God" in COURSE
READER

*** 2nd PAPER DUE TODAY ***

10/15 Philosophy: The Commandments
Maimonides, material on "Law" in COURSE READER

10/20 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

10/22 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

10/27 Emancipation:
Seltzer, Jewish People, Jewish Thought, pp.513-46, 580-618 in COURSE
READER

*** 3rd PAPER DUE ***

10/29 Reform Judaism
Abraham Geiger in COURSE READER

11/3 Modern Orthodoxy
Samson Raphael Hirsch in COURSE READER

11/5 Conservative Judaism
Zecharias Frankel in The Jew in the Modern World in COURSE READER
TBA

11/10 Jewish Prayer and Modernity
The Siddur in COURSE READER

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

11/12 Kaplan: selection from Judaism as a Civilization in COURSE READER

11/17 The Holocaust: Richard Rubenstein, "Dean and the Chosen People" in After
Auschwitz in COURSE READER and Eliezer Berkovits, "Faith" in
COURSE READER

11/19 Kaplan: selection from The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion in
COURSE READER

11/24 Heschel, The Sabbath

12/1 The State of Israel A.B. Yehoshua, Between Right and Right, pp.21-74 in COURSE
READER

12/3 Plaskow, Standing Again at Sinai, chapter 2

12/8 Plaskow, *Standing Again at Sinai*, chapter 3-4
12/10 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