

JEWISH THOUGHT COURSE LIST - FALL 2014

NOTE: *All Jewish Studies courses satisfy the GENERAL EDUCATION REQUIREMENT with the exception of Hebrew Language courses*

Course #19998

JDS 103 (RSP 203) Introduction to Judaism – Richard Cohen

WED. 11:00 AM -1:40 PM

Clemens 708

Judaism is one of the oldest continuously practiced world religions; its influence is inestimable. One need only think of the profound impact it has had on the origins, development, and basic elements of Christianity and Islam. Because Judaism has evolved and changed over a very long history - including the eras of the Hebrew Bible, the ancient Israelite commonwealth, medieval Talmudic-rabbinical communities, modern denominations, the Holocaust, Zionism and modern Israel - this course will approach Jewish history, theory and practice together. We will ask: What have Jews believed and done? What do Jews now believe? What are the meanings of Judaism – texts, rituals, practices, beliefs - for Jews? How is Judaism similar and different from other spiritual traditions? What relevance does Judaism still have for the larger world?

Course #TBD

JDS 111: Great Jewish Books: Arguing with God – Sergey Dolgopolski

T/TH 12:30-1:50 PM

LOCATION: TBD

What makes a human argue with G-d? How and in what settings does such an argument go? What if G-d no longer directly responds? Using Jewish traditions as a case study, this course will use a comparative perspective to explore these questions through reading a selection from religious, secular, and philosophical texts from Biblical interpreters in late antiquity, to post-Holocaust thinkers, both religious and secular, such as the Bible, Talmud, Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed, and Hasidic Masters of Modern Times.

Course #23801

JDS 204: Introduction to Jewish Ethics – Alexander Green

T/TH 2:00-3:20 PM

Clemens 708

This course will trace the history of Jewish ethics and study the evolving nature of some of its central tenets. The challenge of defining the nature of Jewish ethics goes back to the ambiguities in the Hebrew Bible itself. Is ethics completely dependent on the authority of God or is there also an ethics that is independent of God's law or will? Is the

ethics of Jewish tradition only applicable to Jews or also to non-Jews as well? If applicable to non-Jews as well, is there anything that differentiates "Jewish" ethics? Is law the true form of ethics or is legal ethics a means towards external goals? In the first half of the course, we will analyze how medieval and modern Jewish thinkers have defined Jewish ethics utilizing the tools of Western philosophy to answer many of these questions. We will look at two important models: virtue ethics and (universal) deontological ethics through the writings of Maimonides and Hermann Cohen and examine the extent to which these thinkers adapted the thought of Aristotle and Immanuel Kant and applied them to the ethics of the Jewish tradition. In the second half of the course, we will examine contemporary ethical issues such as war and peace, feminism, abortion, economics and charity, and the environment.

Course # TBD

JDS 210: Introduction to Hebrew Bible - Alexander Green

T/TH 9:30-10:50 AM

Clemens 708

The Hebrew Bible is one of the central texts of Western Civilization. It arose from a nation known as the Israelites that claimed no international power or empire in comparison to the surrounding empires of Mesopotamia, Egypt and Babylon. Why did the small world of the Israelites survive and have such a long term impact? This course reads the Hebrew Bible as an anthology of writings written over an extensive period of time responding to various issues, but all engaged with explaining the nature of a covenantal God. We will be reading the texts through the lens of the Jewish rabbinic tradition with the assistance of ancient, medieval and modern interpreters. We will engage issues such as creation, desire, wisdom, civilization, sacrifice, family, deception, law, revelation, sin, conquest, kingship, prophecy, destruction, exile, skepticism, love and tragedy.

Course # TBD

JDS 225: Modern Jewish Thought: Jews in Times of Revolution – Noam Pines

M/W/F 10:00-10:50 AM

Clemens 708

The course will explore the diverse roles of Jews in cultural, scientific, and political revolutions during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These revolutionary moments provided unprecedented opportunities for Jews who sought to break free from the confines of their traditional culture and religion and find a place for themselves in the wider European society, as well as for those who despaired of the prospect of emancipation and opted to partake in the Zionist project. We will consider the individual motivations of Jewish intellectuals, poets, visionaries, politicians, and artists, and examine the various contexts in which they worked: cultural, political, biographical, as well as religious. Readings and discussions will include figures such as Heinrich Heine, Karl Marx, Theodor Herzl, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, Ze'ev Jabotinsky,

Marc Chagall, Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Trotsky, David Ben Gurion, Paul Celan, Allen Ginsberg, and Jacques Derrida.

Course #21697

JDS 229: Medieval Judaism – Marla Segol

T/TH 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM

Clemens 708

In this course we will study Jewish culture in the medieval period. This materials we study will tell the story of the shifting centers of medieval Jewish culture from the rabbinic period to early modernity, and from Babylonia to Spain, to points east and the new world. We will focus on major forms of cultural expression; Jewish philosophy, Hebrew fiction, medieval cookbooks, travel narratives, mystical and magical works, social histories, and personal letters. We will use these sources to better understand the development of Jewish culture in dialogue with ancient Jewish culture on one hand, and with Islam and Christianity on the other.

Course # TBD

JDS 237 History of Israel and Zionism: Zionism and Prophecy- Noam Pines

M/W/F 2:00-2:50 PM

Clemens 708

This course will chart the development of a prophetic persona in Hebrew literature in relation to the Zionist project, from the writers of the Haskala to the poetry of the Statehood Generation in Israel. The link between Zionism and prophecy was established in the nineteenth century in the writings of Isaac Erter and Abraham Mapu, and toward the turn of the century developed into conflicting visions of Zionism by prominent "prophetic" figures such as Theodor Herzl and Ahad Ha'am. In Hebrew literature, the prophetic persona appears fully-fledged in the poetry of Chaim Nachman Bialik and Saul Tshernichowsky, and the genre of prophetic poetry attained popularity in Palestine in the period between the two world wars, often in direct correlation to the Zionist project. We will reflect upon the specific attributes of the genre of prophetic Zionist literature, follow the critical debates on its merits and shortcomings, chart its rise and fall, and consider it within the historical, literary, biographical, and theological contexts from which it emerged.

Course #23813

JDS 301 (GGS 376): Psychology of Religious Ecstasy: Sex, Drugs, and Rock & Roll and Religion - Marla Segol

T/TH 3:30- 4:50 PM

Clemens 708

This course will explore sexuality and ecstasy in religion, the ritual use of intoxicants, and music and trance in religious life. These present opportunities for psychically and physically intense experiences, and they can induce transpersonal and ecstatic states, as well as those of euphoria, harmonization and interconnectedness, sometimes called 'peak' and 'flow' experiences. We'll look at how peak and flow experiences are generated

by these means, how religious institutions authorize or sanction those practices, and the ways in which they are integrated into religious canons, rituals, and lives.

Course #23795
JDS 402: Jewish Law in Development - Sergey Dolgopolski
MON. 6:30 - 9:10 PM
Clemens 202

This course explores Jewish legal and narrative literature from late antiquity to modernity in the broader context of Western legal thought. It also addresses methodological and theoretical questions of rabbinic as a discipline studying this corpus of literature. No knowledge of Hebrew or Aramaic language is required. For students with advanced knowledge in Hebrew and or Aramaic languages a companion reading course might be available upon approval of the instructor for additional 3 credit points.

JDS 499: Independent Study

Need Professor's Permission for Independent Study

Course #19893
HEB 101: Elementary Modern Hebrew - Lilia Dolgopolskaia
M/W/F 9:00 - 10:25 AM
Filmore 325

A beginning course in modern Israeli Hebrew. Essentials of grammar, syntax and conversational practice; elementary reading and writing. Note: Students with other previous experience in Hebrew must take a placement exam.

Course #17783
HEB 201: Intermediate Hebrew - Lilia Dolgopolskaia
M/W 11:00 AM - 12:20 PM
Filmore 325

Further development of language skills: listening comprehension, oral efficiency, Intermediate grammar and syntax, reading and writing.

*Note: Students with other previous experience in Hebrew must take a placement exam.

*Prerequisite: HEBREW 102 or permission of the instructor.