



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Jewish Magic and Society in Antiquity and the Middle Ages - 13938

Last update 23-08-2021

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: History of Jewish People & Contemporary Jewry

Academic year: 0

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Avigail Manekin

Coordinator Email: avigail.manekin@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours:

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Avigail Manekin

Course/Module description:

In this seminar we will examine the world of Jewish magic in the longue durée. We will explore a wide array of sources describing ancient Jewish magical practices, and attempt to reconstruct the various aspects of ancient Jewish magic. We will start with demonology and exorcism in biblical and Second Temple literature. Then we will examine rabbinic attitudes towards magic and sorcery and rabbinic magical recipes. We then turn to material artifacts: late antique Jewish amulets and magic bowls. Finally we will survey the large corpus of magical texts from the Cairo geniza and Hebrew manuscripts of magic from the middle ages. During the course we will consider broader questions such as the relationships between magic and religion, the identity of the Jewish magicians and their clients, relationship between Jewish and contemporary non-Jewish magic, and evidence of everyday life.

Course/Module aims:

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- 1.Acquaintance with different types and genres of ancient Jewish magic
- 2.Knowledge and critical reading of secondary sources.
- 3.Identifying and analyzing Jewish magical sources
4. Investigating the implications of these texts for the study of Jewish history

Attendance requirements(%):

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction:

Course/Module Content:

- 1.Defining Jewish magic
- 2.Demonology and exorcism in Second Temple times
3. Magic and Medicine in Rabbinic literature
4. Demons in Rabbinic literature
5. Sorcery and witches in the world of the rabbis
6. Jewish motifs in non-Jewish magic
- 7.Metal Amulets from late antique Palestine

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8. Aramaic incantation bowls
 9. Jewish magical grimoires from late antiquity
 10. Using magic texts as historical sources
 11. Connections between ancient Jewish magic and mysticism
 12. Hai Gaon's responsum regarding Jewish magical practices
 13. Magic in the Cairo Geniza
 14. Maimonides and Jewish Magic
 15. Solomonic Magic
 16. Manuscripts of Magic from the Middle Ages

Required Reading:

* The reading requirements will be given in the first lesson.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 80 %

Presentation 10 %

Participation in Tutorials 10 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: