



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Introduction to Jewish Thought - 14116

Last update 19-04-2015

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Jewish Thought

Academic year: 1

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Avinoam Rosenak

Coordinator Email: avinoam.rosenak@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Wed. 12:30-14:00

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Avinoam Rosenak

Course/Module description:

The course will deal with major trends in Jewish thought from its earliest times until the present. It explores different tendencies among various thinkers from rational to mystic minded ones (such as Maimonides, Yehuda Halevy, R. Kook, R. Soloveitchick, M. Buber and others).

The student will be invited to compare various ways of viewing Jewish life on an intellectual plane and to find similarities and differences among them.

Course/Module aims:

The course will deal with major trends in Jewish thought from its earliest times until the present.

The course will explore different tendencies among various thinkers from philosophy and Kabbalistic tradition.

The course will compare various ways of viewing Jewish life on an intellectual plane and to find similarities and differences among them. We will explain the thought and writings of central Figures in Jewish Thought.

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

To get a broad picture of the main streams in Jewish Thought.

To have the ability to analyze and distinguish between different periods in Jewish thought.

To have a solid knowledge about the different kind of literary in Jewish thought.

To recognize several fundamental models that underlie the research in Jewish thought.

Attendance requirements(%):

80

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: a Lecture

Course/Module Content:

Introduction to Jewish Thought

Moshe Halbertal, Hebrew University

Course requirements: Exam at the end of the course

1 a. Introduction to Jewish Thought: What is Jewish Thought and the question of its boundaries.

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- b. Biblical conceptions of God and its implication on biblical theology and thought.*
 - 2 Jewish Thought the Second Temple period: The book of Jubilees and the Dead Sea Scrolls*
 - 3. Rabbinic Thought (a): Major components. The rise of the Scholar, the study of Torah as the ultimate religious obligation, the emergence of Beit ha-Midrash, and the emergence of Controversy.*
 - 4. Rabbinic Thought (b): The concept of suffering*
 - 5. The Philosophy of Halakah and the concept of interpretation*
 - 6. Heichalot Literature: Mysticism and Magic*
 - Medieval Jewish Thought*
 - 7. Seda'aya Gaon: Reason and Revelation*
 - 8. Yehudah Halevi: Religious experience and the Concept of History*
 - 9. Between Halevi and Maimonides: History and Nature*
 - 10. Maimonides (b): The War against idolatry, the problem of creation and the idea of Esotericism*
 - 11. Maimonides (c) The problem of evil and providence*
 - 12. Maimonides (d) Prophecy the reasons for the commandments and the concept of humanity*
 - 13. Kabbalah (a): Historical and ideological introduction*
 - 14. Kabbalah (b): Religious symbols and the divine world*
 - 15. Kabbalah (c) Humanity, Commandments and History*
 - 16. Shabtaut and Frankism: Mysticism and Antinomianism*
 - 17. Major Challenges of Jewish Modern Thought*
 - 18. Jerusalem of Mendelson: Particularism, Universalism and the question of Religious toleration.*
 - 19. The Hasidut: Devekut, the Zadik and worship through the material*
 - 20. Herman Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig: The relation between Religion and Morality and the religious response to Kant and Hegel*
 - 21. Rabbi Kook: Mysticism, Messianism and History*
 - 22. Rabbi Solloweichick and Liebowitz: Halakaha without Metaphysics*
 - 23. Ehad ha-Am and A. D. Gordon: National Jewish thought and the turn in modern Jewish Identity*
 - 24. Jewish Thought in the USA and Europe: Heshel Kaplan and Levinas*
 - 25. The Post Modern Challenges,*
 - 26. Conclusion*

Required Reading:

Gordon, Robert P. (ed.) *God of Israel*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
Urbach E. *The Sages - Their Concepts & Beliefs*. Jerusalem, 1979
Malter, M. *Life and Works of Saadiah Gaon*. New York 1921.

Rawidowicz, Simon. *Saadya's Purification of the Idea of God*. In *S.R. Studies in Jewish Thought*. Philadelphia 1974. pp. 246-264.

Ross, Jacob Joshua, *Saadya's concept of belief*, *WCJS* 4,2 (1968) 97-101

Ross, Jacob Joshua. *A note concerning Saadya's concept of cognition. Essays Presented to Chief Rabbi Israel Brodie* (1967) 355-364.

Bodoff, Lippman, *Was Yehudah Halevi racist?* *Judaism* 38,2 (1989) 174-184.

Schwarzschild, Steven S., *Proselytism and ethnicism in R. Yehudah HaLevy. Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter* (1992) 27-41.

Strauss, Leo. *The Law of Reason in the Kuzari*. In: L. S. "Persecution and the Art of Writing". New-York 1942. 141-95.

Kenneth Seeskin, *Maimonides: A Guide for Today's Perplexed*. Behrman House, 1991.

Warren Zev Harvey, *Political philosophy and Halakhah in Maimonides*. *Binah* 3 (1994) 47-64.

Warren Zev Harvey, *Maimonides and Spinoza on the Knowledge of Good and Evil*. In Joseph Dan (Ed.): *Studies in Jewish Thought*. *Binah* 2 (1989) 131-146.

Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar: An Anthology of Texts* (3 Vol.). Translated by D. Goldstein. Oxford: Oxford University Press for The Littman Library, 1989.

Scholem, Gershom. *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. Schocken Books Inc., 1974.

Gershom Scholem. *Sabbatai Sevi, The Mystical Messiah, 1626-1676*. *Littman Library of Jewish Civilization*. Pp. 1000. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1973.)

H. A. Wolfson: *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*. Harvard University Press, 1929.

H. A. Wolfson: *Crescas on the Problem of Divine Attributes*. *JQR. New Series Vol. VII* 1916. pp. 175-221.

H.A. Wolfson. *Studies in Crescas*. *Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research*. Vol. V. 1993-3. pp. 155-175.

Warren Z. Harvey: *Hasdai Crescas's Critique of the Theory of Acquired Intellect*. Ph. D. Thesis. Ann Arbor University, 1976.

Errol E. Harris, *Spinoza's Philosophy : An Outline*. Humanities Press (Atlantic Highlands, N.J), 1992.

Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (*Littman Library of Jewish Civilization*), 1998.

Franz Rosenzweig in *Encyclopedia Judaica* by Ephraim Meir and Rivka G. Horwitz, Thomson Gale, 2007.

Nahum N. Glatzer, *Franz Rosenzweig: His Life and Thought*. New York: Schocken Books, 1961, 2nd edn.

Aviezer Ravitzky. *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (*Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism*). The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Rosenak, Avinoam, *Prophecy and Halakha : dialectic in the meta-halakhic thought of Rabbi A.I. Kook*. *Jewish Law Annual* 17 (2007) 121-157.

Kaplan, Lawrence J., *Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik's philosophy of Halakhah. Jewish Law Annual 7 (1988) 139-197.*

Kaplan, Lawrence J., *Joseph Soloveitchik and halakhic man. The Cambridge Companion to Modern Jewish Philosophy (2007) 209-233.*

Ravitzky, Aviezer, *Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik on human knowledge : between Maimonidean and neo-Kantian philosophy. Modern Judaism 6,2 (1986) 157-188*

A Selection of R. Soloveitchik's articles in English (Can be borrowed from Matanya [matania.fishaimer@mail.huji.ac.il]).

Kaufmann, Yehezkel. *The religion of Israel : from its beginnings to the Babylonia exile. New York : Schocken Books, 1972.*

Scholem, Gershom. *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism. Schocken Books Inc., 1965.*

Alfred L. Ivry, Elliot R. Wolfson, Allan Arkush (eds.), *Perspectives on Jewish Thought and Mysticism. Routledge, 1998.*

Mysticism, Magic and Kabbalah in Ashkenazi Judaism: International Symposium Held in Frankfurt a/M 1991, eds. Karl E. Grozinger and Joseph Dan, Berlin-New York: Walter de Gruyter 1995.

'The Emergence of Jewish Mysticism in Medieval Germany', *Mystics of the Book*, ed. Robert A. Herrera, New York: Peter Lang 1993, pp. 57-95

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 70 %

Presentation 0 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 0 %

Assignments 30 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 0 %

Additional information: