

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

READINGS IN MAIMONIDES'S GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED - 14211

Last update 19-04-2015

HU Credits: 4

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Jewish Thought

Academic year: 0

Semester: Yearly

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Aviram Ravitsky

Coordinator Email: aravitsky@gmail.com

Coordinator Office Hours: Mon. 15:00-16:00

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Esther Eisenmann

Dr. Aviram Ravitsky

Course/Module description:

In the course we will read the philosophic Magnum Opus of the main medieval Jewish philosopher – Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed. We will learn about Maimonides' method of reconciling religion and philosophy and about his views on Divine attributes, prophecy, and the purpose of Jewish law.

Course/Module aims:

- 1. Reading ability of the medieval Hebrew translation of The Guide, by Rabbi Samuel ibn Tibbon.*
- 2. Understanding the philosophical concepts of The Guide, and of the medieval Jewish philosophic literature in general.*
- 3. Gaining knowledge of Maimonides' world view.*

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

The students will read fluently The Guide of the Perplexed in the translation of R. Samuel ibn Tibbon, and will understand the basic concepts of medieval Jewish philosophy in general, and of Maimonides in particular.

Attendance requirements(%):

10 lectures per semester

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lectures and reading

Course/Module Content:

- 1. Divine Attributes: Negative Attributes and Attributes of Action*
- 2. The world view of the Kalam*
- 3. The creation of the world vs. its eternity*
- 4. Prophecy: Psychology and Politics*
- 5. The Purpose of Jewish Law*
- 6. Maimonides: Between al-Farabi and ibn Bajja*

Required Reading:

1. Zev Harvey, 'The Question of God's Incorporeality in Maimonides, Rabad, Crescas and Spinoza', *Studies in Jewish Thought* (Hebrew) S. Heller-Wilensky and M. Idel (eds.), Jerusalem 1989, pp. 63-78
2. Michael Schwarz, 'Who were Maimonides' Mutakallimun? Some Remarks on Guide of the Perplexed part 1 Chapter 73', in: A. Hyman (ed.), *Maimonidean Studies*, vol. 2, New-York 1991, pp. 159-172; vol. 3, 1992-1993, pp. 143-172
3. Eliezer Schweid, *Our Great Philosophers: The Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Hebrew), Tel Aviv 1999, pp. 275-299
4. Jacob Levinger, *Maimonides as a Philosopher and a Codifier* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1990, pp. 21-38
5. Isadore (Yitzchak) Twersky, *Introduction to Maimonides' Mishneh Torah* (Hebrew), Jerusalem 1991, pp. 267-383
6. Shlomo Pines, 'The Limitations of Human Knowledge According to al-Farabi, ibn Bajja, and Maimonides', in: I. Twersky (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, Cambridge, Mass. 1979, pp. 82-109
7. Lawrence V. Berman, 'Maimonides the Disciple of Alfarabi', *IOS (Israel Oriental Studies)*, 4 (1974), pp. 154-178

Additional Reading Material:

- H. A. Davidson, *Moses Maimonides: The Man and His Work*, Oxford 2005
- L. V. Berman, "The Structure of Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed", in: *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, 1973, Vol III (Division 3), pp. 7-13.
- M. Friedlander, *Maimonides – Guide of the Perplexed*, 1981, Introduction, p.xlii.
 - L. Strauss, "How to Begin to Study the Guide of the Perplexed" in: *The guide of the perplexed / Moses Maimonides*, translated by Shlomo Pines, Chicago, 1963, Introduction
- Lawrence V. Berman, 'Maimonides the Disciple of Alfarabi', *IOS (Israel Oriental Studies)*, 4 (1974), pp. 154-178
- S. Harvey, "Maimonides in the Sultan's Palace", in: J.I. Kraemer, *Perspectives on Maimonides*, Oxford 1991, pp. 47-76.
- M. Fox, *Interpreting Maimonides*, (part I- On Reading Maimonides pp. 3-92) Chicago 1990, pp. 67-92.
- Altmann, "Maimonides 'Four Perfections'" in: *Essays in Intellectual History*, Hanover, 1981
- Herbert A. Davidson, "The Study of Philosophy as a Religious Obligation," in Shelomo Dov Goitein, ed., *Religion in a Religious Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Association for Jewish Studies, 1974), pp. 53-69.
 - H. Davidson, "Maimonides on Metaphysical Knowledge" in: A. Hyman (ed) *Maimonides Studies*, N.Y, vol.3 1992-3, pp. 49-103.
 - M. Kellner, *Maimonides on Human Perfection*, Alatalana, 1990.
 - H. Kreisel, "Imitatio Dei in Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed" *AJS Review*, 19, 1994, pp. 169-211.

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- D. Lasker, "Love of God and knowledge of God in Maimonides' philosophy", in: C. Sirat, J. Hammese & O. Weijers (eds.) *Écriture et réécriture des textes philosophiques médiévaux*, Turnhout : Brepols, 2006, pp. 329- 345.
 - S. Pines, "The Limitations of Human Knowledge According to Al-Farabi, ibn Bajja' and Maimonides", in: I. Twersky (ed), *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, Cambridge, 1979, pp.82-109.
 - S. Stroumsa, "True Felicity: Paradise in the Thought of Avicenna and Maimonides," *Medieval Encounters* 4 (1998), pp. 51-77
 - Altmann, "Essence and Existence in Maimonides" *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 35 (1953) pp. 108-127.
 - Herbert A. Davidson, 'The Principle That a Finite Body Can Contain Only Finite Power', in: S. Stein and R. Loewe (eds.), *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History*, Presented to Alexander Altman, Alabama, 1979, pp. 75-92.
 - W.Z. Harvey, "Maimonides and Aquinas on Interpreting the Bible", *Proceeding of the American Academy for Jewish Research*, vol.55 (1988) pp. 59-77
 - C. H. Manekin, "Belief, Certainty and Divine Attributes in the Guide of the Perplexed" in: A. Hyman (ed) *Maimonides Studies*, N.Y vol.1 1990, pp.117-141.
 - H.A. Wolfson, *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, Cambridge, Mass, 1973, Vol 2, pp. 161-194.
 - H. A. Wolfson, 'Maimonides on Negative Attributes', in: idem, *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, Cambridge, Mass. 1977, vol. 2, pp. 161-194; 195-230
 - Herbert Davidson, "Maimonides' Secret Position on Creation", in: I.Twersky (ed), *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, cambridge, Nass, pp. 16-40.
 - W.Z. Harvey, "A Third Approach to Maimonides' Cosmogony – Prophetology Puzzle", *Harvard Theological Review*, 74 (1981) pp. 287-303.

Alexander Altman, "Maimonides and Thomas Aquinas: Natural or Divine Prophecy", *Essays in Jewish Intellectual History*, Hanover, New Hampshir 1981, pp. 77-96

- L. Kaplan, 'Maimonides on the Miraculous Element in Prophecy', *HTR* (Harvard Theological Review), 70 (1977), pp. 233-256
- H.A. Wolfson, *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, Cambridge, Mass, 1973, Vol 2, pp. 60- 119.

M. Schwarz, 'Who were Maimonides' Mutakallimun? Some Remarks on Guide of the Perplexed part 1 Chapter 73', in: A. Hyman (ed.), *Maimonidean Studies*, vol. 2, New-York 1991, pp. 159-172; vol. 3, 1992-1993, pp. 143-172

J. van Ess, 'The Logical Structure of Islamic Theology', in: G. E. von Grunebaum (ed.), *Logic in Classical Islamic Culture*, Wiesbaden 1970, pp. 21-50

Z. Diesendruck, "Samuel and Moses Ibn Tibbon on Maimonides Theory of Providence", *HUCA* vol. XI 1963, pp. 341-365.

S. Pines, "The limitation of Human Knowledge according to Alfarabi, aiabm Bajja and Maimonides", in: I. Twersky (ed.), *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, Cambridge- Mass, 1979, pp. 88- 109.

J. Stern, "Maimonides' Epistemology", in: K. Seeskin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Maimonides*, Cambridge 2005, pp. 105-133.

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 10 %
Project work 20 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 70 %
Other 0 %

Additional information:

Assignments and requirements

1. Attendance in class, at least 10 lectures, per semester (10% of final grade)
2. Reading relevant bibliography
3. Submitting a short paper (2 pages) in the semester (20% of final grade)
4. Final exam at the end of the semester (70% of final grade)