



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

The Philosophy of Modern Orthodox Judaism - 14785

Last update 03-02-2021

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: Jewish Thought

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Prof. Arnold Ira Davidson

Coordinator Email: fiorentina@uchicago.edu

Coordinator Office Hours:

Teaching Staff:

Prof Arnold Ira Davidson

Course/Module description:

The Philosophy of Modern Orthodox Judaism: Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

The thought of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik is the philosophical foundation of Modern Orthodox Judaism. In this course, we will examine R. Soloveitchik's conception of halakhic method, his elaboration of the notion of masorah, and his idea of halakhic morality. Although we will study a number of texts from different periods of R. Soloveitchik's thought, our main text will be his collection of essays "Halakhic Morality. Essays on Ethics and Masorah". Readings from R. Soloveitchik will be supplemented by some essays of Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein and others. The course will aim to provide a philosophical and theological characterization of Modern Orthodox Judaism, and we will draw some contrasts with both Haredi and Reform Judaism.

Course/Module aims:

To study the philosophical foundations of Modern Orthodox Judaism

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

To provide an understanding of the ideals of Modern Orthodox Judaism, especially as articulated by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

Attendance requirements(%):

100%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Close reading and discussion of the texts

Course/Module Content:

see description above

Required Reading:

Week 1

Orthodox Judaism and Philosophy: Bifurcation or Integration:

David Shatz, "The Overexamined Life is not Worth Living", in Jewish Thought in

Dialogue.

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "The Source of Faith is Faith Itself" in *Leaves of Faith*, Volume 2.

Week 2

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Mind*, pp. 89 – 102.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "The Korah Rebellion" in *Vision and Leadership*.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (and Jeffrey Saks), "Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik on the Brisker Method", in *Tradition* 33:2, 1999, especially pp. 53 – 60.

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Lecture on Torah Study*, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v&eq;8VlgxE67FYM>

Week 3

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Morality. Essays on Ethics and Masorah*, pp. 3 – 62.

Week 4

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Morality*, pp. 63 – 120

Week 5

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Morality*, pp. 181 – 222

Pierre Hadot, "Philosophy as a Way of Life," in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 264-276.

Week 6:

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, *By His Light. Character and Values in the Service of God*, chapters 5 and 12.

Dialectal Tension and Value Pluralism:

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, "Majesty and Humility", in *Confrontation and Other Essays*.

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "The Ideology of Hesder", available at <http://www.haretzion.org/about-us/ideology-of-hesder>

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, " 'The Woods are Lovely, Dark, and Deep': Reading a Poem by Robert Frost", available at <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/alei-etzion-16-%E2%80%9Cwoods-are-lovely-dark-and-deep%E2%80%9D-reading-poem-robert-frost>

Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, "To Distinguish Between the Impure and Pure", available at <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/%E2%80%9C-distinguish-between-impure-and-pure%E2%80%9D-0>

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 20 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 70 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %

Research project 0 %

Quizzes 0 %

Other 10 %

other

Additional information: