

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

Purity and Impurity in the Bible and in Qumran - 21912

Last update 21-08-2017

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: bible

Academic year: 0

Semester: 2nd Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Naphtali Meshel

Coordinator Email: [nmeshe1@huji.ac.il](mailto:nmeshel@huji.ac.il)

Coordinator Office Hours: please contact instructor

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Naphtali Meshel

Course/Module description:

We will read selected passages from Biblical and post-Biblical texts pertaining to the concepts of purity and impurity, and together create a model for the synchronic and diachronic analysis of these complex systems.

Course/Module aims:

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

1. Create a preliminary model for interpreting the formal properties of a complex ritual system.
2. Employ philological tools acquired in the course for research in Biblical and post-Biblical literature, including Qumranic, Samaritan and Karaite literature.

Attendance requirements(%):

100%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: seminar

Course/Module Content:

- Weeks 1-2: Introduction: Constructing a Model for a Ritual System
1. Maimonides, Introduction to Seder Qodashim ("Introduction to Tractate Zebahim")
 2. Staal, Frits. Rules without Meaning: Ritual, Mantras, and the Human Sciences (Toronto Studies in Religion 4), New York: P. Lang, 1989.
 3. Frits Staal, "The Meaninglessness of Ritual." Numen 26 (1979) 2-22.
 4. Axel Michaels and Anand Mishra, Grammars and Morphologies of Ritual Practices in Asia (2010).
 5. Gane, Roy E. Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005.
 6. N. Meshel, A 'Grammar' of Sacrifice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
 7. Leach, Edmund. Culture and Communication: The Logic by which Symbols Are Connected. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Weeks 3-4: One or Two Systems: "Ritual" and "Moral" Purity

Primary literature: Leviticus 4-7; 10-21, Numbers 19, 31

1. D. P. Wright, "The Spectrum of Priestly Impurity", in: Priesthood and Cult in

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- Ancient Israel, ed. G. Anderson and S. M. Olyan (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), 150-181.
2. Jacob Milgrom, "The Priestly 'Picture of Dorian Gray.'" *RB* 83 (1976): 390-99.
3. Regev, Eyal. "Priestly Dynamic Holiness and Deuteronomic Static Holiness." *Vetus Testamentum* 51:2 (2001). [or: לאפיון סטטית קדושה או דינמית קדושה", רגב 'א, 51-74]. הקדום, יד (תשס"ד), 51-74.
4. T. Frymer-Kensky, "Pollution, Purification and Purgation in Biblical Israel", in: *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth*, ed. C. Meyers and M. O'Connor (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 399-413.
5. Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
6. Martha Himmelfarb, "Impurity and Sin in 4QD, 1QS, and 4Q512," *DSD* 8 (2001).

Weeks 5-6:

Primary literature: Leviticus 4-7; 10-21, Numbers 19, 31

The Biblical Purity System in Detail

1. Maimonides (transl. Qafah), *Introduction to Seder Tohorot* ("Introduction to Tractate Kelim")
2. Knohl, Israel. *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995. [originally published as: 'הדממה מקדש, קנוהל י'. עיון ברובדי היצירה הכוהנית שבתורה (ירושלים: מאגנס, תשנ"ג).
3. D. P. Wright, *The Disposal of Impurity, Elimination Rites in the Bible and in Hittite and Mesopotamian Literature* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987). [with Milgrom's notes]
4. Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (3 vols. AB 3, 3A, 3B. New York: Doubleday, 1991-2001) 1.953-968.

Weeks 7-8: Purity and Impurity of Animal Species

1. E. Durkheim and M. Mauss, *Primitive Classification*, trans. R. Needham (London: Cohen and West, 1963) [Paris, 1903].
2. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, trans. R. Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963). [originally published as: C. Lévi-Strauss, *Le Totémisme aujourd'hui* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962).]
3. Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966.
4. M. Douglas, "The Forbidden Animals in Leviticus", *JSOT*, 59 (1993), 3-23.
5. Seth Daniel Kunin, *We Think What We Eat: Neo-Structuralist Analysis of Israelite Food Rules and Other Cultural and Textual Practices*. *JSOTSup* 412. London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004.
6. E. Firmage, "The Biblical Dietary Laws and the Concept of Holiness", in: *Studies in the Pentateuch*, ed. J. A. Emerton (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 177-208.
7. S. J. Tambiah, "Animals are Good to Think and Good to Prohibit", *Ethnology*, 8 (1969), 423-45.
8. M. P. Carroll, "One More Time, Leviticus Revisited", in: *Anthropological Approaches to the Old Testament*, ed. B. Lang (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985),

117-126

9. E. Hunn, "The Abominations of Leviticus Revisited", in: *Classifications in their Social Context*, ed. R. F. Ellen and P. Reason (London: Academic Press, 1979), 103-116.
10. Jacob Milgrom, "Two Biblical Hebrew Priestly Terms: שָׁקַץ and טָמֵא" *Ma'arav* 8 (1992) 107-16.
11. N. S. Meshel, "Food for Thought: Systems of Categorization in Leviticus 11." *HTR* 101 (2008) 203-29.
12. D. Sperber, "Pourquoi les animaux parfaits, les hybrides et les monstres sont-ils bons à penser symboliquement?", *L'Homme*, 15 (1975) 5-34.
13. Leach, Edmund. "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse." In *New Directions in the Study of Language*, edited by E. H. Lenneberg. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1964, 23-63.
14. Kunin, Seth Daniel. *We Think What We Eat: Neo-structuralist Analysis of Israelite Food Rules and Other Cultural and Textual Practices*. JSOTSup 412. London and New York: T. & T. Clark, 2004.

Weeks 9-10: Applicability of Π

1. From: Hanna Harrington, *The Impurity System of Qumran and the Rabbis* (SBL Dissertation Series 143; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993).
 2. Hanna Harrington, *The Purity Texts Companion to the Qumran scrolls 5*; London: T&T Clark, 2004).
 3. ספר מצוות גדול הנקרא גן עדן: בבאור כוונות המצות שבתורה ודיני ענינים הנכללים בתוכה חברו החכם האלהי והכולל הרב רבינו אהרן בעל ספר עץ חיים וכתר תורה נב"ע בהר"ר אליהו ניקומודיאן זצ"ל (יצא לאור פעם ראשונה מוגה ומתוקן על פי נוסחאות שונות כתיבות יד חדשות גם ישנות על ידי יהודה בכ"מ יצחק ז"ל סאווסקאן; גוזלוא: אברהם בן שמואל פירקוויץ פירקוביץ, תרכ"ו [1866]).
 4. Iain Ruairidh mac Mhanainn Bóid, *Principles of Samaritan Halachah* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 38; Leiden: Brill, 1989).
 5. Selected Samaritan sources (in Hebrew translation)
- Comparative perspectives:
6. From: *Manusmṛti and its medieval commentaries* (in Hebrew and English translation)
 7. Robert Parker, *Miasma: Pollution and Purification in Early Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1983).
 8. Christian Frevel and Christophe Nihan, eds., *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

Weeks 10-11:

The problem of compoundment

1. Thomas Kazen, "4Q274 Fragment 1 Revisited—or Who Touched Whom? Further Evidence for Ideas of Graded Impurity and Graded Purifications," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 17 (2010) 53-87.
2. Hannan Birenboim, "Expelling the Unclean from the Cities of Israel and the Uncleanliness of Lepers and Men with a Discharge according to 4Q274 I i," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 19 (2012) 28-54.
3. From: Yadin, *Temple Scroll*

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4. Milgrom 1995 Jacob Milgrom, "4QTOHORAa: An Unpublished Qumran Text on Purities," in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness: Papers on the Qumran Scrolls by Fellows of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1989–1990* (Ed. Devorah Dimant and Lawrence Schiffman; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 59–68.
 5. Wayne Westbrook in the *Mesopotamian World* (Chip Dobbs-Alsopp)
 6. Solomon 1997 Avi Solomon, "The Prohibition against *Ṭevul Yom* and Defilement of the Daily Whole Offering in the Jerusalem Temple in CD 11:21–12:1: A New Understanding," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 4 (1997) 1–20.
 7. Fitzmyer 1981 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Gospel According to Luke (I–IX)* (New York: Doubleday, 1981).
 8. Jayantakrishna Harikrishna Dave, *Manu-Smṛti: With Nine Commentaries by Medhātithi, Sarvajñanārāyaṇa, Kullūka, Rāghavānanda, Nandana, Rāmacandra, Mañirāma, Govindarāja and Bhāruci, Volume III (Adhyāyas 5–6)* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1978).
 9. Schenker 2015 Adrian Schenker, "Unreinheit, Sünde und Sündopfer: Kritische Untersuchung zweier verarbeiteter Thesen: befleckende Sünden (moral impurity) und Sündopfer *chaṭṭa't* als Reinigungsoffer für das Heiligtum," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 59 (2015) 1–16.
 10. Ravid 2002 Liora Ravid, "Purity and Impurity in the Book of Jubilees," *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 13 (2002) 61–86.
 11. Thiessen 2012 Matthew Thiessen, "Luke 2:22, Leviticus 12, and Parturient Impurity," *Novum Testamentum* 54 (2012) 16–29.
 12. יאיר פורסטנברג, טהרה וקהילה בעת העתיקה: מסורות ההלכה בין יהדות בית שני למשנה (ירושלים: מאנגס, תשע"ו).
 13. Joseph M. Baumgarten, "The Laws about Fluxes in 4QTOHORAa (4Q274)," in *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness: Papers on the Qumran Scrolls by Fellows of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1989–1990* (Ed. Devorah Dimant and Lawrence Schiffman; Leiden: Brill, 1995) 1–8.

Required Reading:

A selection from the items listed above, according to the needs of the seminar.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %

Presentation 30 %

Participation in Tutorials 0 %

Project work 70 %

Assignments 0 %

Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 0 %
Other 0 %

Additional information: