



# *The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

## *Syllabus*

### *Emmanuel Levinas; an educational perspective - 63982*

*Last update 02-05-2024*

*HU Credits: 2*

*Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)*

*Responsible Department: Jewish Education*

*Academic year: 0*

*Semester: 2nd Semester*

*Teaching Languages: Hebrew*

*Campus: Mt. Scopus*

*Course/Module Coordinator: Michael Gillis*

*Coordinator Email: [michael.gillis@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:michael.gillis@mail.huji.ac.il)*

*Coordinator Office Hours: Wednesday 13.00-14.00*

---

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Michael Gillis

Course/Module description:

Together with his contribution to Western philosophy particularly in the field of Ethics, Emmanuel Levinas is considered one of the most significant Jewish thinkers of the second half of the 20th Century. He was also significantly engaged in Jewish life and Jewish education in France. The course is concerned with Levinas's understanding of Jewish education. Among the topics covered are: the educational significance of his ethics; the educational implications of his Talmudic Readings; the significance of his writings on Jewish education; his importance for the general philosophy of education.

Course/Module aims:

- A basic familiarity with Levinas's general philosophical approach.
- An understanding of Levinas's approach to Judaism.
- An understanding of Levinas's life's work and thought against the background of his biography and context.
- A familiarity with Levinas's method as an interpreter of the Talmud.
- To develop a critical appreciation of Levinas's ideas and their current relevance.

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

- An ability to approach in a critical manner the relevant philosophical ideas.
- An ability to read with understanding Levinas's writings on Judaism and Jewish education.
- An ability to weigh the current value and relevance of Levinas's view on education.

Attendance requirements(%):

85

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Seminar style discussion of the readings.

Student presentations.

Participation in course forums on course internet site.

---

Course/Module Content:

1. Levinas, the man and the philosopher
2. Central concepts in Levinas's general philosophy.
3. Levinas as a Jewish Thinker
4. The Greek and the Hebrew.
5. Levinas as an Interpreter of the Talmud
6. Levinas on Jewish Education.
7. Levinas and the philosophy of education
8. Levinas as Pedagogue and Teacher
9. The teacher-student relationship

Required Reading:

- Emmanuel Levinas, "Signature," in *Difficult Freedom*, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1990, p.291.
- Emmanuel Levinas, "Name of the Dog," in *Difficult Freedom*, pp. 151-153
- Interview with Francois Poirie in Jill Robbins (editor) *Is it Righteous To Be*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 2001 pp. 45-61
- Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: conversations with Phillipe Nemo*, Duquesne University Press, Pittsburgh, 1985,
- Chapter 4 "The Loneliness of Being"
- Chapter 7: "The Face"
- Chapter 8: "Responsibility for the Other"
- Emmanuel Levinas, "A Religion for Adults" pp.11-23
- Emmanuel Levinas, "How is Judaism Possible?" pp. 245-254
- Both in *Difficult Freedom*
- Emmanuel Levinas, "The Temptation of Temptation" in *Emmanuel Levinas, Nine Talmudic Readings*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1990, pp. 30-50
- Emmanuel Levinas "The Translation of Scripture", *In the Time of the Nations*, Bloomington 1994, pp. 33-54
- Sharon Todd, *Welcoming and Difficult Learning: Reading Levinas with Education* pp.170-185
- Gert Biesta, *Pedagogy with Empty Hands: Levinas, Education and the Question of Being Human* pp. 198-210
- Chinnery, A. (2010). "Encountering the philosopher as teacher: The pedagogical postures of Emmanuel Levinas." *Teaching and Teacher Education* 26(8), 1704-1709
- Emmanuel Levinas, "The Translation of Scripture" in *"In the Time of the Nations"* Bloomington 1994 pp. 33-54
- Emmanuel Levinas, "Introduction to Four Talmudic Readings" and "Preface to *From the Sacred and the Holy*" both in, *Nine Talmudic Readings* Bloomington 1990' pp3-11 and 91-9

---

Annette Aronowicz, "Translator's Introduction to Nine Talmudic Readings",  
Bloomington, 1990 pp. ix-xv

Annette Aronowicz, "Jewish Education in the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas" in  
"Abiding Challenges", edited Yisrael Rich and Michael Rosenak, London 1999, pp.  
65-100

Sharon Todd, "Welcoming and Difficult Learning: Reading Levinas with Education",  
in *Levinas and Education*, edited Denise Egea-Kuehne, New York, 2008, pp.170-185.

Joldersma Clarence W., *Beyond Rational Autonomy: Levinas and the Incomparable  
Worth of the Student as Singular Other*, Interchange 39:1 2008

*Nine Talmudic Readings*, pp.155-159.

Israel Scheffler, "Reflections on Jewish Education,"  
"Antihumanism and Education  
both from *Difficult Freedom*, pp. 265-268, 277-290

Additional Reading Material:

Simon Critchley, "Emmanuel Levinas: a disparate inventory," in *The Cambridge  
Companion to Levinas*, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (editors), Cambridge  
University Press, Cambridge 202, pp. vv-xxviii

Hilary Putnam, *Levinas and Judaism* in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, pp.  
33-62.

Annette Aronowicz, "Levinas and Jewish Education" in *Research Perspectives on  
Jewish Education: Studies in Memory of Mordechai Bar-Lev*, Edited by Yisrael Rich  
and Michael Rosenak, Tel Aviv, 1999, pp. 65-100.

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 90 %

Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports  
/ Forum / Simulation / others 10 %

Additional information: