



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

LAND AND AGRICULTURE IN JEWISH LAW - 71075

Last update 29-01-2024

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: Plant Science in Agriculture

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: Hebrew

Campus: Rehovot

Course/Module Coordinator: Joshua Klein

Coordinator Email: vcjosh2000@yahoo.com

Coordinator Office Hours: By appointment

Teaching Staff:

Dr. Joshua Klein

Course/Module description:

The land of Israel and its holiness: Borders of the land according to olei Mitzrayim and olei Bavel. Land ownership by non-jews and the controversy of heter mechira. Kilayim (mixing of species): Theoretical background, mixing of seeds, mixed crops in a vineyard, interspecies grafting, identification and categorization of plant types halachically and scientifically, halachic implications for genetic engineering and biotechnology. The etrog (citron): identification and grafting. Orla (fruit of young tress): Halachic definition of "tree", counting years of orla, planting in a boll of earth, laws relating to orla fruit, Tu B'Shvat and Tu B'Av. Cycle of trumot and maasrot (tithes), laws of untithed produce (tevel/demai), tithing in modern times, separation of "challa". Laws of gleaning (leket, shichecha, peah). Shmita (sabbatical year): ideological and historical background, primary and secondary agricultural tasks (avot and toladot), crop/tree management during shmita, shmita in modern times, produce with the "holiness of shmita/shv'it" – ownerless produce (hefqer), prohibition of commercial activity, otzar bet din, nullification of shvi'it (biur).

Course/Module aims:

To know how, where and when to apply laws dependent on the year of Shmita; to understand basic halachic concepts in agriculture

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

Comprehension of the laws of Shmita and of the halachic concepts that govern Jewish agriculture and agriculture in the Land of Israel, such as kilayim, orla, and trumah/maaser. Halacha in light of agricultural and biological concepts

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: lectures

Course/Module Content:

Sanctity of the holy land
Borders of the Land of Israel
How, where and when to apply jewish laws which are land-dependent
Shmita- The idea, forbidden and permitted labor
Shmita for consumers
- Otzar Bet Din, the ritual sanctity of fruit

Kilayim-- interspecies mixing by sowing, grafting, and pollination, including genetic engineering

Orla - What is the halachic definition of a tree or a vegetable?

Tithes (Maaser and truma)

Bikkurim--First fruits

Four species of Sukkot

Required Reading:

lectures

Additional Reading Material:

biblical sources

Grading Scheme:

Written / Oral / Practical Exam 85 %

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 15 %

Additional information:

There is one exercise towards the end of the course: designing a fruit and vegetable garden in line with halacha