



MIDRESHET TEHILLAH

NEVE YERUSHALAYIM



**Course
Catalog**



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*Please note that this catalogue does **not** include all classes that are offered in any given year, and that not all classes listed are given every year.*

The 19 Letters of Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch

Instructor:

Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Turner

Topics:

This series will be an in-depth study of Rav Hirsch z'l's book 'The 19 Letters'.

Born in Hamburg, Germany in 1808, Rav Hirsch lived through an extremely trying period in European Jewry's history. The rise of the Enlightenment movement affected the Jews no less than other religions and threatened the existence of traditional Jewish practice. The Enlightenment promoted the philosophy that 'reason' and autonomy should be the primary source of authority and, as a result of this way of thinking, many young intellectual minds began to be swept away from Torat Moshe and adopt alternative lifestyles.

In this remarkable sefer, Rav Hirsch, using a pen name Naftali, creates a dialogue with an invented character Binyamin. Binyamin, as an intelligent student, asks in the first Letter the basic questions a teen/student at the time would raise. He shares his reservations and frustration with 'old-fashioned' Yiddishkeit and begs answers. In the following 18 letters, Naftali addresses the questions in a respectful yet firm and clear fashion, elaborating on the underlying foundations of Orthodox Jewish beliefs.

Purpose:

The purpose of this series is to enable the thinking mind to discuss some of those challenging areas in modern life that we too may be dealing with. Although based on the written text, the class will leave room for guided open discussion and enable us to gain a deeper, clearer and user friendly understanding of the principles of Judaism.

Course Material:

The 19 letters of Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch z'l

Scheduling:

This will be a weekly shiur.

Evaluation:

Weekly reading in preparation for the shiur, will be a basic requirement. Participation and a short essay will be used together with attendance to give the final grade

At Home With the Avot

Instructor:

Mrs Tova Orenbuch

Topics:

In this course we will study Sefer Bereishit, focusing on the relationships between characters. We will learn about relationships between spouses, siblings, sister-wives, and parents and children. We will analyze the words of the text with the aids of classical and modern commentaries to gain a clear understanding of the nature of the characters' relationships and how we can apply that understanding to our own relationships

Goals:

Students will be integrally involved in the learning process as they challenge their skills and gain confidence in their ability to comprehend the text. Delving into the commentaries, we will see just how intuitive the mefarshim were, and just how relevant their words still are. With these goals in mind, we will take all of the lessons that our Avot and Imahot have to offer us to improve our own relationships with our families, friends and ourselves.

Materials:

Students are required to have a Chumash Breishitmikraotgedolot. Occasional additional source sheets will be handed out. Some prior textual skills are preferred.

Assessments:

Assessments will be administered at the conclusion of each topic. These will include a couple of informal in-class assessments as well as a non-cumulative test. Participation and attendance will be an integral part of grading.

Bamidbar

Instructor:

Mrs. Sarah Slater

Topics:

In this class, we will travel with the Jewish nation through the *midbar*, on their way from Egypt to the Land of Israel. We will examine the organization of the nation, its sanctification, and the development of its faith in Hashem through precisely orchestrated experiences and trials. We will learn about Divine Providence, faith and trust in Hashem, the roles of the tribes, and the power of speech.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is two-fold. First, to learn the stories and events of *Sefer Bamidbar*. But equally important, the journey of the Jewish people serves as a paradigm for the process we each go through as we travel from our own exile in *Mitzrayim* to the *geula* of entering *Eretz Yisrael* and achieving closeness to HaShem. Our second goal, therefore, will be to relate the experiences of the Jewish people recounted in the text to our own lives, and learn to view our lives as a parallel journey towards Hashem.

Course Material:

Students who can comfortably move around a Chumash should have a Chumash/*Rashi Bamidbar*. However, sheets with *pesukim* and their translations will be handed out so that everyone will be able to keep up with this fast-paced class. Additional commentaries will also be on the sheets to provide a springboard for class discussions.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated based upon class discussions, journal assignments, and group projects.

Beginner Beit Midrash: Korach

Instructor:

Mrs. Nechama Carter

Topics:

We learn Parshat Korach and while doing so explore many central *hashkafic* and personal topics such as: *emunat Chachamim*, Talmudic *machloket*, reward and punishment and why sometimes it doesn't seem fair, the unique power of women, the basis of personal conflict, how to process and forgive the hurt someone caused you, and more.

Purpose:

This course is designed to improve text skills, starting from a beginner level. We focus on expanding Hebrew vocabulary and understanding Hebrew sentence structure and grammar. To keep it exciting, we use texts that are fascinating in their own right, intended to generate discussions on important Torah and personal topics.

Course Material:

Students will receive 4 booklets during the course of the year, with the *pesukim* from Chumash and commentaries.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Midterm and final.

Intermediate Beit Midrash: Megillot

Instructor:

Ms M. Brunner

Topics:

We will focus primarily on *Esther* and *Ruth*, with some time in *ShirHaShirim* and *Kohelet*.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to develop intermediate-level text skills of students who arrive at seminary with the ability to read and translate *pasukim* well, including knowledge of basic grammar and sentence structure. The class will focus on gaining the ability to learn basic *meforshim* with particular focus on Rashi- both the technical aspects and how to get to the deeper meanings implicit in the Rashi. To keep things exciting, we will take time to delve into these deeper meanings.

Course Material:

The primary text will be Mikraot Gedolot of the Megillaw we are studying. There will be some time spent in *chavruta* learning, but there will also be a group level dissection of the text, especially at the beginning of the year as students build up their skills.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

At the end of each unit there will be a quiz to evaluate comprehension of both the topic at hand and the ability to read and understand the texts we have been working with.

Advanced Beit Midrash: Tehillim

Instructor:

Ms M. Brunner

Topics:

We will be covering several chapters in Tehillim. These chapters are mostly ones that students have been exposed to in the past such as Perakim 23, 92, 95, 100, 114, 121. Understanding these chapters will enrich your knowledge and understanding of such topics as Emunah, gratitude to Hashem and Mashiach.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to further develop the textual skills of students who arrive at seminary with good skills. Entering students are expected to already have some facility with such *mefarshim* as: Redak, Rashi and Metzudat. Malbim and Midrashim are the more complex texts that we will explore in this course in order to both sharpen technical skills and to appreciate how, through directly engaging the text, students can achieve a deeper and more integrated understanding of the material than when hearing it pre-processed by a teacher.

Course Material:

The primary text will be *Tehillim Mikaraot Gedolot*. Additionally, each Perek will be accompanied by a set of handouts containing sources that compliment what is found in the *mefarshim* or bring alternative approaches. There will be significant time spent in *chavruta* learning, which will be followed by class discussion.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

At the end of each Perek there will be a test to evaluate both comprehension of the topics discussed in connection with the Perek and acquisition of the skills needed to read and understand the Perek and its *mefarshim*.

Intermediate Beit Midrash

Words Without Friends: Exploring the Mystery of Rare Words in Tanach

Instructor:

Mrs. S. Muschel

Topic:

We will focus on rare words which appear in *Torah*, *Neviim*, and *Ketuvim*, using classic *meforshim* to probe the word's meaning.

Purpose:

This course is designed to develop students' intermediate-level textual skills by exploring the approaches used by *meforshim* to understand some of *Tanach*'s most puzzling *Pesukim*. Each module will present a new mystery, a different rare word in *Tanach*. Through closely analyzing the *meforshim* on the meaning of these words, we will learn the *meforshim*'s methodology for understanding *Tanach* in general. Students will also come to appreciate that extraordinary significance of each and every word of the *Tanach* and how even slight differences in interpretation of a single word can broadly impact our understanding of an entire story.

Course Material:

We will use a sourcebook divided into modules built around each rare word we study. It presents *pasukim* and classic *meforshim* in a carefully structured manner, along with questions and footnotes to guide students' *chavruta* learning.

Scheduling:

The course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

A mid-term and final that will require students to apply the principles taught during the semester. Additionally, students will choose their own rare word in *Tanach*, write a paper on the word along with its related *pasuk*, and present it to the class.

Advanced Beit Midrash: Shmuel

Instructor:

Miriam Tannenbaum

Topics:

We will be covering several units in Sefer Shmuel (1 & 11). These units focus on the various forms of leadership and influence of Am Yisrael when they are a sovereign body in Eretz Yisrael. Understanding the difference between power and influence in those times can impact how we approach these topics today. Sefer Shmuel is a mirror for understanding how to navigate the world around us as well as a potential catalyst for our own impact on our world.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to further develop the textual skills of students who arrive at seminary with good skills. Entering students are expected to already have some facility with such *mefarshim* as: Radak, Rashi and Metzudat. The next step is to learn how to work with more complex *mefarshim* such as Malbim and Abarbanel. Additionally, gaining a deeper appreciation of how to read *Peshat* before exploring the *mefarshim* will enhance students' understanding of the text and the ideas of added by them *mefarshimon* a deeper level. Engagement with the text gives the student an opportunity to 'own' her learning in a manner that cannot be achieved by a 'sage on the stage'-style class. Grappling with the language and concepts facilitates a deeper and more enduring learning.

Course Material:

The primary text will be *Shmuel Mikraot Gedolot*. Additionally each unit will be accompanied by a set of handouts containing sources/questions that complement and guide the student through her journey. There will be significant time spent in *chavruta* learning, which will be followed by class discussion/shiur.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

There will be a midterm and final that will evaluate the students on the comprehension of topics as well as on the skills developed in the course. The exams will be essay-style with open Navi/resources (as the goal of the course is not to memorize the information).

Chassidut: Getting to Know Your Soul

Instructor:

Mrs Rachel Silber

Topics:

The course is a detailed understanding of our personality, based on Torah sources. We learn the influence that our Hebrew name has on our personality, and learn the deeper meaning of the Alef Bait in order to deepen our understanding of our name. We explore the four elements of the personality as brought down in Tanach and Chassidut. We begin to learn to analyze ourselves and understand why we behave a feel as we do. One main purpose of this course, besides self-awareness, is to understand others in our lives and fulfill the Mitzva of Ahavat Yisrael and Dan Lekaf Zechut. We also want to find our strong points and maximize them. We also begin to understand our weak points and learn to balance and correct them.

Purpose:

The material studied in this course will help you better understand yourself and those around you, including your family. This is valuable on many levels. Among them, we will focus on how this knowledge facilitates and deepens your practice of the mitzvah Ve'ahavta Le'rayacha - to love your friend as you do yourself. We will learn how to judge favorably or not at all, as per Pirkei Avot.

Course Material:

There will be regular handouts.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Students will be asked to write two papers during the course of the year based on our class discussions. Grades are determined by these papers, together with class attendance and participation.

Chinuch for the 21st Century

Instructor:

Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Turner

Topics:

The topic of this series is Chinuch/Education through the Torah prism.

We will be using themes from the weekly Parasha as a spring-board to discuss topics relevant to raising children and ourselves.

Through the topics discussed and open class debate we will gain an awareness into some of the experiences we have all come across in our younger years. We may find some less and others more relevant to us personally, but in the field of education the more we can bring to our conscience the better.

Topic examples - brotherly love, tolerance, tailor made Chinuch, technology in the home, firm or soft, schooling, chinuch for Torah, cultural differences in Jewish education, making decisions etc.

Purpose:

The benefit of seeing how the Torah relates to specific topics and how we can translate that into our 21st Century lives, can be eye-opening and is often essential. The purpose of this series, is not to spend time judging our parents' successes. (We certainly do not want a student to tell her parents 'Even R' Turner said you were wrong!'). The purpose is rather to prepare ourselves as parents and educators, through understanding some of the fundamentals as well as ensuring our own constant personal growth.

Course Material:

No specific material needed. Handouts will be brought to the class when necessary.

Scheduling:

This will be a weekly Shiur.

Evaluation:

Participation and attendance will be the final grade

Classic Works of Mussar and Emunah

Instructor:

Rabbi Baruch Schechter

Topics:

This class takes age-old wisdom and applies it to contemporary issues. See the Chovot Halevavot show us how to bring Hashem into our daily lives today. Understand Rambam's views on music and how to prioritize our lives. Learn what Rav Yosef Albo has to say about societal values relative to Torah values. Discover how to experience joy on Yom Kippur with the advice of Rabbeinu Yonah. Find out how to value your self, appreciate your life, deal with personal struggles, and intensify your emunah and bitachon. This is an interactive and down-to-earth class, dealing with real issues of real people.

Purpose: Through careful analysis of the words of the sages we discover the depth of their insight and its relevance to our present day experience. Our goal is to learn how to restructure our thinking and conduct according to these insights in order to achieve a deeper, more satisfying and meaningful life.

Course Material:

We will use sourcebooks with selections from classic works of mussar and hashkafa, such as Chovot Halevavot, Sefer Ha'Ikrim, Shaarei Teshuva, Kuzari, Tomer Devora, Michtav M'Elizahu, Chazon Ish and others. The sources are organized topically and allow students to "follow along inside" while we are learning the material as well as to review it in a coherent and comprehensive fashion.

Scheduling:

This class meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Evaluation will be based on essays done outside of class. They will focus on how to internalize concepts covered in class and apply them to daily life.

Controversial Halachot

Instructor:

Rabbi Shalom Apelbaum

Topics:

In this course we will examine some of the most challenging Halachic issues presented by contemporary society. We will cover such topics as: Abortion, Homosexuality, Birth Control, yeshiva students going to the army, the modern Aguna problem, issues of conversion and more. We will look at the sources underlying the laws together in class so Hebrew skills are not required. This will be a discussion class rather than a lecture class.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to understand the principals involved in complex modern social issues and how halacha approaches them. In general it is to gain an appreciation for the relevance of halacha to all aspects of modern life.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out during each class with sources relevant to the specific focus of the class. These will often include pesukim from Chumash, an excerpt from the Talmud and Rambam, and basic halachic sources.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

There will be a midterm and final in the form of essays in which you either summarize a topic covered in class or research your own halachic issue.

Derech Hashem

Name of Instructor:

Rabbi Yaakov Lynn

Topics:

In this class we will learn through the *Derech Hashem* (The Way of G-d), written by Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (Ramchal). *Derech Hashem* is unique in the vast breadth of basic topics covered in a short *sefer*. Ramchal's purpose in writing it was to show how all the disparate ideas of Torah function together to form a single, integrated vision of reality. It is therefore a remarkable resource for understanding how Torah teaches us to understand the world.

In the beginning of the year, we will focus on the first section of the *sefer*, where Ramchal explains what we know about "Who" Hashem is, the purpose of Creation, and Man's role in Creation, how *hashgacha* (Divine Providence) works, the role of the Jewish people in creation, and the function of the stars, the Zodiac, and the *melachim* (angels).

Later in the year we will skip to the third section of the *sefer*, where Ramchal discusses the role of *Avodat Hashem* in our lives and how specific mitzvot figure in to that avodah. We will concentrate on: the study of Torah, the Shema, Prayer, and Shabbat

Before each of the *yomintovim*, we will learn the sections of *DerechHaShem* that discuss the *chag*.

Purpose of the class:

The goal of the class is to deepen our understanding of Hashem, His Universe, how it functions, and our role in it. We will discuss the implications of this understanding for our behavior and approach to life.

Course materials/sources:

You will need a copy of *DerechHaShem*. Printings are available that include an excellent English translation.

Scheduling:

The class will meet twice a week.

Evaluation:

Mid term and final.

Sefer Devarim: Moshe's Final Address

Instructor:

Mrs. S. Muschel

Course Description:

In this course, we will analyze *Sefer Devarim* as *Moshe's* last lecture to *Bnei Yisroel*. Using this perspective we listen with fresh ears, understanding how its messages are relevant both to his audience then, a nation on the cusp of entering *Eretz Yisroel*, as well as to Jews throughout the ages.

Purpose:

Our goal for the course is threefold: first that students understand the general structure of *Sefer Devarim*; second, that students appreciate the main themes of *Sefer Devarim* as developed by *Chazal* and later commentators; and finally, that students consider how the eternal messages of *Moshe's* final address are relevant to our spiritual development today.

Course Materials:

We will use a sourcebook composed of *pesukim*, *midrashim*, and select later *meforshim*.

Scheduling:

This course meets once a week.

Evaluation:

Mid-term and final. Additionally, students will choose one aspect of *Moshe's* last lecture, write a short paper on the topic and present it to the class.

Haftarah

Instructor:

Mrs. Arielle Arieli

Purpose:

Did you ever wonder, what is the meaning of the portion of Navi read after Kriat Hatorah on Shabbat? Did you ever wonder why that specific section of Navi was chosen?

Together, we will expand our understanding of Navi to include some less familiar parts from the weekly Haftarah. We will also learn how the Haftarah relates to the Parsha and how it relates to our lives. The Gemara (Megillah 14a) states "that there were many Nevi'im - double the number that came out of Egypt. But only those that were needed for future generations were written down and those that weren't needed were not written down." We will develop insights into what the Navi wanted to impart to our generation.

Course Material:

You will receive sheets including the weekly Haftarah and additional sources that will help us grasp its deeper messages such as Rav Hirsch, Malbim, Alschich, and the mefarshim from Mikraot Gedolot.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

An open-notes exam is administered at the end of each semester. Grades will depend on this, together with class attendance and participation.

Halacha: General

Instructor:

Rabbi Yehoshua Schwab

Topics:

This course covers three major areas in *halacha*; *brachot*, *tefila* and *kashrut*. The section on *kashrut* includes *halachot* relevant to a modern kitchen. When the *chaggim* approach, we learn the *halachot* of that particular holiday. Therefore, most years we start the course with the laws and customs of *Elul*, *Rosh Hashanah*, *Yom Kippur*, and *Sukkot*.

If there is time and interest, we also study some of the laws of *bein adam l'chaveiro*, such as the laws of *tzedaka* and *maaser*, laws of respecting the property of others, *kibudav'em*, etc. Both Ashkenazic and Sephardic opinions are presented.

Purpose:

The purpose of this course is for the student to know how to conduct herself according to *halacha* on a daily basis, as well as understanding the *halachic* basis and sources relevant to the *halachot*. She will enable her to ask intelligent *shaalot* in the future as different issues arise.

Course Material:

Class handouts are provided for each topic. Handouts begin with a brief description and introduction to the topic. This is followed by an outline of various points with space between the points for students to take notes.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Usually a take-home final is given and is returned to class on a specific date when we review it together. Being present for the review is mandatory to ensure that the student finishes the course correctly knowing the *halacha*.

Halacha: Beiyun

Instructor:

Rabbi Shlomo Cohen

Topics

The course will deal with both the familiar and less familiar areas of Halacha, covering such topics as "*Agunot*", copyright in the light of the internet, modern day *kashrut* issues, business halacha, and other contemporary halachic issues.

Purpose

The course is intended for students who have a good background in basic everyday halacha and are looking to widen their knowledge, entering new realms of previously unexplored halacha. This will give them a more comprehensive outlook on the world of halacha. Students will be shown how the halacha develops from the Talmud and the rishonim, straight through to the decisions of modern day poskim. We will be exploring questions and situations that affect all aspects of modern life. Students will obtain an understanding of the process by which difficult halachic rulings are arrived at, and an understanding of when a question requiring a halachic solution arises and when not.

Course material

We will examine sources from the Talmud through to the writings and rulings of present day *poskim*.

Scheduling

The course will meet twice a week.

Evaluation

There will be a midterm and final multiple choice test.

Halacha: Sephardic Tradition

Instructor:

Rabbi Mordechai Cohen

Description:

The class will cover the following halachot in accordance with Sephardic custom.

- Chagim (Elul, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Chanukah, Purim and Pesach)
- Berachot
- Tefilah
- Seder Hayom
- Kashrut

Purpose:

Although the Halachot for Ashkenazim and Sepharadim are mostly similar, the discrepancies can make learning Halacha confusing. The purpose of this class is to present halachah as clearly as possible to the Sephardic student. The course will also strive to give a basic understanding of what lies behind halacha, making the halacha logical and understandable.

The class will also address the divergent minhagim that appear among Sepharadim of different backgrounds.

Course Material:

Question sheets will be handed out before every topic for the students to follow along.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

The grade for the course will be based equally on exams (to be given at the conclusion of every unit), class attendance, and participation.

Milchot Shabbat: General

Instructor:

Rabbi Yehoshua Schwab

Topics:

This course covers major areas of *hilchot* Shabbat. The course begins with less complicated but very important *melachot* and works its way to the more complicated *melachot* of *bishul* and *borer*. An important segment of the course covers the use of cosmetics and personal hygiene on Shabbat. In addition, we cover *muktza*, *kiddush*, *havdala* and *hadlacotneirot*.

This course is both thorough and comprehensive and is, therefore, appropriate for beginners and advanced students. Both Sephardic and Ashkenazic customs, and their reasons, are taught. Special emphasis will be placed on understanding the logical basis of the various *halachot* to better understand when they apply.

Purpose:

In addition to knowing how to keep *Shabbat* properly, students will understand the reasoning behind the *halacha*, so that they will not just practice it by rote and will be able to ask intelligent *shaalot* in the future.

Course Material:

Class handouts are provided for each topic. Handouts begin with a brief description and introduction to the topic. This is followed by an outline of various points with space between the points for students to take notes.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Usually a take-home final is given and is returned to class on a specific date when we review it together. Being present for the review is mandatory to ensure that the student finishes the course correctly knowing the *halacha*.

Hilchot Shabbat: Be'iyun

Instructor:

Rabbi Shlomo Cohen

Topics

The course will cover all areas of Shabbat, paying particular attention to the practical application of the *halacha* to modern day situations, and the logical process by which the Talmud is interpreted and applied to modern day appliances and situations. Different approaches to the *halacha* will be discussed and explained, and both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi rulings will be presented.

Purpose

To acquire both knowledge of practical *halachot Shabbat* and understanding of the *halachic* process by which it is determined. This will enable students to manage any *Shabbat*-related situation that arises in her home - either knowing what to do or recognizing when a question arises that requires a *halachic* ruling.

Course material

We will examine sources from the Talmud through to the writings and rulings of present day *poskim*.

Scheduling

The course will meet twice a week.

Evaluation

There will be a midterm and final multiple choice test.

Inter-personal Relationships

Instructor:

Rabbi Simcha Poupko

Topics:

Beginning with a *Mishna* from *Pirkei Avot* or a halacha from Rambam's *Hilchot De'ot*, we will examine many of the complex issues that come up in daily human interactions. We will work to understand what motivates us and the people around us, looking closely at commonly experienced emotions such as arrogance, anger, and fear.

Pressing issues such as those involving roommate relationships and respect for parents in challenging situations will be investigated. The subtle involvement of *lashon hara* and *nekama* (revenge) in these situations will be examined and taken to a new level of understanding through honest and mature probing. Issues pertaining to students' future relationships - in marriage, career, and child-raising - will also be addressed.

Our discussions will also draw perspective from leaders of the *mussar* movement, such as Rabbi Yisrael Salanter and from more contemporary greats, such as Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. The course will include both theoretical study and practical, interactive discussion during class.

Purpose:

The goal of this course is to help you become more aware of the complex emotions and motives that underlie our actions and reactions in basic social situations. This course aims to make you more adept at managing your relationships through honest and at times painful self-awareness rather than through tips and technical strategies. Through real-life situations and interactive discussion, you will acquire the sensitivity and empathy that can assist you in the complex navigation of the relationships that form our daily lives.

Course Materials:

Occasional handouts with sources drawn from *Chumash*, Ramban, Rambam and *Pirkei Avot*. Students do not require advanced Hebrew skills as we will read the sources together in class.

Scheduling and Credits:

This course meets once a week.

Evaluation:

There will be an in-class midterm and final. Grades will be based on test results, together with attendance and class participation.

Israeli Society

Instructor:

Rabbi Simcha Poupko

Topics:

In the course we will become familiar with the following topics:

Zionism - its roots, goals, major events, major figures; the map of Israel; the Middle Eastern neighborhood; the Israel-Palestinian conflict; *aliyah*, Israeli culture and personality; hi-tech innovation in Israel; sectors and sub-sectors in Israel; Israeli Arab society; basic structure of government; the educational system; the IDF and Israeli society; Israel and the non-Jewish world.

Purpose:

The goal of the course is to give students an insider's view of what is happening in Israel today while understanding its formative events and processes. The historical view of modern Israel will help students strengthen their identity as Jews and their own connection to the Land.

Scheduling:

This course meets once a week.

Evaluation:

Midterm assignment: Students will collaborate to create a presentation summarizing what they learned so far about Israel.

Final assignment: Written exam in which students will choose from several issues that were debated in class on Israeli history/society and present pertinent arguments.

Jewish Relationships 101

Instructor:

Mrs. Chana Levitan

Topics:

This class will give you information and tools to build successful relationships. The 3 main relationships we will focus on in this course are:

1) **Your Relationship with Yourself** - Bein Adam LeAtzmo, 2) **Friendships** - Bein Adam LeChavero, and 3) **Dating and Marriage** - Bein Ish LeIshto.

Bein Adam LeAtzmo: Before you can date anyone successfully, you must first date yourself. This means that first we need to know who we are, what we stand for and where we are going in life. This section of the course will focus on knowledge and hands-on tools and exercises necessary to understanding and building ourselves.

Bein Adam LeChavero: This section of the course will focus on interpersonal relationships, primarily friendships. Friendships can be one of the most precious and profound parts of our lives, if we know how to manage and build them. In this section of the course, we will learn about healthy boundaries, successful communication, trust...and keys to creating safe, healthy emotional bonds.

Bein Ish LeIshto: In the third section of this course, we will do an 8 week dating and marriage workshop, based on my books, "I Only Want to Get Married Once" and "THAT'S Why I Married You!". We will also learn about the advantages of a Jewish marriage, which are particularly relevant in the 21st century.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to give you skills to achieve your own internal happiness, to choose the right marriage partner, to navigate the complex world of human relationships and create lasting, loving marriages.

Course Material:

There will be worksheets given throughout the year and practical, in-class exercises as well. Source sheets will also be given out, with sources primarily from Rav Dessler, Rav Volbe and Rav Chaim Friedlander.

Scheduling and Credits:

This course meets once a week and does not include tests or credits.

Ma'agal Hachayim

Instructor:

Mrs Michal Levy

Topics:

In this class we will go through the major segments and milestones of life to get a deeper understanding of how we are developing at each of these stages, and how Torah frames and guides that development. We will begin with our initial formation: nine months in the womb, followed by birth with its accompanying Brit or Kiddush and name giving. We will then move on to our early development as individuals culminating in our Bar or Bat Mitzvah. We will then discuss our transition into family through marriage, exploring the changes we experience and the different opportunities, obligations, and focus that this brings. We will conclude with end of life issues, examining the Torah approach to mourning.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to appreciate the significance of the events that mark major transitions in life, to understand what is changing, the unique opportunities this creates, and how we can build on those to more fully develop ourselves. This will also deepen our appreciation and experience of these events when we join in other people's simchas and special occasions.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out at each class with sources included. We will go through most of the sources together so Hebrew skill are not a prerequisite for this course.

Scheduling and credits:

This course meets once a week.

Evaluation:

A test with essay questions will be given at the end of each semester to evaluate your understanding of the material.

Mechina

Instructor:

Mrs Raquel Kirszenbaum

Topics:

Mechina is a Hebrew term used to describe beginnings, preparations and prerequisites for something greater. A Mechina class is, therefore, about fundamentals - everything you need to know about Torah but never had the chance to ask. It is modeled on the classes given in Neve to incoming baaleitshwah, those who lack background in Torah. It is meant to answer the questions they come in with and to give them the foundations they need to enter the world of Torah. But since many of us are missing those fundamentals ourselves or have very confused ideas about them, this class is a unique opportunity to put together your understanding of Torah from the ground up. Questions addressed will include: Is there a G-d? What is the purpose of life; what am I doing here? How do I develop a relationship with God? What does it mean to be the "chosen people"? Why was Abraham the person who founded the Jewish people? What are Mitzvot all about, why do we need to do them? What does it mean to accept and live according to Torah? Once we get a basic outline of the big picture we will turn to some of the basic mitzvot to understand how they fit into a Torah life: Shabbat, Kashrut, and more.

Purpose:

To get direction in life. To understand what Torah is about and why it defines our lives.

Course Material:

This is a discussion class. I will be quoting a lot of Midrashim, Gemaras and later commentaries. But we will be working "outside" of the text.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Midterm and final. They will either be exams or an essay, depending on how the class goes.

Meet the Mefarshim

Instructor:

Rabbi A. Manning

Topics:

We will examine the lives and works of the classic mefarshim, starting from the Mishna and Gemara and running to present day. We will cover for example: the Geonim (early and late), Rif, Rashi, Ba'alei HaTosafot, Rambam, Rabbeinu Yona, Ramban, Rosh, R. Yosef Caro, Rema, Ariz'l, Shach, Taz, Magen Avraham, Ramchal, Ba'al Shem Tov, Vilna Gaon, Alter Rebbe, R. Chaim Volozhiner, Rav Hirsch, Netziv, Rav Kook, Chafetz Chaim, Rav Soloveitchik, and Rav Hutner.

Purpose:

The classes will include a brief biography of the mefaresh being discussed with a view to appreciating the relationship they had to other classic Jewish thinkers - their teachers, students and family. We will examine their principal writings, how they are structured, how to best use them and where to find them in a classic Torah library. We will also use each individual as a springboard to understand the context of their times; what issues were dominant in the Jewish and non-Jewish world at the time, how those issues impacted on their lives and their writings, and how they broaden our understanding of how we arrived where we are today. For example, our discussion of Mishna and Gemara will include an understanding of the fall of the Roman Empire and rise of Islam. The Rambam includes a deeper understanding of the development and codification of halacha. R. Yosef Caro introduces a discussion on the Expulsion from Spain and rise of Messianic fervor leading to the attempt to form a Sanhedrin. The Ariz'l prompts a discussion on the spread of kabbala, its basic tenets and impact on Jewish thought. As the more recent mefarshim are examined we will look at the Jewish Enlightenment and the growth of major Jewish movements in the 19th Century, including Reform, Chassidut, the Yeshiva World and Zionism.

Course Material:

The course will be taught from a specially prepared source-book.

Scheduling and Evaluation:

This course meets once a week. There is no examination for this course. Grade is based on attendance and class participation.

Mesorah – Our Journey, My Journey

Instructor:

Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Turner

Topics:

The topic of this series is our Jewish tradition and heritage that, over time, developed into what we call 'Mesorah'. This word in and of itself is challenging to define, yet through an overview of Jewish history, we will gain an understanding of one of the most important and beautiful concepts in Torah. Starting from creation of man, on to our forefathers and mothers, the exile in Egypt, the Sinai Experience and then the journey to settlement in Eretz Yisrael, persecution, exile and return up to our present day, we will learn what defined and still defines us as a nation. We will gain an understanding of the need for Mesorah and develop a respect for it too.

Purpose:

The purpose of this series is to enable us to gain a sense of understanding and then belonging to our Jewish heritage as a whole, and our families as individuals. We will focus on respecting, accepting and loving all of Klal Yisrael, with and perhaps through, their kaleidoscope of styles, customs, dress-codes and practices.

The class will be open to discussion and the input of the students will help define our success in reaching our planned goal.

The aim of this series is to understand where we come from, be proud of who we are, and learn to love others.

Course Material:

Handouts will be brought to the class.

Scheduling:

This will be a twice-weekly Shiur.

Evaluation:

A short end of semester and end of year test, together with participation and attendance will be the final grade.

Mishlei

Instructor:

Rabbi Baruch Schechter

Topics:

In this class we will learn about how to work on middos with specific emphasis placed on those which enable us to have better relationships with people, with HaShem, and with ourselves. In terms of *beinadamim'chavero*, we will talk about **patience and tolerance**. We will explore how to **give to and be there for others while maintaining healthy boundaries**. We will learn **strategies on how to develop deeper friendships** and the **power of dignified speech** to encourage and assist others to reach their potential. In terms of *beinadamim'Makom* we will explore ways to **see Hashem as an ongoing presence in our lives through the good times and the bad**. In terms of *beinadamim'atzmo* we will learn the centrality of truth in thought, speech and action to developing a strong and healthy self, with a focus on learning to be “real”.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is not just to learn Mishlei; it's to live Mishlei. By applying the age-old wisdom of ShlomoHamelech to our situation in the modern era with our modern challenges ShlomoHaMelech will teach us how to live life to its fullest: how to be our own unique selves with our G-d given individual talents and our G-d given individual shortcomings.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out during each class with psukim from Mishlei on the particular topic at hand. The sheets will include summaries of the classic commentaries on Mishlei such as Rabbeinu Yonah, Rashi, the Gr'a, the Rabbag and others. These source sheets will allow students to “follow along inside” as well as assist in reviewing the material in an organized and comprehensive fashion.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Evaluation will be based on essays done outside of class. They will be focus on how to internalize topics covered in class and apply them to daily living.

Netivot Shalom

Instructor:

Ayelet Elnecave

Topics:

In this class each week we will learn a piece on the weekly parsha or on an upcoming holiday from the sefer Netivot Shalom by the Rebbe of Slonim, Rav Sholom Noach Berezovsky ztz"l. It is a remarkable work that combines chassidic thought, kabbalistic concepts, and penetrating rational analysis.

Purpose:

Our goal is to bring grounded inspiration to our avodat HaShem that we can build on throughout the year.

Course Material:

Classes will be taught from the sefer Netivot Shalom as well as referencing both Chumash, Pirkei Avot and other sources.

Scheduling:

This course meets once a week. Grades will be based on class participation and an essay at the end of each semester.

Niflaot HaBriya – The Wow World!

Instructor:

Rabbi Moshe Yehuda Turner

Topics:

The topic of this series is the wonderful world we have.

Each class will take a deeper look and focus on an element in the physical world we live in, or the human body. The first part of the class will be basic information on the reality that we often take for granted. The second part will be a key lesson that we can use as a tool for practical growth through the topic chosen.

Some examples: The Human Cell - We will discuss Unity but not Uniformity; The Heart - we will discuss prayer; The Spine - we will discuss gratitude; Hair - we will discuss Emunah - trust in Hashem.

Purpose:

Being born into this world, we tend to take some of God's most incredible gifts for granted. We spend little time and thought noticing the incredible parts of ourselves and the world around us.

The purpose of this series is to open our eyes, to gain a deeper appreciation for the kindness of Hashem in our world and to gain an understanding through the brilliance of our Rabbis into the deeper messages behind the physical world.

Course Material:

A booklet of diagrams and topics will be available.

Scheduling:

This will be a weekly Shiur.

Evaluation:

An end of semester article and an end of year summary test, together with participation and attendance will constitute the final grade.

Power Pointing Through Jewish History

Instructor:

Rabbi A. Manning

Topics:

Jewish history from Avraham to the present. The class is structured as 15 Power Point presentations progressing chronologically and showing through charts, maps, graphs and photos how Jewish history unfolded (in the context of global events) and brought us on a winding but determined path to where we are today. As we approach the modern period the focus will zoom-in with more detail and discussion of the tumultuous events of the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Purpose:

The class is intended to give students a sense of understanding of and wonderment from how Jewish history has progressed in unlikely and miraculous ways, ultimately leading to the Jews learning Torah in Yerushalayim!! It seeks to give context and structure to their understanding of Jewish history, in a way which is colorful, visual and (hopefully) memorable. The course seeks to deepen the students' appreciation of and inspiration from the hashgacha of the Divine Hand which guides world history. It also tries to impress on them THEIR critical link in the chain of Jewish history and how they can be inspired by the lives of others to make the right choices for the Jewish future.

Course Material:

The course will be taught from specially prepared PowerPoint presentations.

Scheduling:

This course meets once a week.

Evaluation:

There is no examination for this course. Grade is based on attendance and class participation.

Ramchal

Instructor:

Rabbi Jeremy Kagan

Topics:

In this class we will examine a few basic concepts that are central to Torah observance and to our understanding of ourselves, our relationship with God, and our purpose. We will begin with **emunah**, trying to understand what it is and what is its basis. Our focus on emunah and its significance will naturally lead us to ask the question why God is so hidden. This will introduce the topic of **free choice** - what it is and why it is so central to our relationship with God that it results in our living in a world that is counter-intuitive to our unexamined expectations. Once raised, the topic of free choice will lead to a discussion of how, as a nation we have used this capacity and how it has effected the nature of the world we live in. This opens up issues relating to **exile**, the **historical process** in which we find ourselves and its structure and meaning. Our examination will be guided by concepts from the 18th century Italian Rabbi, Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato, the Ramchal. Thus the title of the class.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to encounter Torah on a deeper level and through this to appreciate both the intuitive nature of basic Torah concepts and how fully integrated they are with one another. Through the topics chosen you will have an opportunity to become more conscious and thoughtful about your relationship with God. Emphasis will be placed on how the world as we experience it today effects the nature of that relationship and the challenges we face developing that relationship. The class will push you to think and, hopefully, will give you a taste for how penetrating and satisfying Torah's vision is when brought to this level.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out during each class with excerpts primarily from Midrash, Maharal, and Ramchal. We will examine some of these sources in class. But the sheets will also provide you with material to examine on your own if you are interested in understanding from where the concepts presented in class are derived.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

During the year you will have to write several in-class essays. These will test your understanding of the concepts that were developed in class by requiring you to think through the material on your own and present it.

Received Wisdom: the Psychology of Pirkei Avot

Instructor:

Rabbi Dr. Samuel Landau

Topics and Purpose:

Dry, boring, irrelevant and archaic; PirkeiAvot can be relegated to an obscure location in the Shabbat afternoon siddur...or perhaps it could be rich with meaning, psychologically cutting-edge, even transformative. This ground-breaking course will seek to synthesise Jewish content with psychological processes to offer a unique way of learning and living.

PirkeiAvot is described as the basis for developing a relationship *ben adam l'atzmo* - between a person and their selfhood. This course will explore the psychological underpinnings of PirkeiAvot as expressed in the text and commentaries and reflect on their application to the growing person.

This journey will be grounded in the centuries-old received wisdom of PirkeiAvot but additionally informed by contemporary psychological theory, therapeutic skills and reflective practice. It will call upon participants to engage with the source material from the multiple positions of scholar, student and searcher.

Course Material:

The course will utilise the classical text and commentaries on PirkeiAvot in combination with empirical evidence, therapeutic skills and psychological theory.

Ultimately though, the fundamental material for the course is our selfhood and psyche as we grow and strive to live the messages of the text.

Scheduling:

The course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

A reflective account of the course in whatever medium best describes your personal journey will form the core evaluative component.

Rethinking Jewish Thought

Instructor:

Rabbi Dov Lev

Topics:

This course explores fundamental ideas within Jewish thought. Topics include:

- Evidence for God's existence
- Responding to challenges to Jewish convictions
- Where was God during the Holocaust and why do bad things happen to good people
- Evidence of the authenticity of Torah
- Role of the Torah SheBaalPeh
- The philosophical underpinnings of prayer
- How *hashgachapratis* works
- The development of diverse opinions in Judaism and the Torah perspective on dealing with those with different views

Purpose:

Did you ever feel like no one was giving deeper answers to your fundamental questions about Jewish life? This is the class that you've been waiting for! Without any apologetics and without any assumptions, Rabbi Lev tackles many of the basic and not-so-basic issues in Torah Thought. Students can expect to come out with the thinking and communication skills to respond to challenges to Judaism by being instilled with a proper understanding of the fundamental tenets of Torah, as well as a deep sense of confidence in these convictions. This engaging course is designed for students who love to ponder and to challenge and to be challenged.

Course Material:

The ideas that form the basis of the course are derived from the classical Jewish thinkers such as Rambam, ChovosHaLevovos, Kuzari, Ramchal, Vilna Gaon, Rav Dessler, Rav Hutner, Rav Wolbe and many others. Class discussion are conducted "outside" the text, but source material will be provided to students who wish to pursue the ideas in greater depth.

Scheduling:

The class meets once a week.

Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated based on class performance, as well as a series of essay assignments that test students' research skills and critical thinking while utilizing the tools and knowledge that were developed in class.

Shevatim B'Tanach

Instructor:

Mrs. Brocha David

Topics:

This course is an in-depth exploration of the twelve shevatim that formed the core of the Jewish nation, and is a unique blend of Tanach and machshavah. Using a thematic approach, each tribe is studied from birth, and the various incidents in Chumash involving individual tribes are examined. The brachos given to the shevatim by Yaakov Avinu and Moshe Rabbeinu are analyzed, and the foremost descendants of each shevet in Neviim and Ketuvim are studied, as inter-generational links and common character traits are revealed. The course stresses textual analysis, and a wide variety of sources are used, spanning from early Midrashim to classic Rishonim to contemporary thinkers and Chassidic masters.

We will study Rachel and Leah and their respective relationships with Yaakov, in order to gain a deeper understanding of Shimon, who was similar in potential to both Leah and Eisav. We will study Levi, who is the “glue” of the Jewish nation, and Reuven, who had all the characteristics of a firstborn, yet lost the rights of the firstborn. We will learn about Asher, who was blessed with wealth and abundance, and Binyamin, whose birth in Eretz Yisrael set him apart from the other tribes. We will examine the complexities of Dan, who dwelled on the dark side, and Gad, who chose self-deprivation over indulgence and had an extraordinarily close relationship with Moshe Rabbeinu. Time permitting; there are many more shevatim I would love to learn about with you!

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to gain an appreciation of the unique role each tribe played in the overall composition of Am Yisrael. Each one served Hashem in a different way, yet they shared a common goal. Each tribe's approach was distinct and necessary, yet their strength was in their unity and interconnectedness. Together, they are the pillars the world rests on. For our part, we can learn to apply the lessons learned from each tribe to our own lives and appreciate the depth and diversity inherent in Avodat Hashem, while simultaneously acquiring a deeper, broader knowledge of Tanach and improved textual skills.

Course Material:

Source sheets will be distributed in class, and the majority of sources are studied inside the text. You will need a Tanach. Some Hebrew skills are preferable.

Scheduling and Credits:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

An open-notes exam is administered at the end of each semester. Grades will depend on this together with class attendance and participation.

Simcha B'Avoda

Instructor:

Rabbi Yaakov Altman

Purpose:

Daily life can be challenging, discouraging, and even overwhelming.

This class will give you the tools not only to *handle* life's challenges, but to *turn them into springboards* for your happiness and success. You'll learn many ideas and **practical techniques** to keep your mind and heart in a great place emotionally, so you go through life with the simchah, creativity, and vibrant energy you need to fully actualize your potential and to become the incredible person you're meant to be.

Topics:

Topics include: Motivation (developing and maintaining it), Tools to Maintain Positive Emotional States, Marriage, Loving Yourself, Happiness, Dealing with Failure and Discouragement, Understanding Yourself and Others, Persistence, Dealing with Difficulties, Self-Confidence/ Self-Worth, Developing and Pursuing your Goals and Dreams, Overcoming Fear, Taking Action, Self-Improvement, and much more.

You will also develop a **system** to internalize and remember these concepts, and to integrate them into your life.

Resources:

Audio recordings and videos will be made available to you online to review the ideas discussed in class, and more importantly, *to internalize them*. These audios and videos are *only a part* of the tool-set you'll receive to make these concepts a part of your life and who you are.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out during each class with excerpts from Chazal, Mishlei, Chumash, Pirkei Avot, etc, as well as many sources of concepts in psychology, self-improvement, and peak-performance.

Scheduling:

This course meets once a week, but its effects are for a lifetime!

Ta'amei Hamitzvot

Instructor:

Mrs Michal Levy

Topics:

In this class we will discuss the meanings behind the mitzvot and minhagim which we do on a regular basis. The first part of the year we will focus on those connected with Shabbat. We will start with the beginning of the day - Kabbalat Shabbat, candle lighting, and Kiddush, and move all the way through to the end of the day - Seudah Shlishit and Havdalah, with many more in between. The second part of the year we will focus on mitzvot of our day to day life: Brachot, Shema, Amein, Kivud Av v'Aim, etc. As the chagim come around we will choose a specific mitzvah to focus on that will give us a taste for what the chag is all about.

Purpose:

To gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of what we are really doing through specific mitzvot and minhagim - what is being accomplished and how we are affecting ourselves and the world around us. This transforms our experience of them from empty movements to meaningful actions, allowing us to bring ourselves to their performance.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out for each semester. We will study the sources together so advanced Hebrew skills are not required. The sources will come primarily from Sifrei/Machshavah (include the more philosophical material), such as Maharal.

Scheduling:

This class meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

In-class essays will be given at the end of each semester to evaluate your understanding of the material.

Tanach Personalities

Instructor:

Mrs Raquel Kirszenbaum

Topics

This will examine the main personalities in the book of Bereishit: the characteristic trait that defined each of them, their challenges, mistakes, and accomplishments. We will study the creation of man and woman, their sin as the source of all of man's trials, about Cain and Hevel - these two opposite personalities and how balance was achieved through their third brother Sheit. We will study Noach - his greatness but also what failures prevented him from becoming the father of the Jewish people. Primary focus will be the patriarchs and matriarchs as the creators of the fundamental personality traits of the Jewish people.

Purpose:

“Maasevotsimant'banim” the deeds of our forefathers are signs for their children. Learning in depth about the personalities of Bereishit will allow us to identify and understand our own unique character, the things that most challenge us individually, how best to meet those challenges and build on our strengths to succeed in actualizing our potential. We will derive practical lessons for life, looking in depth at these ancestors as our manual of instruction.

Source Materials:

The primary sources will be Chumash Bereishit and its commentaries.

Scheduling:

This class will be taught twice a week.

Evaluation:

Midterm and final, which will be either an exam or essay.

Tefilla (Mrs. Hasten)

Instructor:

Mrs Leah Hasten

Topics:

In this class we will begin by exploring fundamental concepts related to tefilla, such as why we need to daven if Hashem already knows what we need, the purpose of praising Hashem in prayer, how to connect through words we don't understand, and more. We will build our understanding in the context of a general appreciation of the nature of Hashem's existence and why He created the world with man at its center. After developing this larger context we will examine the language of the siddur, going through the words to understand the intent, depth, and breadth of the tefillot. We will discuss the hashkafic topics that are implicit in the tefillot, providing a practical and philosophical approach to prayer. The class will focus primarily on Birkot Hashachar and the Shemone Esrei.

Purpose:

In this Tefilla class we will learn to discover and rediscover our relationship with Hashem through prayer. Though many of us were introduced to tefilla at a young age, most of us continue to struggle to find meaning and connection to a seemingly unrelated jumble of words. The goal of the class is to uncover deep levels of understanding and significance in the text of the daily siddur, using it as a springboard to address fundamental philosophical questions surrounding prayer. The topics are chosen to provide understanding of *what* we are saying as well as the greater picture of *why* we are saying it. Through this we develop an appreciation of the importance of prayer to our identity as Jews as well as its importance in constantly rejuvenating our relationship with Hashem. The class will assist students to take ownership of their individual relationship with Hashem by providing a framework of understanding that transforms the "tefilla experience" into an intimate personal and positive spiritual experience. Therefore, while the crux of the class will be knowledge based and informational, it will combine experiential learning as well in order to guide the student to genuine growth in the area of personal prayer and connection to God.

Course Material:

The siddur is the primary text, but it will be supplemented with sheets bringing a broad array of mefarshet siddur.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

At the end of each semester students will be asked to summarize each tefilla/bracha studied, in a form that could be inserted into each student's individual siddur. Additionally, students will be asked to write an essay aimed at encouraging them to reflect on the personal implications of the material learned. There will be various in-class and follow-up workshop activities to assist in the practical application of the concepts discussed in class.

Tefillah (Mrs. Carter)

Instructor:

Mrs. Nechama Carter

Topics:

The primary focus of this course will be understanding the translation and meaning of prayers. We will study Birkot Hashachar, Shema, and Shemoneh Esrei in depth. But before that project makes sense we need to understand how tefillah works - how the avodah of tefillah can transform us and to where it can take us in terms of our closeness to Hashem. So this general study of tefillah will form the first unit of the course. This is meant to be a practical course so our study will require us to address a wide-ranging array of fundamental issues involved in developing our relationship with HaShem through tefillah. These will include: how to want a relationship with Hashem and make avodat Hashem a focus of our lives, how to make that relationship real and vibrant; how gratitude leads to happiness; how we create our reality through speech; how we find true strength, inner knowledge, and peace.

Purpose:

The main goal of this class is to deepen our relationship with Hashem, specifically through appreciating His gift of tefillah, the transformative power of tefillah, and the content of specific tefillot.

Course material:

Siddur

Scheduling:

The course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

At the end of each semester I will give out a card with the tefillot we have studied. You will be required to annotate each tefillah on the card with one point that we learned in class that resonated with you. You can then, if you choose, daven from the card, focus on an area of growth through each tefillah, and continue to strengthen your connection with Hashem on your own. If the information on your card is drawn from what we learned in class, you get credit.

Torah MiSinai

Instructor:

Rabbi Anthony Manning

Topics:

A detailed analysis of the origins and development of the halachic system, from Mount Sinai to the present day. This course charts the historical and philosophical evolution of the Oral Law in 20 sessions, with emphasis on its historical and political context, and major meta-halachic and hashkafic themes.

Purpose:

To gain a deeper understanding of the origin and legitimacy of the Oral Law. To better appreciate the historical development of halacha, and how contemporary poskim arrive at halachic decisions today.

Course Material:

You will receive a booklet with relevant Hebrew and English sources, including those from the Gemara, Midrash, Rishonim and contemporary sefarim.

Scheduling:

This course meets once a week.

Evaluation:

A final exam

Torah Thinkers of the Modern Era

Instructor:

Miriam Tannenbaum

Topics:

This class will look at some of the great Torah thinkers of the 20th century: R' Tzadok HaCohen, R' Abraham Yitzchak Kook, R' Eliyahu Dessler, R' Yitzchak Hutner, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik. Representing a broad spectrum of Jewry, we will examine their views on Tefillah, Teshuva, and Eretz Yisrael along with their understanding of the place of individual uniqueness in avodat HaShem.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to familiarize ourselves with these Torah greats and their various approaches to living a full Jewish life. Though you may have been exposed to some of their ideas on these topics we hope to understand them much more deeply. We will develop an appreciation for the different schools of thought they represent and the unique contribution each of these remarkable individuals made to Jewish thinking. Though their views on these matters have played a role in the political development of our people, our primary goal in studying their approaches is to enhance the depth of our relationship with God, our sense of self, and the meaningfulness of our lives.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out during each class with excerpts drawn primarily from the works of the particular Torah great that we are studying, along with the source material needed to understand and give context to what they are saying. We will both examine these texts inside and engage in discussion beyond the texts.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

During the year you will have to write several in-class essays. These will test your understanding of the concepts that were developed in class and push you to think through the material on your own.

Yud Gimmel Ikarim

Instructor:

Mrs Raquel Kirszenbaum

Topics:

In this class we will study the 13 Principals (Ikarim) of Faith according to the Rambam. We will explore each ikar individually and also how they fit together as a whole, to understand why each is so fundamental to our relationship with HaShem. We will focus both on the philosophical aspects of each *ikar* and on personally applying it to our lives to achieve a deeper, more integrated Emuna.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to gain a deeper understanding of what emunah is and through this to appreciate our unique relationship to Hashem, both nationally and personally. This will give us insight into what it means to be a Jew and how we view both this World and the World to Come. This allows us to experience our lives with a genuine awareness of G-d's presence and the significance of His rules.

Course Material:

Handouts will be provided with the shortened version of the principal as well as different sources that expand, support, and explain the principal - primarily from *Yesodei HaTorah* of the Rambam. Sources will be printed in both Hebrew and English, but we will work in class directly from the Hebrew to get a more precise understanding.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

There will be a Midterm and Final in the form of an essay or test.

The Halachot that Moshe Forgot

Beit Midrash Track

Instructor:

Mrs. B Sendic

Topics:

This is an in depth text-based Chumash class. There are five instances found in the Torah where Moshe was unsure of the Halacha. We will study these five events and come to a deeper appreciation of concepts such as Torah MiSinai, Shabbat, Kedusha, Zealousness, and the role of women in Judaism.

Purpose:

The purpose of this course is to advance the textual skills of students beyond mere translation to where they perceive the deeper intent of the author and begin to learn how to put different mefarshim together to build larger structures of understanding. The class is structured with a 45 minute guided Chavrusa period during which the students will study the sources on their own. In the classroom, we will analyze the sources more deeply, discovering the nuances that shed light on the author's intent, enhancing our appreciation of *משה אמת ותורתו אמת*. The end of class will be devoted to honing specific skills, or polishing our *Bekiut* in Torah.

Course Material:

The primary text will be Chumash Mikraot Gedolot. Additionally, each topic will be accompanied by two packets. One will contain extra sources that enhance our understanding of the basic commentaries found in the Chumash. The second packet will contain guided instructions and questions for the students to use as they learn the mefarshim.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

At the end of the semester there will be a test to evaluate the comprehension of the material that the students learned. The test will also include mefarshim that were not learned in class to evaluate how well the students can understand mefarshim on their own.

Machshevet HaRishonim

Beit Midrash Track

Instructor:

Rabbi A. Manning

Topics:

The course will examine some of the key questions addressed by the Rishonim (with particular focus on the Kuzari, Rambam and Ramban) in Jewish Thought and Philosophy. These will include:

- How we know that God exists and whether that can, or should, be proven.
- Whether, and how, we can ever understand the nature of God.
- How God communicates with humans, the nature of prophecy, and its impact on the halachic process.
- The illegitimacy of astrology and an understanding of mazal.
- What is the essential nature of a human being and how does that differ from an animal?
- What is a malach and how do we relate to it?
- What is the difference between Jews and non-Jews?
- Why do we keep mitzvot?
- What is the Jewish perspective on studying secular thought?
- What is hashkafa and where does it come from?
- How does God run the world - hashgachapratiit/klallit and the interplay between them.
- What is the Jewish perspective on reward and punishment? How does this feed into our understanding of Olam Haba, Mashiach, TechiyatHametim and Gilgulim?
- What is the role of EretzYisrael in Judaism and mitzvot? What are galut and geula?

Purpose:

The class will develop the ideas behind these topics and impart a critical understanding of the actual information, as well as dispel common misconceptions. Critically, it will also show how many of these topics are an opening to a much deeper hashkafic debate between the Rishonim and their world-views, often with the Rambam and the rationalists on one side and the Kuzari and more mystical thinkers on the other. This in turn can shed light on the

origins of different hashkafic communities in today's world and help the students to understand the interplay between them.

Beit Midrash: This course is given in the Beit Midrash Track. As such, the students will have 40 minutes per session to learn the key sources in chavruta, guided by the teacher personally and also by detailed guidance questions to enable the student to get the most from this element of the class. The chavruta preparation time achieves a number of key goals, including:

- teaching students to think more deeply about the language used and how the nuance of the text can have enormous implication for the conclusions.
- enabling students to develop their OWN understanding of the concepts, which can then be brought into the classroom discussion in a much more interactive way.
- showing students the excitement and inspiration of gaining new personal understanding through their own thinking and effort.
- giving students more skills and confidence in personal learning.

Course Material:

The course will be taught from specially prepared source books.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

Evaluation is at the end of each semester by two essays written by the students from a choice of topics.

Machshevet Olam Hamusar

Beit Midrash Track

Instructor:

Mrs Michal Levy

Description:

We will gain an overview of the world of mussar while choosing specific excerpts from the different Sifrei Mussar to achieve a deeper understanding of the relevant personalities and their different hashkofot on life and personal growth.

Works to be studied span many different time periods in Jewish history, and will include Chovot Halevavot, Mesilat Yesharim, Michtav Meliyahu and Alei Shur, just to name a few. We will focus on their core understandings and beliefs which are relevant to our life today as we are developing our relationships with ourselves, each other and Hashem.

Course Material:

Sources and excerpts will be handed out before each topic.

Scheduling:

This course meets once a week

Evaluation:

A test with essay questions will be given at the end of each semester to evaluate the students' understanding of the material

Power & Influence in Sefer Shmuel

Beit Midrash Track

Instructor:

Miriam Tannenbaum

Topics:

We will be covering several units in Sefer Shmuel (1 & 11). These units focus on the various forms of leadership and influence of Am Yisrael when they are a sovereign body in Eretz Yisrael. Understanding the difference between power and influence in those times can impact how we approach these topics today. Sefer Shmuel is a mirror for understanding how to navigate the world around us as well as a potential catalyst for our own impact on our world.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to further develop the textual skills of students who arrive at seminary with good skills. Entering students are expected to already have some facility with such *mefarshim* as: Radak, Rashi and Metzudat. The next step is to learn how to work with more complex *mefarshim* such as Malbim and Abarbanel. Additionally, gaining a deeper appreciation of how to read *Peshat* before exploring the *mefarshim* will enhance students' understanding of the text and the ideas of added by the *mefarshim* on a deeper level. Engagement with the text gives the student an opportunity to 'own' her learning in a manner that cannot be achieved by a 'sage on the stage'-style class. Grappling with the language and concepts facilitates a deeper and more enduring learning.

Course Material:

The primary text will be *Shmuel Mikraot Gedolot*. Additionally each unit will be accompanied by a set of handouts containing sources/questions that complement and guide the student through her journey. There will be significant time spent in *chavruta* learning, which will be followed by class discussion/*shiur*.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

There will be a midterm and final that will evaluate the students on the comprehension of topics as well as on the skills developed in the course. The exams will be essay-style with open Navi/resources (as the goal of the course is not to memorize the information).

Ramchal

Instructor:

Rabbi Jeremy Kagan

Topics:

In this class we will examine a few basic concepts that are central to Torah observance and to our understanding of ourselves, our relationship with God, and our purpose. We will begin with **emunah**, trying to understand what it is and what is its basis. Our focus on emunah and its significance will naturally lead us to ask the question why God is so hidden. This will introduce the topic of **free choice** - what it is and why it is so central to our relationship with God that it results in our living in a world that is counter-intuitive to our unexamined expectations. Once raised, the topic of free choice will lead to a discussion of how, as a nation we have used this capacity and how it has effected the nature of the world we live in. This opens up issues relating to **exile**, the **historical process** in which we find ourselves and its structure and meaning. Our examination will be guided by concepts from the 18th century Italian Rabbi, Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato, the Ramchal. Thus the title of the class.

Purpose:

The purpose of this class is to encounter Torah on a deeper level and through this to appreciate both the intuitive nature of basic Torah concepts and how fully integrated they are with one another. Through the topics chosen you will have an opportunity to become more conscious and thoughtful about your relationship with God. Emphasis will be placed on how the world as we experience it today effects the nature of that relationship and the challenges we face developing that relationship. The class will push you to think and, hopefully, will give you a taste for how penetrating and satisfying Torah's vision is when brought to this level.

Course Material:

Sheets will be given out during each class with excerpts primarily from Midrash, Maharal, and Ramchal. We will examine some of these sources in class. But the sheets will also provide you with material to examine on your own if you are interested in understanding from where the concepts presented in class are derived.

Scheduling:

This course meets twice a week.

Evaluation:

During the year you will have to write several in-class essays. These will test your understanding of the concepts that were developed in class by requiring you to think through the material on your own and present it.

A Tour of Yerushalayim and the Mikdash

Instructor:

Mrs Tova Orenbuch

Topics:

Why was there so much singing in the Beit HaMikdash? What did the women do in the Beit Hamikdash? Where did all of the olteiregel sleep? Does God really need us to kill so many sheep for Him? How many korbanot were brought annually? These are just a handful of questions we will answer in our tour of Yerushalayim and the Beit Hamikdash. We will use sources as well as many pictures to understand the structure, routine, and quintessential holiness of the Beit Hamikdash.

Goals:

Students will learn to relate more to the grandeur and awesomeness of the Beit HamaHaikdash. We will glean insights into the holiness of Mikdash and Yerushalayim and, in so doing, sharpen our grasp on what we are missing today and gain a deeper appreciation of what a privilege it is to spend the year in Yerushalayim!

Materials:

Students will receive handouts with sources and pictures.

Assessments:

Students will have a final independent research project. Participation and attendance will be an integral part of grading.