



# SKIRBALL

The Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning at Temple Emanu-El

*The* moon said,  
“Ruler of the Universe, is it possible...”

ניסן

Nisan

אייר

Iyar

סיון

Sivan

תמוז

Tammuz

אב

Av

אלול

Elul

תשרי

Tishrei

חשוון

Heshvan

כסלו

Kislev

טבת

Tevet

שבט

Shevat

אדר

Adar

## Introduction

**N**isan, Iyar, Sivan, Tammuz.... The names of the months of the Hebrew calendar are surprisingly late in origin. The Bible refers to most of the months numerically: “the sixth month,” “the ninth month,” etc. Only four months have proper names in the Bible, and no one uses these names today: Aviv (first), Ziv (second), Etanim (seventh), and Bul (eighth). The names that we now use for the months were borrowed from the Babylonian calendar during the Babylonian exile following the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE.

In our Fall 2006 Course Guide, we explored the centrality of time through each of the seven days of the week. Now, we turn to the twelve months of the Hebrew calendar. While much of the world follows the same seven-day week, the twelve months of the Hebrew calendar are a particularly Jewish way of marking time. Based on the cycles of the moon, the Hebrew calendar also takes the solar cycle into account. The months are determined by the cycle of the moon around the Earth, which is approximately 29.5 days long, but the calendar is adjusted so that festivals such as Passover are always observed in their proper season. Because the lunar month is between 29 and 30 days long, the first day of each new month (*Rosh Chodesh*, lit. “head of the month”) was determined by witnesses who came to the Temple to report having seen a new moon. Each month would be either 29 or 30 days long.

Rabbinic literature compares the Jewish people to the moon. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, so too does the people of Israel reflect God’s light in the world. Some have suggested how fitting it is that Israel’s calendar is primarily governed by the moon. The moon, as opposed to the sun, is the kind of light that allows for ambiguity and uncertainty. The moon suggests that truths are illusive. The moon, as opposed to the sun, underscores the importance of dialectic, the search for clarification in a world of uncertainty—a world where meanings emerge only through the shadows cast by the light of the moon.

According to the *Sefer Yetzirah* (“The Book of Creation”), a mystical ancient Jewish text of indeterminate origin, each Jewish month has a corresponding color, a letter of the Hebrew alphabet, a zodiac sign, one of the twelve tribes of Israel, a sense, and a controlling organ/limb of the body. Any such correspondences noted here are from this text.

for two kings to wear one crown?”


# What's New at Skirball?

## Expanded Daytime Program


This Spring, in response to requests from students, we are offering more daytime courses. Each week, six classes will take place before our 6:30 pm classes begin, leaving you plenty of time for dinner and a night on the town! Start your day off right with an early morning Talmud class ([pg 17](#)), attend a mid-morning Jewish literature class ([pg 10](#)), or grab a post-lunch Torah portion class ([pg 14](#)). Round out your day with a late afternoon class on the Siddur (prayerbook) ([pg 8](#)), a class on the complex relationship between Samuel, Saul, and David ([pg 10](#)), and a special 4-week class exploring women in the Bible ([pg 8](#))!



## Synergy Between Our Website and This Catalog

This semester, for the first time, a small icon  under some course descriptions will direct you to our website, where you can find more information about the course and its instructor. In addition, you may visit a special section of our website ([www.adultjewishlearning.org/months](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/months)) for more information about the Jewish months and about the art created by the artists from our Artists' Beit Midrash for this catalogue. More information inside and online!

## Prepare for Purim and Passover

Don't let Purim or Passover catch you by surprise! Come find out how women wield power and how best to deal with meddlesome uncles in *The Book of Esther: A Tale of Two Queens* ([pg 11](#)). On Mondays, reexperience the Exodus and more in *The Passover Haggadah: Fresh Readings for Engaging Seders* ([pg 8](#)). If you want to brush up your Hebrew in preparation for the Seder, get thee to Michal Nachmany's *Hebrew Through the Haggadah Level 2* ([pg 8](#)) or *Level 3* ([pg 9](#)). Finally, if you want to prepare for Passover and get a taste of Talmud along the way, join Dr. Motti Arad at *Early Morning Talmud* ([pg 17](#)). See holiday icon in index .

## Yom HaShoah Program: “A City of Memory: Contemporary Holocaust Memorials in Berlin”




















































This year, on Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day), Core Faculty member Noam M. Elcott will present a provocative seminar on the Holocaust memorials in Berlin, where he has spent the past year researching collective memory in the public sphere. Join us for this interactive presentation involving text, images, and Noam's engaging teaching ([pg 7](#)).

## Multiple Perspectives: Text and Film Class Tackles Pressing Social Issues

This Spring, we are bringing together Core Faculty members Wendy Amsellem and Faye Lederman to teach *Projecting Ideas: Exploring Tensions Between Judaism and Modern Society Through Text and Film*. Pursue a deeper understanding of complex and challenging issues: women's status, gay and lesbian issues, and the complexities of illness/healing and disabilities. Shape and refine your perspective as you debate and discuss with your classmates and instructors ([pg 13](#)).

He answered, “Go then and make

# Index of Spring Classes

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 Beginners

 Cooperative Learning Communities

 Arts and Literature

 Bible

 Contemporary Issues

 Hebrew

 Purim & Passover

 History

 Jewish Thought

 Rabbinic Texts

yourself smaller.” As it says, “The



**T**he Skirball Center links liberal Jews to Jewish study that is relevant and meaningful. At Skirball, Jewish learning is infused with excitement and depth, complexity and diversity. Skirball enhances the search for what it means to be a human being and a Jew.

## General Information

### Contact Information

Phone 212.507.9580

Fax 212.570.0826

Email [info@adultjewishlearning.org](mailto:info@adultjewishlearning.org)

[www.adultjewishlearning.org](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org)

### Getting There

Courses at the Skirball Center are held at 10 East 66th Street, between Fifth and Madison Avenues in Manhattan.

### By Bus:

M1, M2, M3, M4, M18, M66, M72

### By Subway:

N/R/W 5th Avenue Station

4/5/6 9th Street Station  
or 68th Street Station

F 63rd Street Station

### Refund Policy

A full refund may be requested after the first class meeting or if a course is cancelled. After the second class, prorated credit (good for one year) for any course is available. No credit will be given after the third class. The registration fee is non-refundable.

### Library Privileges

All students enrolled in a Skirball Center class will have borrowing privileges at the Ivan M. Stettenheim Library, Congregation Emanu-El's own expansive collection. For library information, call 212.744.1400, ext. 361.

### The library is open

Sunday: 10–4

Monday–Thursday: 10–6

or by appointment 212.744.1400 ext. 361

### The JBI Library

The Jewish Braille Institute can make it possible for any visually impaired or blind person to participate in Adult Jewish Learning courses at the **Skirball Center**.

Given reasonable lead time, JBI can prepare relevant reading materials in the appropriate format. For more information or to volunteer in the JBI studios call **The JBI Library: 800.433.1531**.

### Administration

Rabbi Leon A. Morris,  
*Executive Director*

Darone Ruskay,  
*Managing Director*

Adina Gerver,  
*Assistant Director*

Judith Berdy,  
*Administrator*

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Roger Bennett

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Fred Rosenbaum

Dr. Robert Seltzer

Barry Shrage

Dr. Ronald B. Sobel

Leah Strigler

Marcia Waxman

Eternal made the two great lights:

# Sunday

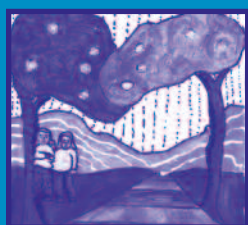
## DAYTIME CLASSES



**Nisan**, Amy Schindler



**Iyar**, Sharon Rosen



**Sivan**, Rochelle Spergel



**Tammuz**, Arlene Sokolow



**Av**, Rachel Kanter



**Elul**, Arlene Sokolow

Artwork created by students of the Artists' Beit Midrash, interpreting each month of the year.

*Join us this Spring for one or more of these scintillating Sunday seminars.*

We are pleased to offer six different seminars this semester, in response to growing demand for these one-day, intensive study sessions. Come once or come all six times! Study with a different master teacher each week. Each week's seminar will include elements of text study and discussion. **\$50 each, all six for \$250.**

### How Islam Changed the Way We Look at the Bible

DR. MIRIAM GOLDSTEIN

10 AM–2 PM | **February 4**

Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scholars in the Mediterranean and the East in the tenth and eleventh centuries studied each others' works and met for theological discussions where they discussed issues of common interest face-to-face. Such a world is almost unimaginable today. Examine how Jewish views on the Bible during this period were colored by Muslim attitudes toward Scripture, as well as by literary style in the Muslim world. Using translations of Judeo-Arabic Bible commentaries preserved in manuscript in *genizah* collections, as well as selections from the Qur'an and contemporaneous Muslim writings, come to understand how our reading of the Bible has been shaped by medieval inter-religious exchange.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see "Whose Bible Is It?" (below).

### Journeys through Midrash, Biblical Texts, and Storytelling

PENINNAH SCHRAM

10 AM–2 PM | **February 11**

Each of us is on a personal life journey, but we may not always connect our personal journeys to those found in the Bible. The interpretive process of Midrash forces us into a dialogic relationship with text, revealing something new about our tradition as well as about ourselves. There are four themes inherent in all journeys: leaving a place; wandering; arriving; and harvesting (the next generation). Join the renowned storyteller Peninnah Schram in interweaving these four themes of biblical journeys into your personal, family, and community lives. Drawing from text, tales, traditions, and memories, weave a tapestry of tales that enhances the connections between you, your family, and our collective Jewish journeys.

 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/schram](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/schram) to hear Peninnah tell a story

### Whose Bible Is It? Jewish and Christian Interpretation of Scripture


MARCIE LENK

10 AM–2 PM | **February 25**

How does a faith community relate to its holiest texts when those texts are appropriated by another faith? How much did the early

the greater light to dominate the day,

development of Christianity affect Jews and their interpretation of Scripture? How much Christian interpretation was a response to the ways Jews worshiped and studied? What were the “lightning rod” passages in the Bible for the interaction between these two communities? Focusing primarily on the early centuries of the common era, but utilizing medieval Jewish and Christian texts as well, examine the ways that Christian use of Scripture affected Jewish interpretation and vice versa.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “How Islam Changed the Way We Look at the Bible” (pg 6).

## The Rational Skeptic’s Search for God

RABBI CHAIM SEIDLER-FELLER

10 AM–2 PM | **March 11**

Do you have trouble articulating a meaningful notion of God that is both spiritually fulfilling and intellectually uncompromising? How does a modern skeptic who struggles with a traditional notion of God develop a way of embracing a God idea that is compelling in the modern world? Study Maimonides’ rational constructions of God as well as Hasidic speculation in an attempt to develop a personally-meaningful theology in the modern world. Discover the dynamic of the dual nature of God as presented in the tradition and how it can serve as a framework for contemporary spirituality.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “What Happened at Sinai? Revelation in an Age of Biblical Criticism” (pg 15).

## Jewish War Ethics in the Face of Terror

RABBI MELISSA WEINTRAUB

*The Hortense Jordan Course in Ethics*

10 AM–2 PM | **March 25**

While war rages around the world and both America and Israel are threatened by terror, questions of morality abound. What moral guidance does Judaism offer us in an age of terror? How humanely must we treat our enemies during wartime? This class explores a variety of sources, including the Talmud, medieval legal texts, and contemporary scholarship, to shed light on pressing “battlefield ethics” questions for both America and Israel. Focus on proportionality, collective punishment, and the interrogational torture of terror suspects.

## A City of Memory: Contemporary Holocaust Memorials in Berlin

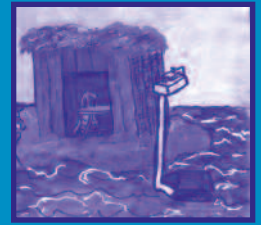
NOAM M. ELCOTT

10 AM–2 PM | **April 15**

**Yom HaShoah/Holocaust Remembrance Day**

No city on earth commemorates the Holocaust like Berlin does: in place of the victims, it is the perpetrators who erect the monuments. Heartfelt, disarming, and provocative, these memorials occupy the city’s empty spaces and central squares, from the humblest cobblestones to the House of Parliament. At their best, they bond a deep historical engagement to the most sophisticated contemporary public art and architecture. In a highly interactive and intense seminar, explore Berlin’s mnemonic topography and rethink the commemoration of the *Shoah* (Holocaust), contemporary German culture, and the nature of collective memory in the public sphere.

 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/elcott](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/elcott) to see images of the memorials



**Tishrei**, Rochelle Spergel



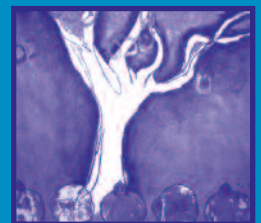
**Heshvan**, Rochelle Spergel



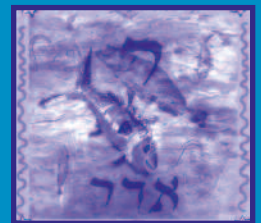
**Kislev**, Julie Meslin



**Tevet**, Rochelle Spergel



**Shevat**, Joyce Silver



**Adar**, Barbara Freedman

For complete artwork in full color visit our website at [www.adultjewishlearning.org/months](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/months)

and the lesser light to dominate the





## ניסן | Nisan

### Etymology

From Akkadian *nissanu*

### Biblical names

- “the first month”
- Called “chodesh ha’aviv” or “the month of spring” in the Pentateuch
- Called “Nisan” in Esther and Nehemiah

The first month in the biblical calculation of the months.

### Holidays

- 15th to 21st of Nisan: Passover
- 27th of Nisan: Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day

### What happened in Nisan?

- According to Rabbi Joshua, the world was created, Patriarchs were born, and Israel was redeemed from Egypt in Nisan, and Israel will be redeemed in the future in Nisan. (*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 11a*)
- God spoke to Moses from the burning bush during Nisan. (*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 11a*)
- Miriam, Moses’ sister, died on the 10th of Nisan. It was once observed as a fast day. (*Megillah Taanit 13*)

### Other cultures

Nisan is also the Turkish and Arabic name for the month of April.

# Monday

## DAYTIME CLASSES

### Examining the Siddur

RABBI JAN R. UHRBACH

4:30–6:00 PM | Jan 29 Feb 5, 12, 26 Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

Are you hungry for a meaningful experience in synagogue but have trouble connecting to the typical service? Would you like to have the knowledge and skills to find your way around the prayer book and fully participate in any service? Examine the siddur with an eye to the structure of Jewish worship, the meaning of specific prayers, and some of the theological, emotional, and intellectual issues underlying the liturgy and the concept of prayer.

👉 **Interested in this course?** Also see “The Passover Haggadah” (below).

### “And You Shall Hearken to Her Voice”: The Extraordinary Women of the Bible

IRIT KOREN

5:00–6:30 PM | Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

#### SPECIAL 4-WEEK CLASS!

The Bible is filled with the remarkable stories of extraordinary women, which were later interpreted in both flattering and unflattering ways by the rabbis. After considering rabbinic interpretations of biblical women’s lives, widen your understanding of the traditional text and view it from a new, critical perspective. Engage in critical readings of the Bible, using multiple perspectives. How does the biblical text influence our social perspective on Judaism and gender roles? Is it possible to reveal women’s voices in a text that silences their voices?

👉 **Interested in this course?** Also see “The Book of Esther” (pg 11).

## EVENING CLASSES

### The Passover Haggadah: Fresh Readings for Engaging Seders

DR. DAVID ARNOW

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 29 Feb 5, 12, 26 Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

Explore the development of the Haggadah and the ancient wisdom of the earliest architects of the Seder who carefully balanced ritual with creativity and learn how to restore that long-lost balance to your own Seders. Discover the connection between Passover and nature, experience the Exodus as a personal spiritual journey, join the rabbis in their struggle with the moral ambiguity of the Ten Plagues, and consider the human role in redemption. This class combines lecture, text-study, and workshop elements. It will deepen your understanding of Passover and the Haggadah and enable you to develop a wide range of activities and discussion material that you can use for many Seders to come.

📄 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/arnow](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/arnow)

for excerpts from Dr. David Arnow’s *Creating Lively Passover Seders*

### Hebrew Through the Haggadah Level 2

MICHAL NACHMANY

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 29 Feb 5, 12, 26 Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

For those who can read letters and vowels, apply that knowledge to the Haggadah while increasing your vocabulary and knowledge of

night.” (*Genesis 1:16*)





## אייר | Iyar

### Etymology

From Akkadian *aaru*, possibly meaning “rosette” or “blossom”

### Biblical names

- “the second month”
- Called “Ziv” in *I Kings 6:1*

### Holidays

- 5th of Iyar: Israel Independence Day, the anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel in 1948
- 18th of Iyar: Lag B’Omer, the 33rd day of the Omer, traditionally considered a festive day, because on that day a plague that killed 24,000 of Rabbi Akiva’s students ceased. The Talmud says that the plague occurred because they did not show proper respect to one another. (*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot 62b*)

### What happened in Iyar?

- 1st of Iyar: Moses conducted the census in the wilderness (*Numbers 1:1*)
- 2nd of Iyar: completion of the building of the Second Temple by Solomon in Jerusalem (*11 Chronicles 3:2*)

grammar. Through story, song, and close reading of the Passover Haggadah text and selections from Exodus, you will increase your knowledge of biblical and liturgical Hebrew.

## Religion and the Necessity of Choice

RABBI JAN R. UHRBACH

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 29 Feb 5, 12, 26 Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

Every day, we make choices about ordinary and extraordinary matters. This capacity to freely exercise our will is one of the ways in which we are made in the image of God, but the necessity of choosing is one of the things that separates us from God. The dilemma of choosing is also embedded in the heart of the biblical narratives of Abraham, Rebecca, Jacob, and Moses, and each struggled in his or her own way to negotiate and finally come to terms with the inescapability of choice. Through close study of the biblical text and the full range of commentary and Midrash, explore these struggles and discover some paths through them.

## Beit Midrash for Psychotherapists

DR. TSVI BLANCHARD

*The Pincus Family Course in Jewish Studies*

7:00–9:00 PM | Jan 29 Feb 5, 12, 26 Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

In this cooperative learning environment, explore the interaction between psychology and religion. Using Bible and Midrash as our basis, seek a conception of psycho-spirituality that encompasses both the holy and the secular, the mundane and the extraordinary, the elevated and the earthy. (For an explanation of the theme of “Between Holy and Mundane / *Bein Kodesh L’chol*” see page 18.) Join others in being open to alternative religious, spiritual, and psychotherapeutic approaches. The only requirements are a willingness to share your personal and professional experience and a positive attitude toward the contributions of traditional Jewish text study to conversations about important life issues.

## Artists’ Beit Midrash

TOBI KAHN and IRIT KOREN

7:00–9:00 PM | Jan 29 Feb 5, 12, 26 Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

Apply your artistic talents to the theme of “Between Holy and Mundane/*Bein Kodesh L’chol*” (explained on page 18) as you explore Jewish sources, inspiring you to create new visual commentaries on the ancient texts of our tradition. Together with other artists, share previously created work and explore, individually and as a group, the imaginative and creative possibilities of Jewish teachings. This unusual experience is co-facilitated by a Judaic scholar and a renowned artist whose own work blends modern art with the life of the spirit.

 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/gallery](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/gallery) for images and texts from last year’s Artists’ Beit Midrash

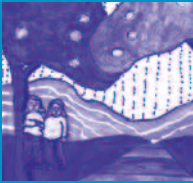
## Hebrew Through the Haggadah Level 3

MICHAL NACHMANY

8:15–9:45 PM | Jan 29 Feb 5, 12, 26 Mar 5, 12, 19, 26

Read parts of the Passover Haggadah and explore its themes and deeper meanings, while delving into the many layers of the Hebrew language. If you already know some Hebrew, this a good chance for you to improve your knowledge of grammar and expand your vocabulary, in a fun, song-filled setting with a dynamic teacher. No seder will be the same again!

But the moon protested and said,



סיון

Sivan

Etymology

From Akkadian *simanu*, meaning “fixed date, time.” The Hebrew word *zman* (“time”) is believed to come from the same Akkadian word via Aramaic.

Biblical names

- “the third month”
- Called “Sivan” in *Esther* 8:9

Holiday

- 6th of Sivan: Holiday of Shavuot, when first fruits were offered

What happened in Sivan?

- 23rd, 25th, and 27th of Sivan, once observed as fast days commemorating the martyrdom of the sages Simeon b. Gamliel, Ishmael b. Elisha, Hananiah Segan ha-Kohanim, and Hananiah b. Teradyon at the hands of the Romans. (*Megillah Taanit* 3)

Zodiac sign

Twins

# Tuesday

## DAYTIME CLASSES

### Modernism in Jewish Literature and Art

DR. BARBARA MANN

10:30 AM–12:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

Explore Jewish modernist writing from the 1890s through the 1930s on three continents and in several languages (all in translation). From well-known writers such as Peretz, Kafka, and Henry Roth to painters such as Marc Chagall and Reuven, explore traditional Jewish society’s entry into modernity. How might Hebrew and Yiddish writers contribute to our understanding of modernism as a whole? What is the relationship between literature and national identity, and between artists and their community? Finally, what is the role of gender in Jewish “bilingualism”?

### Fathers and Sons:

#### The Samuel-Saul-David Story

DR. FREEMA GOTTLIEB

4:30–6:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

As prophecy, authority, and kingship are handed down in the Bible, repeated patterns of messy, anguished father-son relationships make for an almost inevitable disconnect. One of the richest examples of this is found in the story of Eli the High Priest in the Book of Samuel. His “adopted son” Samuel supplants Eli’s defaulting heirs and pronounces their doom and then pronounces doom against his own adopted son Saul in favor of David. Why should David be an exception to this pattern? Using the biblical text of I Samuel, along with rabbinical exegesis, Midrash, and mystical interpretations, this course traces the complex drama of the Samuel-Saul-David story, bringing out resonances verging on Shakespearean tragedy.

👉 Interested in this course? Also see “The Book of Esther” (pg 11).

## EVENING CLASSES

### Imagining Alliances: The Black-Jewish Relationship Explored Through Film

FAYE LEDERMAN

*The William Rosenwald and Ruth Israels Rosenwald Course in Contemporary Jewish History*

6:00–8:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

Where do Jewish and African-American cultures, politics, and immigrant experiences overlap and where do they diverge? When did the accepted notion of a historic Jewish-black alliance fall apart and why? Explore the past and present of black-Jewish relations through films such as *The Commandment Keepers*, *From Swastika to Jim Crow*, and *Strange Fruit*. View excerpts of Shakti Butler’s provocative films *The Way Home* and *Light in the Shadows* as a means to examine our own internalized racism and the ways that our self-perceived whiteness and our Jewishness have influenced our personal relationships with African-Americans. Short written texts will help frame our discussions of both documentary and fiction films.

👉 Interested in this course? Also see “Projecting Ideas” (pg 13).

📄 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/film](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/film) for more information on films

“Ruler of the Universe, because I

## The Book of Esther: A Tale of Two Queens

WENDY AMSELLEM

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

The book of Esther is both a fairytale and a dark feminist nightmare. Closely read this famous text, focusing on the characters of Vashti the Persian Queen and her successor, the Jewish maiden Esther. While at first Esther is presented as a literary foil to Vashti, she evolves to become more similar to her. Along the way, explore how women wield power, how to deal with meddlesome uncles, and the preferred model for celebrating Jewish survival, utilizing both classical rabbinic exegesis and modern literary analysis.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “And You Shall Hearken to Her Voice: Extraordinary Women of the Bible” (pg 8).

## How Does Jewish Law Work? Maimonides’ Controversial Views in Today’s World

DR. MICHAEL CHERNICK

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

Is Jewish law unchangeable? Is Jewish law only for traditionally observant Jews? Does Jewish law cover only obscure ritual? Is Jewish law foreign and outdated, or are its principles more modern than we suppose? Study Maimonides, the most controversial figure in medieval Jewish philosophy, and discover answers to these questions and others. Maimonides was the only Jew ever to write clearly and succinctly about how Jewish law works and what issues it addresses. Study his philosophy of Jewish law through translated selections from his essays on Jewish law, his code, and his legal responses to the most crucial religious and social questions of his time. Discover how Maimonides’ views influence Jewish life today.

*This course is part of a year-long program of study at Temple Emanu-El called “Emanu-El Reads Maimonides.” All are welcome.*

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “Things Your Hebrew School Teacher Taught You That Aren’t Quite True” (pg 16).

## God: How and What?

DR. NEIL GILLMAN

*The Harrison S. Kravis Course in Jewish Studies*

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

“God is everywhere!” That’s the answer we give our children when they ask, “Where is God?” But is God *really* in space? Is God *really* male? Did God *really* speak to Moses on Sinai? Does God *really* hear our prayers? The word “really” occurs all the time when we try to pin down God’s location, characteristics, or behavior, because it’s not clear how we can ever say anything real about an incorporeal God. Although the Bible forbids us to make graven images of God, traditional Jewish texts are filled with descriptions of God. These “word pictures” tell us a great deal about God’s behavior, God’s feelings, and God’s thinking. They describe a God who has a face, an arm, and a hand, a God who sees, hears, and speaks. Throughout, God is portrayed in remarkably human terms. How are we to understand these pictures? Where did they come from? And are they *really* true?

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “What Happened at Sinai? Revelation in an Age of Biblical Criticism” (pg 15).

 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/gillman](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/gillman)

to hear Dr. Neil Gillman on a panel titled “Where Is God Today?”



תמוז | Tammuz

### Etymology

From Babylonian month *Du’uzu*, named after the Babylonian and Assyrian god Dumu-zi, meaning literally “the son who rises” or perhaps “the faithful son”

### Biblical name

- “the fourth month”

### Holiday

- 17th of Tammuz: a rabbinic fast day primarily commemorating besieged Jerusalem walls breached by the Roman emperor Titus

### What happened in Tammuz?

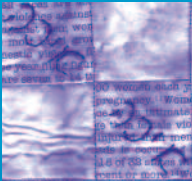
- 17th of Tammuz: Moses smashed the tablets upon returning from Mount Sinai and witnessing the golden calf; the daily sacrificial Temple service was disrupted three weeks before the Babylonians destroyed the Temple in 423 BCE; Roman general Apostamus burned and placed an idol in the Temple, all in 69 CE. (*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Taanit 28b*)

### Zodiac sign

Crab

made a proper claim before you,





אב | Av

Etymology

From Akkadian *abu*

Biblical name

- “the fifth month”

Holidays

- 9th of Av,  
in Hebrew *Tisha B’Av*:  
the strictest of four fast  
days commemorating the  
destruction of the  
Temples in Jerusalem in  
589 BCE and 70 CE
- 15th of Av,  
in Hebrew *Tu B’Av*:  
a joyous popular festival  
during the days of the  
Second Temple on which,  
according to the Mishna  
in *Tractate Taanit* 4:8:  
“The maidens of  
Jerusalem used to go  
out dressed in white  
garments...and danced  
in the vineyards, saying:  
‘Young men, look and  
observe well whom you  
are about to choose [as  
a spouse]; regard not  
beauty alone, but rather  
look to a virtuous  
family....’ ”

What happened in Av?

- 9th of Av:  
All Jews expelled from  
England in 1290 and not  
permitted to return for  
almost four centuries
- 9th of Av:  
traditionally thought  
to be the day that the  
Israelites were told that  
they would not enter the  
promised land and would,  
instead, perish in the  
desert

# Tuesday continued

## Seeing the Light: The Life and Teachings of Rabbi Kook

RABBI DAVID INGBER

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

Gershom Scholem once remarked that the twentieth century had produced only one original Kabbalistic thinker, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1865–1935). Immerse yourself in the incredibly beautiful and original teachings of this towering personage, exploring his poetry, theology, and mystical writings. Rabbi Kook’s approaches to Zionism, atheism, evolution, Torah study, and science were revolutionary and are still relevant for us today as we continue to grapple with these questions.

## Die Golde Medina: Was Irving Berlin Really Dreaming of a White Hanukkah?

LISA KOGEN

*The Jane Moyses Gilder Course in Jewish History*

6:30–8:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

What were the blessings and challenges of life in the New World? How was Jewish identity in the immigrant generation preserved or undermined by America’s offerings? How did their Judaism influence their lives? Look at critical historical events as well as literary and cultural inventions in and of this generation of new Americans. Discuss the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, the women’s kosher meat boycott, and Jewish labor union activism. Read excerpts from Anzia Yezierska’s *Breadgivers* and the *Bintel Brief*, and examine this generation’s creation of the new American cultural institutions, Tin Pan Alley, Broadway, and Hollywood.

## Writers’ Beit Midrash: Creative Non-Fiction

SHELLY R. FREDMAN

*The Harrison S. Kravis Course in Jewish Studies*

7:00–9:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

Join a small group of creative non-fiction and memoir writers as we explore texts that inspire and amaze us, encourage us to wrestle with meaning, and stimulate the connections between our writing and our lives. The Writers’ Beit Midrash is divided into two sections: text study, in which we will delve into the theme of “Between Holy and Mundane/*Bein Kodesh L’chol*” (explained on pg 18) in Jewish sources, and the workshop, in which each student will receive critique and support from a professional writer and fellow students. Our engaging discussions will spur creativity and spark imaginative exchange. Interested applicants should submit a writing sample with their registration.



am I to make myself smaller?”



## Friends & Lovers (*Re'im Abuvim*)

IRIT KOREN

*The Hans A. Vogelstein Course in Jewish Studies*

7:00–9:00 PM | **Feb** 13, 20, 27 **Mar** 6, 13, 20

### You are getting married. Mazal tov!

But in planning a wedding that reflects who you are, the myriad symbols and rituals of Jewish tradition can seem baffling. This special course for engaged couples will allow you to find your own path through the vast array of Jewish traditions. Explore the options that Judaism offers an engaged couple so that you can make choices that speak to you. Familiarize yourselves with the components of the wedding ceremony itself, including *ketubah* (marriage contract), breaking the glass, the *huppah* (wedding canopy), and other rituals. In addition, study stories of love and relationships from Jewish sources, examine the psychodynamic and legal aspects of marriage, and allow us to help you prepare for the big day and for the years that follow.

### Projecting Ideas: Exploring Tensions Between Judaism and Modern Society Through Text and Film

WENDY AMSELLEM and FAYE LEDERMAN

8:15–9:45 PM | **Jan** 30 **Feb** 6, 13, 20, 27 **Mar** 6, 13, 20

As Judaism adapts to and embraces various host cultures, it must confront and grapple with the challenging social issues and inherent tensions in modern society. This unique course will pair screenings of Jewish films with related text studies from Jewish tradition, allowing us to more fully explore, from both visual and written textual standpoints, several seldom discussed issues in a Jewish context. Discuss how film itself is text and how the visual experience of film compares to words on a page. Topics include women's status, gay and lesbian issues, illness/healing, and disabilities. Films will include excerpts from *Tehora*, *Mekudeshet* (*Sentenced to Marriage*), *Keep Not Silent: Ortho-dykes*, and *Praying with Lior*.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see "Imagining Alliances: The Black-Jewish Relationship Explored Through Film" (pg 10).

 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/film](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/film) for more information on films

### From Jesus to Jonathan Pollard: Jews and Judaism on Trial

LISA KOGEN

8:15–9:45 PM | **Jan** 30 **Feb** 6, 13, 20, 27 **Mar** 6, 13, 20

Using historical documents, uncover the historical forces contributing to significant trials involving Jews and, sometimes, Judaism. How much did Judaism factor into each case? What was lost or gained by the trial? How did each trial affect the Jewish community in which it took place? To what extent was each of these trials driven by Jewish relations with the host culture? Topics will include: the trial of Jesus; the Norwich and Trent blood libels; Nachmanides' disputation in Barcelona; the Dreyfus court-martial; the Beilis blood libel; the Leo Frank murder trial in Atlanta; Allen Ginsburg's obscenity case and the Rosenbergs' espionage trial in the 1950s; Jonathan Pollard; and Holocaust denier David Irving's suit against Deborah Lipstadt.



אלול | Elul

#### Etymology

From Akkadian *ululu* or *elulu*, meaning "the time when [the produce of the land] is brought in," i.e. "harvest time," from a verb meaning "to bring in" or "thrust in"

#### Biblical names

- "the sixth month"
- Called "Elul" in *Nehemiah* 6:15

A rabbinic tradition derives the allusion to the name Elul from the verse in Song of Songs: "Ani L'Dodi v'Dodi Li," "I am my beloved and my beloved is mine." The first letter of each of these words in Hebrew spells "Elul." This is interpreted as describing the relationship between God and His people during this auspicious time preceding Rosh Hashanah.

Because it precedes Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the month of Elul became connected to repentance.

#### What happened in Elul?

- On the 25th of Elul, the Israelites rebuilt the destroyed walls of Jerusalem under the prophet Nehemiah's direction after they returned from the diaspora of Babylon. (*Nehemiah* 6:15)

#### Other cultures

Eylül is also the name for September in Turkish.

#### Letter

י  
Yud

He replied to her, "Go and rule by



## תשרי | Tishrei

### Etymology

From Akkadian *tashritu*, originally the first month in the Babylonian calendar, from the verb “shurru,” meaning “to begin”

### Biblical names

- “the seventh month”
- Called “Etanim” in *I Kings* 8:2
- Tishrei is the first month of the chronological year in the current way of dating, but is the seventh month in the biblical calculations, which start from Nisan

### Holidays

- 1st and 2nd of Tishrei: Rosh Hashanah
- 3rd of Tishrei: a rabbinic fast day observed in commemoration of the assassination of Gedaliah, a Jewish governor of Judea under the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, as related in *II Kings* 25:25-26
- 10th of Tishrei: Yom Kippur
- 15th -21st of Tishrei: Sukkot
- 22nd of Tishrei: the holiday of Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah

### What happened in Tishrei?

- According to Rabbi Eliezer in the Talmud, the world was created in Tishrei. (*Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah* 10b)

### Zodiac sign

Scale

# Tuesday continued

Now in its  
sixth year!

## Ideas Café

8:00 PM | Jan 30 Feb 6, 13, 20, 27 Mar 6, 13, 20

### New York’s longest-running conervation.

- No reservations necessary.
- \$10 per session at the door.
- \$5 for Skirball Center students.
- Visit us online at [www.ideascafe.org](http://www.ideascafe.org) for information about each week’s topic.

Meet others over wine, cheese, fruit, and, of course, coffee, at small, candle-lit tables and discuss vital current issues that affect Jewish and American life. It’s a meeting of minds where spirited discussions move at a rapid pace—sometimes with very surprising results. You’ll find our sessions provocative, stimulating, and fun—and, above all, a great intellectual experience.

Sarah Chandler, Esther Kustanowitz, Joe Plotkin, Daniel Septimus, and Roy Wasserman will moderate the Ideas Café on alternating weeks. Join us for a chance to meet new friends, share your thoughts, and hear what others think about the issues that affect us all. See you on Tuesday!

 [www.ideascafe.org/podcasts](http://www.ideascafe.org/podcasts) to hear selections from previous Ideas Cafés



# Wednesday

## DAYTIME CLASS

### Rediscovering the Weekly Torah Portion

ARLENE AGUS

*The Robert S. and Kimberly R. Kravis Course in Jewish Studies*

1:00–2:30 PM | Jan 31 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 7, 14, 21

Each week, in synagogues throughout the world, Jews read an identical section of the Torah. This yearly cycle is both study and ritual, an ongoing immersion in the rhythm, wisdom, history, and timeless foundation of Jewish civilization. Applying creativity and imagination, use the weekly Torah portion as a focal point and springboard for connecting your life to greater concepts and lessons. Through guided study of diverse classical and contemporary commentaries, develop tools to read the weekly portion in depth. This semester, follow the Israelites from Egyptian bondage to national autonomy, as they attempt to cope with freedom, the proximity to God, and a destiny bound up with a sacred mission.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “Examining the Siddur” (pg 8).

day as well as by night.”

## EVENING CLASSES

## The Devil Made Me Do It: Satan and the Evil Inclination in the Talmud and Early Christianity

YORAM BITTON

6:30–8:00 PM | **Jan 31 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 7, 14, 21**

Follow the development of the concepts of the “evil inclination” and the devil from the Bible through the rabbinic period and early Christianity. Read rabbinic sources in which Satan and the evil inclination play leading roles and examine how gender played a role in depictions of the devil. Discuss how Judaism and Christianity dealt with the evil inclination, sexuality, and the tension between the love of woman and the love of God.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “Whose Bible Is It?” (pg 6).

## Why Did the Jews Survive?

DR. DAVID KRAEMER

*The Leon Finley Course in Jewish Studies*6:30–8:00 PM | **Jan 31 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 7, 14, 21**

The question has often been articulated: How is it that the Jews, a people small in number, scattered and oppressed, have survived for so long while great and mighty civilizations have disappeared? Well, the answer is no mystery—it is preserved in the texts of our tradition. Our survival is largely due to our diversity and flexibility in the past, and we will argue, into the future. Explore the historical record as it sheds light on this crucial question and come to your own conclusions.


## What Happened at Sinai?

### Revelation in an Age of Biblical Criticism

RABBI MELISSA WEINTRAUB

6:30–8:00 PM | **Jan 31 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 7, 14, 21**

How can we reconcile the dethroned Bible of modernity with the sacred Torah of tradition? In what varied ways has our tradition described the gift of Torah and human involvement in the mystery of revelation? Engage radically different conceptions of what happened at Sinai through rabbinic, Kabbalistic, and contemporary Jewish thinkers in order to access your own way of relating to revelation.

 **Interested in this course?** Also see “The Rational Skeptic’s Search for God” (pg 7).

## Transformations and Formations: The Second Temple Era, Part II

DR. MARK W. WEISSTUCH

6:30–8:00 PM | **Jan 31 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 7, 14, 21**

Judaism during the Second Temple era, a period rife with developments and changes, underwent a paradigmatic shift from the ancient Judaism of the biblical era. Trace and examine the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the non-canonical literature of the period, the clash with Roman authority, the emergence of Christianity, and the coalescence of “rabbinic” Judaism. Focus on key concepts such as fate and free will, Jewish angelology, life after death and the resurrection of the dead, messianism, and the End of Days and mysticism, all of which form the predicate for beliefs elaborated upon in medieval and modern Judaism. Special emphasis will be given to the use of primary source material. Part II may be taken independently of Part I.



## חֶשְׁבָּן | Heshvan

### Etymology

From Akkadian *warahsamnu*, meaning “eighth month,” equivalent to the Hebrew *yare’ah shmona* (8th moon)

### Biblical names

- “the eighth month”
- Called “Bul” in *I Kings 6:38*

Rabbinic homily explains that Heshvan is called “Mar-Heshvan,” meaning “bitter Heshvan,” because this month contains no biblical or rabbinic holidays.

### What happened in Heshvan?

- Tradition holds that the flood that destroyed everyone except Noah and his ark occurred during Heshvan

### Zodiac sign

Scorpion

### Letter

נ Nun

“But what good is a lamp in broad





## כסלו | Kislev

### Etymology

From Akkadian  
*kislimu* or *kisliwu*

### Biblical names

- “the ninth month”
- Called “Kislev” in *Zechariah 7:1* and *Nehemiah 1:1*

### Holiday

- 25th of Kislev to the 2nd of Tevet: the holiday of Hanukkah

# Wednesday continued

## Things Your Hebrew School Teacher Taught You That Aren’t Quite True

DR. DAVID KRAEMER

8:15–9:45 PM | Jan 31 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 7, 14, 21

The cases are many—the “facts” about Judaism that almost every Jew “knows”—the things we picked up from our teachers when we were just children: “Christians believe in the next world, Jews don’t.” “Christians believe in hell, Jews don’t.” But like many easy lessons for children, these facts are often not facts at all! Much of the “common wisdom” we are taught is simply a distortion. In this class, reconsider some of what you think you know, correct some assumptions, and forge a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of Judaism.

## HERITAGE

### Civilization and the Jews, Part 2

*A Multi-Media Voyage Through Time*

Open to New Students!

DAVID WACHTEL

7:00–9:00 PM | Jan 17, 24, 31 Feb 7, 14, 21, 28 Mar 7, 14



This history course combines the remarkable technology of the new *Heritage: Civilization and the Jews Interactive DVD-ROM*, based on the groundbreaking PBS video series hosted by Abba Eban, with the dynamic presentations and expert teaching of David Wachtel. Investigate the amazing history of the Jewish people—from the end of the Middle Ages through the early modern period and down to our own times. Examine the entire range of modern Jewish history, from the emancipation of the Jews of Europe to the rise of American Jewry; through the tragedy of the Holocaust and the birth of the State of Israel. The focus throughout will be on Jewish communities’ interactions with the civilizations in which they developed—from Asia and Africa to Europe and the Americas. Uncover intriguing explanations and insights on each topic in this survey course, using digitally projected maps, multi-media presentations, and primary documents to enhance both the learning and discussion process. Enter the 21st century in adult Jewish education, where learning is a vivid, exciting, and immensely enriching experience!

With the generous support of the Jewish Media Fund of the Charles H. Revson Foundation, we offer the second half of our comprehensive, 18-week course with David Wachtel using digital quality video and the latest computer-controlled projection equipment.

**Even if you missed the first semester, the second half can be taken independently.**

*All participants will receive their own copy of the interactive DVD-ROM.*

**Enrollment is limited; register today.**

 [www.adultjewishlearning.org/heritage](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/heritage)

for more information on the Heritage DVD

daylight?” cried the moon.



# Thursday

DAYTIME CLASS

## Early Morning Talmud

DR. MOTTI ARAD

7:30–9:00 AM | **Feb** 1, 8, 15, 22 **Mar** 1, 8, 15, 22

The Seder night is among the oldest Jewish rituals recorded in Talmudic literature, yet it is still appealing to most Jewish families. What is the source of its vitality? Journey through the closing chapter of Tractate Pesachim to answer this question. From the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb recorded in the Mishna and Tosefta, to a festive family night in Babylonia recorded in the Talmud, to some of the oldest prayerbooks, Talmudic literature provides a one thousand year panorama of both tradition and change.

## SPECIAL LECTURE

THURSDAY, APRIL 26, 8 PM

## Avivah Zornberg

### “Mere Anarchy Is Loosed Upon the World”: Esther’s Prayer



Dr. Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, an internationally renowned Bible interpreter and teacher, draws extensively on classical commentaries, Midrash, and modern insights from literature and philosophy. Her widely read and studied books, *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* (Jewish Publication Society) and *The Particulars of Rapture* (Doubleday), have become classics among readers of all religions. Dr. Zornberg is considered one of today’s most original and compelling interpreters of biblical and rabbinic traditions.

#### To Register

call 212.507.9580, visit [www.adultjewishlearning.org](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org), or fill out the form on the back page

\$10

*This program is made possible through the generosity of an anonymous donor.*

Skirball 2007 | 17



טבת

Tevet

#### Etymology

From Akkadian *tebetu*. It may come from the verb *tebe*, meaning “to sink in,” which is related to the Hebrew verb *tava* “to sink,” so it means “the month of sinking in [the mud].”

#### Biblical names

- “the tenth month”
- The name “Tevet” is mentioned in *Esther 2:16* (“Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, in his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tevet...”)

#### Holiday

- 10th of Tevet: a rabbinic fast day commemorating the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, in 589 BCE, three years before the Temple was destroyed

#### What happened in Tevet?

- 8th of Tevet: the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) was completed by decree of King Ptolemy, an event regarded as tragic in Jewish tradition because it was considered impossible to accurately translate the Torah.

#### Zodiac sign

Goat

#### Letter

א *Ayin*

He replied, “Go! Israel shall use you



## שבט | Shevat

### Etymology

From Akkadian *shabatu*, meaning “the month of destroying rain,” from the verb *shabatu*, meaning “to beat, kill, destroy.” It is related to a Hebrew verb that means “to strike, smite,” which is also the source of the Hebrew noun *shevet*, meaning “rod” or “staff” and hence “tribe.”

### Biblical names

- “the eleventh month”
- Called “Shevat” in *Zechariah 1:7*

### Holiday

- 15th of Shevat, in Hebrew *Tu B'Shevat*: the New Year for the Trees. Used for calculating special offerings taken from trees after three years of bearing fruit, only after which their fruit may be eaten.

## January Intensive Intercession Hebrew!

# In the Original

**Mondays and Thursdays, \$165**

## Hebrew, In the Original: Level 1

MICHAL NACHMANY

6:00–7:30 PM | Jan 4, 8, 11, 18, 22, 25

For those who don't know how to read or understand Hebrew. Intensive, twice-a-week, biblical and liturgical Hebrew.

## Hebrew, In the Original: Level 2

MICHAL NACHMANY

7:30–9:00 PM | Jan 4, 8, 11, 18, 22, 25

For those who can read Hebrew and want to begin to understand it. Intensive, twice-a-week, biblical and liturgical Hebrew.

### To Register

call 212.507.9580 or visit [www.adultjewishlearning.org](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org)



## cooperative learning communities

A unique approach to study and creative thought at the Skirball Center combines dialogue and small group discussion. Join communities of fellowship that will empower you to connect to the great texts and ideas of the Jewish past while engaging in an intellectual and experiential journey through Bible, Talmud, medieval commentaries, Kabbalah, Hasidic thought, modern literature, and more.

Each year, these cooperative learning communities, or *batei midrash*, focus on a particular theme that is elucidated through text study and discussion and that ultimately finds expression in the creative work of its participants.

### *This year's theme is:* **Between Holy and Mundane/Bein Kodesh L'chol**

The distinction between the holy and the mundane is most explicitly articulated in Havdalah, the ritual marking the conclusion of the Sabbath on Saturday evenings at nightfall. The concluding blessing of that ceremony is “Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who distinguished between the holy and the mundane.” This broad dichotomy between the holy and the secular is paralleled in the liturgy with other dichotomies such as light and darkness, the Sabbath and the rest of the week, the people of Israel and the other nations of the world. How do we make sense of such dichotomies in our times? What do we mean by terms like “holy” and “secular”? What makes time and space holy? If God's presence is pervasive, is there anything in life that is truly “mundane”?

**pg. 9 | Beit Midrash for Psychotherapists**

**pg. 9 | Artists' Beit Midrash**

**pg. 12 | Writers' Beit Midrash: Creative Non-Fiction**

*These courses are made possible in part by a generous grant from Targum Shlishi, a Raquel and Aryeh Rubin Foundation.*

to count the days and the years.”

# The Skirball Center's...

## 3-Year Certificate Program in Jewish Studies

# Iyun

Jewish Texts, Contexts & Perspectives

**6 semesters** | **10 weeks each** | **180 hours**

Classes meet Wednesday evenings  
from 6:30–9:30 PM **beginning Fall 2007**

**T**he IYUN program facilitates a serious and intense engagement with Jewish texts—biblical, rabbinic, and modern. Applying methods of critical inquiry to in-depth study of primary sources, IYUN equips students with tools for lifelong learning. IYUN cultivates a community of learning in which students and faculty bring their life experience, secular knowledge, and critical judgment to the exploration of traditional and contemporary Jewish texts. By relating to Jewish texts in their historical contexts and from a variety of perspectives, students will learn to analyze, process, and selectively apply them to enrich their Jewish lives, relationships, and communities.

- Applications for admission to IYUN will be available online in June 2007.
- For more information about the application process, please visit **[www.adultjewishlearning.org/iyun](http://www.adultjewishlearning.org/iyun)**

**UJA** Federation  
of New York

Made possible by a generous grant from  
the UJA Federation of New York.



**אדר** | **Adar**

### Etymology

From Akkadian *addaru* or *adaru*. It comes from either *iddar*, meaning “threshing floor” (“the month of the threshing floor”) or from *adaru*, meaning “to be dark” (“the dark or clouded month”).

### Biblical names

- “the twelfth month”
- Called “Adar” in *Esther* 3:7 and *Ezra* 6:15

### Holidays

- 14th of Adar:  
the festival of Purim
- 15th of Adar:  
the festival of Purim in Jerusalem and other walled cities, also known as “Shushan Purim”

### What happened in Adar?

- 7th of Adar:  
anniversary of the death of Moses, used to be observed as a fast day. According to tradition, the 7th of Adar is also the date of Moses’ birth.
- There is a saying, “When Adar enters, joy increases.”

### Adar II

In some years, a second month called “Adar Sheini,” or “Second Adar” is added, to ensure that the lunar and solar calendars stay in sync so that Passover always occurs in the spring. A year with an “Adar Rishon” (“first Adar”) and “Adar Sheini” (“second Adar”) is considered a leap year and is called a “shana me’uberet,” which literally means, “a pregnant year.”

### Zodiac sign

Fish



# Faculty

## CORE FACULTY

One of the most distinctive elements of the Skirball Center is its Core Faculty. This creative team of talented and dynamic scholars works collaboratively to design the courses each semester. In addition to teaching courses, the faculty plays an integral role in shaping the character of the program.



**WENDY AMSELLEM** is a faculty member at the Drisha Institute and an adjunct faculty member at City College of New York. She is a doctoral candidate at New York University (NYU) in Rabbinic Literature. Wendy is an alumna of the Drisha Scholar's Circle and of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship program, and has a BA in History and Literature from Harvard University.



**NOAM M. ELCOTT** is a doctoral candidate in modern art history at Princeton University and currently a DAAD fellow in Berlin, Germany. Noam has taught and lectured across the tri-state area.



**DR. DAVID GREENSTEIN** is Rosh Ha-Yeshivah/Rabbinic Dean of the Academy for Jewish Religion, where he teaches Rabbinics, Kabbalah, and Jewish Thought and offers rabbinic guidance. David holds a PhD in Rabbinics and Kabbalah. He has published articles on Jewish aesthetics, pluralism, and Talmud.



**IRIT KOREN** is a doctoral candidate in Gender Studies at Bar-Ilan University and has an MA in Jewish Education from Hebrew University. She has taught in numerous institutions in Israel and is the author of *Closet Within a Closet: Stories of Religious Homosexuals*. Her area of interest is the intersection of Jewish tradition, society, and gender.



**DR. DAVID KRAEMER** is Professor of Talmud and Rabbinics at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) where he is also Joseph J. and Dora Abbell Librarian, overseeing the greatest collection of Judaica in the Western world. Among his many publications are *The Mind of the Talmud*, *Responses to Suffering in Classical Judaism*, and his forthcoming *The Gastronomic Jew*. He is a Senior Core Faculty Scholar at Skirball.



**FAYE LEDERMAN**, a producer/director, has made many films, including *Women of the Wall*, *The New Old Country*, and *A Good Uplift*. Her work has screened in dozens of festivals, universities, museums, and conferences, and has been broadcast on PBS. Faye is a part-time faculty member at the School of Visual Arts and a member of the Working Group on Jews, Religion, and Media at NYU's Center for Religion and Media.



**RABBI LEON A. MORRIS** is the Executive Director of the Skirball Center for Adult Jewish Learning. Ordained at Hebrew Union College (HUC), he was a Wexner Fellow. Leon has taught at Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform synagogues as well as at the Drisha Institute. During the summer, Leon serves as a congregational rabbi for Temple Adas Israel in Sag Harbor, Long Island. From January through June 2007, he is serving as a Mandel Fellow in Jerusalem.



**MICHAL NACHMANY** is a graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Michal has taught liturgical, biblical, and modern Hebrew for the past twenty years at synagogues and institutions throughout the city.



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**DAVID WACHTEL** is the Research Librarian for Special Collections at the JTS library. He holds advanced degrees in Medieval History and Jewish Studies from Columbia University. He is the author of *From This World to the Next: Jewish Approaches to Illness, Death and the Afterlife*, and a contributing author to the Yeshiva University exhibition catalogue *Printing the Talmud: From Bomberg to Schottenstein*.

## ADJUNCT FACULTY

**ARLENE AGUS** is an executive consultant to Jewish family foundations. Her interests include Jewish theology and religious feminism, and she is a contributing author to *What Happens After I Die?* and *Jewish Women: New Perspectives*.

**DR. MOTTI ARAD**, a visiting Assistant Professor in Talmud at JTS, holds a PhD in Talmud from JTS. His main research interest is the attitude toward non-rabbis in rabbinic literature. His book, *Desecrators of the Sabbath with Parhessia*, is expected to be published in 2007.

**DR. DAVID ARNOW** is the author of *Creating Lively Passover Seders: A Sourcebook of Engaging Tales, Texts & Activities* (Jewish Lights, 2004) and is co-editor of and a contributor to *My People's Passover Haggadah* (Jewish Lights, 2008).

**YORAM BITTON** is a doctoral candidate in Talmud and has a BA in Talmud and Jewish History from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has served as a visiting scholar at the University of Michigan and taught at Hebrew University.



**DR. TSVI BLANCHARD**, director of organizational development at CLAL, was ordained at the Yeshiva Gedola of St. Louis and holds PhDs in both Psychology and Philosophy. He has been a practicing clinical and organizational psychologist. His recent publications include *How to Think About Being Jewish in the Twenty-First Century*. He is the co-author of *Embracing Life & Facing Death: A Jewish Guide to Palliative Care*.

**DR. MICHAEL CHERNICK**, an ordainee of Yeshiva University, is a professor of Talmud and Rabbinic Literature at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion. He has taught Torah in all sectors of the Jewish community in the United States and Israel. He is the author of two books on rabbinic hermeneutics, the editor of *Essential Papers on the Talmud*, and has recently completed a work titled *The Writing Was the Writing of God*.

**SHELLY R. FREDMAN** teaches writing at NYU and at the City University of New York (CUNY). She received her MFA from Washington University and has taught at the University of Missouri–St. Louis. Her work has appeared in *Best Jewish Writing 2002*, *First Harvest*, the *Chicago Tribune Magazine*, *Lilith*, and a number of anthologies and literary magazines.

**DR. NEIL GILLMAN** is Professor of Jewish Philosophy at JTS. A world-renowned thinker and teacher, Neil is the author of several seminal books on Jewish theology, including *Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew*.

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**DR. FREEMA GOTTLIEB**, author of *The Lamp of God: A Jewish Book of Light*, *Jewish Folk Art*, and *Mystical Stonescapes of Prague Jewish Town and Village Graveyards*, is a freelance writer and teacher living in New York.

**RABBI DAVID INGBER** studied Philosophy and Psychology at NYU, and has learned at a wide range of yeshivot in Jerusalem and New York. David was ordained by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi. He is the spiritual leader of Kehilat Romemu in Manhattan.

**TOBI KAHN** is an internationally acclaimed painter and sculptor whose work has been shown in over 40 solo exhibitions and over 60 museum and group shows. He was selected as one of nine artists for the 1985 Guggenheim Museum exhibition *New Horizons in American Art*. He is co-founder of Avoda Arts and the recipient of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture's Cultural Achievement Award in the Visual Arts. Tobi has taught painting at the School of Visual Arts in New York since 1985.

**LISA KOGEN** is a doctoral candidate in Jewish history at JTS and has lectured extensively in both formal and informal educational venues. She is the National Education Director at the Women's League for Conservative Judaism.

**MARCIE LENK** is the Academic Director of Me'ah in New York. The Schimberg Fellow at Harvard University, she is a doctoral candidate in Early Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism. Marcie has taught at the Drisha Institute, Pardes Institute, and Midreshet Lindenbaum, as well as in a variety of Christian seminaries in Jerusalem. She holds BA and MS degrees from Yeshiva University, and an MTS from Harvard Divinity School.

**DR. BARBARA MANN** is Associate Professor of Jewish Literature at JTS. She is the author of *A Place in History: Modernism, Tel Aviv and the Creation of Jewish Urban Space* and the co-editor-in-chief of *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*.

**PENINNAH SCHRAM**, internationally known storyteller, teacher, author, and recording artist, is Associate Professor of Speech and Drama at Stern College of Yeshiva University. Peninnah is the author of nine books of Jewish folktales, including *Jewish Stories One Generation Tells Another* and *Stories Within Stories: From the Jewish Oral Tradition*. She received a Covenant Award for Outstanding Jewish Educator in 1995.

**RABBI CHAIM SEIDLER-FELLER** is Director of the University of California, Los Angeles Hillel. He was ordained in 1971 at Yeshiva University. Chaim is a lecturer in the Departments of Sociology and Near Eastern Language and Cultures at UCLA. He is a Fellow of the Shalom Hartman Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and is a member of the Academic Advisory board of the Wilstein Institute for Social Policy.

**RABBI JAN R. UHRBACH** is the Rabbi of the Conservative Synagogue of the Hamptons, an Adjunct Lecturer of Professional and Pastoral Skills at the JTS Rabbinical School, and a teacher of Torah in the New York area. Rabbi Uhrbach received her ordination from JTS, where she was a Wexner Graduate Fellow.

**RABBI MELISSA WEINTRAUB** is Director of Education at Rabbis for Human Rights, Rabbinic Fellow at JTS, and the author of articles treating the subjects of war ethics and human rights in Jewish sources. An alumna of the Wexner Graduate Fellowship program, Melissa was ordained at JTS and has taught on Jewish theology, mysticism, and ethics throughout North America. Melissa is currently working on a book exploring Jewish religious responses to terror.

**DR. MARK W. WEISSTUCH** received his doctorate in Theater History from CUNY. He has taught seminars on general Jewish history, the history of the Jews in Poland and Eastern Europe, and various subjects related to the Holocaust. Mark is Administrative Vice President of Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York.

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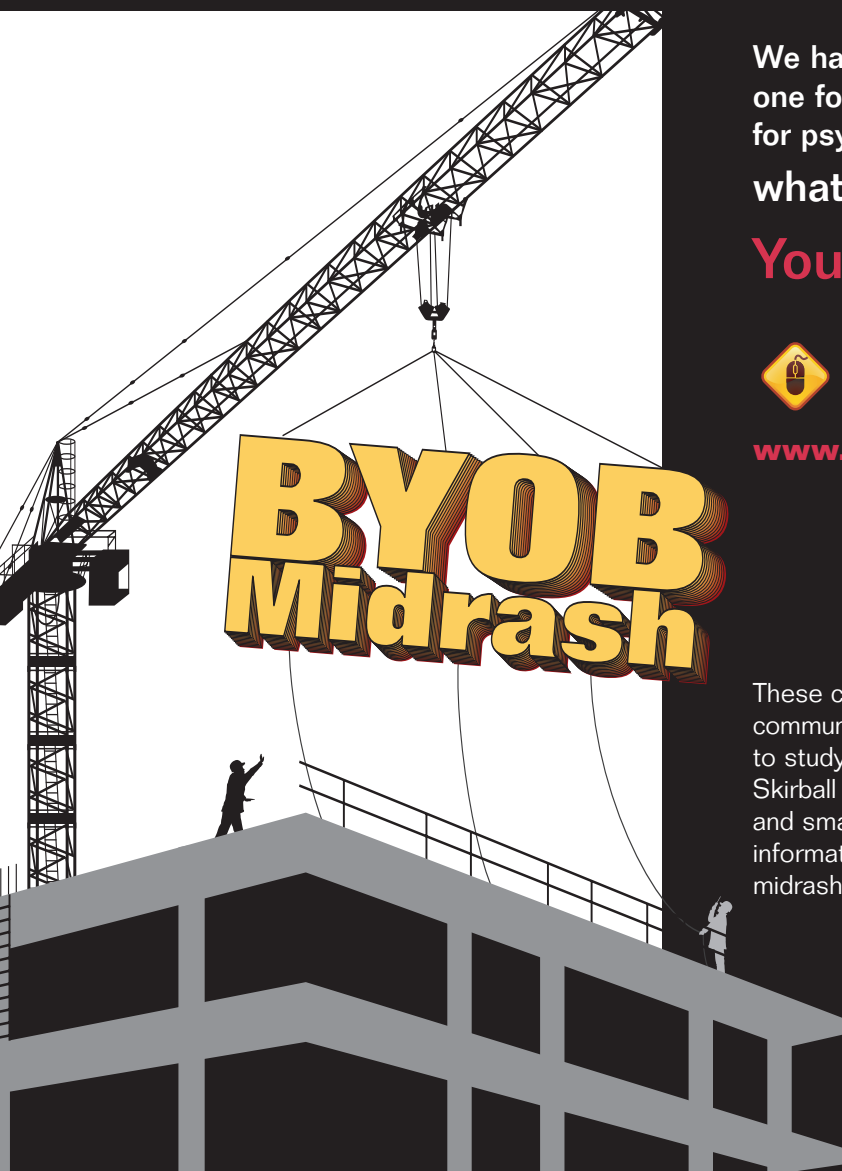


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