

Jewish Thinkers, Ideas and Texts
PHL 145
American Jewish University College Initiatives
Young Judaea Year Course

This course will explore several key topics in Jewish thought. Broadly defined this course will consider areas in which modern axiology and epistemology come into tension with those of the tradition. In each case, we will consider the traditional (both biblical and rabbinic) sources for these values or beliefs and the different ways in which thinkers through out Jewish history have addressed these tensions. Along the way we will become familiar with the major characters in the drama of Jewish thought in general and of the Jewish navigation of modernity in particular.

Assessments:

The success of this course depends on you! I am most interested in hearing your informed opinions regarding and reactions to the issues we cover in class. As Jews in the modern world I am certain many of these topics will resonate with your own experience. As such, your responsibility will be to attend class consistently (25%), come prepared and prepared to participate (25%), as well as offer thoughtful responses to the questions on the midterm and final (25% each).

I. Torah and Science

Genesis 1-2
Adam Jacobs, "The Jewish View of Creationism"
Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed*
Yeshayahu Leibovitz, "Religion and Science in the Middle Ages"
R' J. B. Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith*
Martin Buber, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible"

II. Torah and Criticism

James Kugel, *How to Read the Bible*
Franz Rosenzweig, "The Several Sources of One Revelation"
Aryeh Klapper, "Who Wrote the Torah?"

III. Good and Evil, Reward and Punishment and Faith after the Holocaust

Book of Job
Richard Rubinstein, "Evil," in *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought*
Yitz Greenberg, "Voluntary Covenant"

IV. Identity: Judaism as religion, nation, culture?

Moses Mendelssohn, *Jerusalem*
Ahad Ha'am, "The Jewish State and the Jewish Problem"
H. N. Brenner, "Self-Criticism"
E. Brown and M. Galperin, *The Case for Jewish Peoplehood*

V. Denominations and Law, TBD

VI. God and Faith in the Contemporary World

Discussion based on the documentary, "Who Knows One: Jewish Perspectives on God"

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Philo Judaeus of Alexandria, *The Confusion of Tongues*

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