

INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM
RE 403-3, Spring 2007
Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
Tuesday, Thursday 4:30 p.m.-5:50 p.m.
Nelson Hall 119

Instructor:
Rabbi David Ariel-Joel

This online syllabus should be used to gain a better understanding of the content and focus of a course. The syllabus given out in the class may differ from this online version and its content supercedes that of the online syllabus.

Course Description

The transition from Israelite religion, as depicted in the Hebrew Bible, to Rabbinic Judaism, which unfolded from the 2nd Century Before the Common Era to the 6th Century of the Common Era, was revolutionary. This course will explore the dominant values and practices of what became traditional Judaism. This exploration will be conducted primarily through encounters with primary texts such as the Talmud, Jewish philosophy and Biblical commentary. After an examination of the innovations of Rabbinic Judaism as it developed through the Middle Ages, we will focus on contemporary expressions of Judaism.

Required Textbooks

David S. Ariel, *What Do Jews Believe? The Spiritual Foundations of Judaism*, Schocken Books, New York, 1995

Arthur A. Cohen/Paul Mendes-Flohr (eds.), *Contemporary Jewish Religious Thought. Original Essays on Critical Concepts, Movements, and Beliefs*, New York: Scribner, 1987 (abbr. CMF)

Kertzer, Morris N. *What is a Jew?* rev. ed. Revised by Lawrence A. Hoffman. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993.

Trepp, Leo. *Judaism: Development and Life*. 4th ed. Belmont: Wadsworth, 2000.

Israel Knohl, *The Divine Symphony, the Bible's Many Voices*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 2003

A.J. Heschel, *The Sabbath*, Harper Collins, Canada 1979

Tanakh – the Hebrew Bible with the JPS (Jewish Publication Society) translation

Recommended Web Sites

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/index.htm?VI=481003041026>

<http://ccarnet.org/resp/>

<http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/index.jsp>

Semester Project

The semester project will consist of a written term paper and an oral presentation in class. Written work is due on the last day of classes. Oral presentations need to be scheduled to fit into the flow of the course. A satisfying written presentation is an essay of 5 pages not including an annotated research bibliography (not exclusively relying on internet-sources), covering a relevant topic agreed upon in discussion with the instructor. You are strongly advised to submit a draft before the final due date of the paper (last day of classes).

Students need to schedule all additional media or handouts in advance.