



האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM

בית הספר לתלמידים מחו"ל ע"ש רוטברג

Rothberg International School



Department of Summer Courses
and Special Programs

המחלקה לקורסי קיץ
ותוכניות מיוחדות

The Body in Jewish Thought (SPJT205/48892)

Summer 2017

July 3 - 27, 2017

Class schedule: Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays 13:30 - 16:30

Reception Hours: By appointment.

Dr. Eliezer Shore

Course Description:

Are we our bodies, or do we have bodies? Does G-d have a body, and if not, how do we understand the many depictions of Him found in scripture? Is the body a hindrance or a blessing to spiritual growth?

This course will examine the unique and variegated approach to the body in Jewish thought. Addressing five or six major body-related issues, we will examine their historical and philosophical development over the centuries. After a general introduction of the place of the body in ancient Jewish religious practice, we will learn about such topics as the Divine body, from its scriptural roots, through Rabbinic texts, down to medieval Kabbalah; issues of ritual purity and impurity (both men and women's); asceticism, indulgence and the problem (or benefit) of food and sex; the body as a symbol and locus of meaning; and the gendered body and the "body of engenderment" in Jewish law and theology, among many other topics.

Students will see how issues of the body lie at the very heart of Jewish practice and belief, from the first bite of the proverbial apple to the long-awaited redemption and the final Resurrection.

Grading System:

1. Class participation is an integral part of this course. Both in-class participation and between-class preparation of texts count toward this. (A workbook of sources will be made available). (40%)
5. Final exam (60%). The final exam is comprised of short essay questions, drawn from classroom discussion and reading, and one long essay question, based upon student's unique, independent research in the course of the semester.

Syllabus:

Lectures are topic based, with 2-3 session periods devoted to each topic, depending on student interest, discussion and involvement. Readings for each topic include those which provide basic, background knowledge (such as can be found in online encyclopedias) as well as academic books and articles and those written by religious scholars. Primary sources are provided in translation.

Background Reading on Classic Jewish Texts:

“Oral Torah.” *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.

Simon-Shoshan, Moshe. “What Is Midrash?” *Mizrachi World Movement*. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.

Topic 1: G-d's Body: A discussion of various views, from Biblical to Kabbalistic literature on the possibility of the Divine having a body:

Reading:

- Cooper, David A. “Mystical Creation.” *God Is a Verb: Kabbalah and the Practice of Mystical Judaism*. New York: Riverhead, 1997. 59-64. Print.
- Dubov, Nissan Dovid. “The Sefirot.” *Www.chabad.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.
- Ginzberg, Louis, Henrietta Szold, and Paul Radin. *Legends of the Jews*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003. 1-2+. Print. 1-2, 47-61

- Holtz, Barry W. *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit, 1984. 315-29. Print.
- Maimonides, Moses. *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Trans. Shlomo Pines. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1963. N. pag. Print. Chap. 1:10-1:13, I:26, I:25, 1:46
- Seeskin, Kenneth. "Chapter 2: Describing God." *Maimonides: A Guide for Today's Perplexed*. West Orange, NJ: Behrman House, 1991. 18-39. Print.
- Sommer, Benjamin D. "Introduction." *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 1-10. Print.
- Steinsaltz, Adin. *The Thirteen Petalled Rose*. New York: Basic, 1980. N. pag. Print. Chaps. II: Divine Manifestation, 35-47; III: The Soul of Man, 51-65; VII: The Human Image, 111-122.
- Stern, David. "Imitatio Hominis: Anthropomorphism and the Character(s) of God in Rabbinic Literature." *Prooftexts* 12 (1992): 151-74. Web.

Topic 2: Made in G-d's image: Various discussions, from Talmudic to Modern, of what it means for human beings to be created in the Divine Image.

Reading:

- Cordovero, Moses Ben Jacob. *The Palm Tree of Deborah*. Trans. Louis Jacobs. New York: Hermon, 1974. 70-121. Print.
- Lorberbaum, Yair. "Imago Dei in Judaism: Early Rabbinic, Literature, Philosophy, and Kabbalah." *The Concept of God, the Origin of the World, and the Image of the Human in the World Religions*. Ed. Peter Koslowski. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2001. 57-74. Print.

Topic 3: The body as a religious symbol: Beyond the general concept of the body being created in the Divine image, numerous texts, see each separate component of the body as being a symbol for a multitude of concepts – from the homiletic to the mystical.

Reading:

- Killian, Greg. "The Beit HaMikdash." [Http://betemunah.org/](http://betemunah.org/). The Watchman, n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.
- Killian, Greg. "The Human Body." *Betemunah*. The Watchman, n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.
- Kramer, Chaim, Avraham Sutton, and Nahman. *Anatomy of the Soul*. Jerusalem: Breslov Research Institute, 1998. Print. Excerpts

- Lewis, Patricia. *The Body as Symbol: Bringing Together Theories of Sex/Gender and Race for Theological Discourse*. Diss. Marquette U, 2010. 187-213, n.d. Print.
- White, L. "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155.3767 (1967): 1203-207. Web.

Topic 4: Circumcision: A discussion of the history and meaning of circumcision, the ultimate "bodily symbol."

Reading:

- Cohen, Shaye J. D. "Chapter 1: A Canonical History of Jewish Circumcision," and "Chapter 6: The Reduction of Lust and the Unmanning of Men." *Why Aren't Jewish Women Circumcised?: Gender and Covenant in Judaism*. Berkeley: U of California, 2005. 3-54, 143-169. Print.
- Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard. "Chapter 6: The Fruitful Cut." *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990. 141-76. Print.
- Glick, Leonard B. "'This Is My Covenant' Circumcision in the World of Temple Judaism." *Marked in Your Flesh: Circumcision from Ancient Judea to Modern America*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005. 13-33. Print.

Topic 5: Varieties of Desire: Approaches to sexual desire from Biblical times until late Kabbalistic and Hasidic thought.

Reading:

- Anderson, Gary. "The Garden of Eden and Sexuality in Early Judaism." *People of the Body Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*. Ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz. Albany: State U of New York, 2014. 47-68. Print.
- Biale, David. "Chapter 5: Eros and Spirituality in the Kabbalah." *Eros and the Jews: From Biblical Israel to Contemporary America*. New York, NY: Basic, 1992. 101-20. Print.
- Kimelman, Reuven. "The Rabbinic Theology of the Physical: Blessings, Body, and Soul, Resurrection, and Covenant and Election." *The Cambridge History of Judaism*. Ed. Steven T. Katz. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2006. 946-976. Print.
- Mopsik, Charles. "The Body of Engenderment in the Hebrew Bible, the Rabbinic Tradition and the Kabbalah." *Fragments for a History of the Human Body*. Ed.

- Michel Feher, Ramona Naddaff, and Nadia Tazi. New York, NY: Zone, 1989. 49-73. Print.
- Ribner, David S. “Determinants of the Intimate Lives of Haredi (Ultra-Orthodox) Jewish Couples.” *Sexual and Relationship Therapy* 18.1 (2003): 53-62. Web.
 - Schofer, Jonathan. “The Beastly Body in Rabbinic Self-Formation.” *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*. Ed. David Brakke, Michael L. Satlow, and Steven Weitzman. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 2005. 197-221. Print.

Topic 6: The Ascetic Turn: The rise of asceticism in Talmudic, medieval and Kabbalah though.

Reading:

- “Asceticism - Western Asceticism - The Middle Ages.” - *Self, Body, Church, and Practiced*. Science Encyclopedia, n.d. Web. 27 July 2016.
- Brown, Peter. “The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity.” *Journal of Roman Studies J. Rom. Stud.* 61 (1971): 80-101. Web.
- Fine, Lawrence. “Purifying the Body in the Name of the Soul : The Problem of the Body in Sixteenth-century Kabbalah.” *People of the Body: Jews and Judaism from an Embodied Perspective*. Ed. Howard Eilberg-Schwartz. Albany, NY: State U of New York, 1992. 117-42. Print.
- Hanson, Sarah E. “Connections Between Body and Soul: The Asceticism of Medieval Saints.” *The UCI Undergraduate Research Journal* 12 (2009): 23-34. Web.
- Hundert, Gershon D. “Jewish Popular Spirituality in the Eighteenth Century.” *Polin* 15 (2002): 93-103. Web.
- Swain, Joseph Ward. *The Hellenic Origins of Christian Asceticism*. Diss. Columbia U, 1916. 104-146. Print.

Topic 7: The Modest Body: The body in society, throughout Jewish history and the clothing that covers or reveals it.

Reading:

- “Tzniut.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.
- Block, Sima Zalcborg. “Shouldering the Burden of Redemption: How the “Fashion” of Wearing Capes Developed in Ultra-Orthodox Society.” *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women’s Studies & Gender Issues* 22 (2011): 32-55. Web.

- Yafeh, Orit. “The Time in the Body: Cultural Construction of Femininity in Ultraorthodox Kindergartens for Girls.” *Ethos* 35.4 (2007): 516-53. Web.

Topic 8: Purity and Impurity: Menstrual laws and their contemporary application. The laws of Biblical impurity and their implications for cognitive and spiritual experience.

Reading:

- “Niddah.” Wikipedia. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.
- Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard. “Chapter 7: Menstrual Blood, Semen and Discharge.” *The Savage in Judaism: An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana UP, 1990. 177-94. Print.

Topic 9: The Resurrection of the Dead: various understandings of this disputed Jewish “principle of faith”

Reading:

- Avery-Peck, Alan J. “Resurrection of the Body in Early Rabbinic Judaism.” *The Human Body in Death and Resurrection*. Ed. Tobias Nicklas, Friedrich V. Reiterer, Jozef Verheyden, and Heike Braun. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2009. 243-66. Print.
- Cruz, Joan Carroll. “Introduction.” *The Incorruptibles: A Study of the Incorruption of the Bodies of Various Catholic Saints and Beati*. Rockford, IL: Tan, 1977. N.P. Print.
- Jacobs, Louis. “Resurrection.” *The Jewish Religion: A Companion*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. 420-22. Print. <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/jewish-resurrection-of-the-dead/>
- Silberberg, Naftali. “The Resurrection Process.” *Www.chabad.org*. N.p., n.d. Web. 4 July 2016.