

Messianic Jewish Theological Institute

H504 –Modern Judaism

Instructor: Mark S. Kinzer

Blogsite: <http://sjs.typepad.com/h504>

Dates: March 22 – May 28, 2009 (3rd Quarter of 2008-2009 Academic Year)

1. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course studies the rise of diverse forms of Judaism and Jewish thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with emphasis on the impact of modernity on the Jewish people. It includes examination of the impact of the Shoah and the creation of the State of Israel on Jewish religious life and thought, the changing relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and the emergence of the modern Messianic Jewish movement.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM

This is a required course for the Master of Jewish Studies degree.

3. RELEVANCE

The rise of modernity posed enormous challenges to traditional Jewish life and thought, and led to a new era of Jewish pluralism – an era in which we now live. The study of modern Judaism and its historical development provides us with insight into our own circumstances, and the way they differ from those of our ancestors. It enables us to recognize and articulate the distinctive modern presuppositions that we carry into our study of traditional Jewish texts and our observance of traditional Jewish practice. It also sheds light on the rise of the Messianic Jewish movement, and its place within the Jewish and Christian worlds.

4. PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for this course.

5. TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This is an online course. The student must have a computer and internet access.

6. COURSE FORMAT

Lecture (by podcast) and asynchronous online discussion (by blog).

7. REQUIREMENTS

Listening to all lectures, reading all assigned texts, active participation in all blog discussions, and completion of final examination.

8. REQUIRED TEXTS (selections will be taken from each text)

- de Lange, Nicholas and Miri Freud-Kandel, eds. *Modern Judaism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Kinzer, Mark. *Postmissionary Messianic Judaism*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005. [Chapter 8.]
- Levenson, Alan T. *An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thinkers*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.

- Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism in Modern Times: An Introduction and Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

9. RECOMMENDED READING

- Gillman, Neil. *Conservative Judaism: The New Century*. West Orange: Behrman House, 1993.
- Halivni, David Weiss. *The Book and the Sword*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.
- Kaplan, Edward and Samuel Dresner. *Abraham Joshua Heschel: Prophetic Witness*. New Haven: Yale, 1998.
- Kaplan, Edward. *Spiritual Radical: Abraham Joshua Heschel in America*. New Haven: Yale, 2007.
- Sarna, Jonathan. *American Judaism*. New Haven: Yale, 2004.

10. ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

Participation in the asynchronous online discussion is crucial to learning in the course and to your course grade. I encourage you to keep current and active during discussion weeks.

The final exam will be sent to the class via e-mail attachment on Monday, May 24. The exam must be returned to the instructor by e-mail attachment before 5:00 pm local time on Thursday May 28, 2009.

11. COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1 (March 22-28): What is "Modern Judaism"? [131 pages]
-de Lange, 1-41; Neusner, 1-51; Levenson, 1-39

Week 2 (March 29-April 4): Modernist Forms of Rabbinic Judaism [85 pages]
-de Lange, 81-92, 129-43; Neusner, 52-72, 99-121; Levenson, 53-65

Week 3 (April 5-11): Traditionalist Forms of Rabbinic Judaism [100 pages]
-de Lange, 93-105, 144-54, 216-27; Neusner, 73-98; Levenson, 41-52, 183-208

Week 4 (April 19-25): Non-Rabbinic Judaism – Zionism [134 pages]
-de Lange, 42-77; Neusner, 125-36, 158-75, 206-44; Levenson, 103-31

Week 5 (April 26-May 2): Key Issues – Authority [130 pages]
-de Lange, 205-15, 243-53, 267-300, 325-337; Levenson, 67-101, 133-58

Week 6 (May 3-9): Key Issues – Gender & Sexuality [46 pages]
-de Lange, 341-51, 377-411

Week 7 (May 10-16): Key Issues – Spirituality [60 pages]
-de Lange, 114-24, 231-42; Levenson, 159-81, 209-22

Week 8 (May 17-23): Jewish-Christian Relations & Messianic Judaism [72 pages]

-de Lange, 426-49; Kinzer, 263-310

12. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course successfully, the student will be able

- To describe the essential characteristics of Modern Judaism, and the ways that all forms of Modern Judaism differ from the Judaism of the previous era
- To describe the diverse expressions of Modern Judaism, both in the Diaspora and in the Land of Israel
- To explain the factors that give Modern Judaism its distinctive cast, and that foster its diverse forms
- To describe the primary challenges and opportunities faced by Judaism in the modern era, and the dominant strategies that have been adopted to meet those challenges and take advantage of those opportunities
- To describe the changes that have occurred in the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in the modern era, and to explain the factors that have produced these changes
- To describe the history of the emergence and evolution of the Modern Messianic Jewish movement
- To articulate an informed perspective on the future of Messianic Judaism and the contribution it has to make in relation to Modern Judaism as a whole

13. ASSESSMENT

Grades will be awarded according to the following criteria: quality and quantity of blog participation (1/2), quality of final examination (1/2).

14. GRADING SYSTEM

The basic letter grades have the following significance:

A Exemplary

B Adequate

C Passing, but requiring substantial improvement

F Failed

Grades have been assigned the following numerical values for the purpose of computing the grade point average:

A 4.0 | A- 3.7 | B+ 3.3 | B 3.0 | B- 2.7 | C+ 2.3 | C 2.0 | C- 1.7 | F 0.0

Further aspects of the MJTI Grading System can be found on page 33 of the MJTI Catalogue

15. COURSE POLICIES

1. **Preparation:** Each student is expected to be prepared for, and to participate, in the live and online class discussions.
2. **Dishonesty and plagiarism:** Any form of dishonesty (copying from another student's work or allowing your work to be copied) or plagiarism (passing off another's work as your own, not giving appropriate credit to another's ideas) will

- not be tolerated. Such misconduct will result in automatic “F” grade for the class and a permanent notice placed in the student's academic record. If you are unsure whether an action is permissible or not, please check with the professor or teaching assistant. We want to help you.
3. **Incompletes:** Incompletes will only be granted when the instructor and Provost agree that significant extenuating circumstances have prevented a student from finishing the course work by the stipulated Due Date. Extenuating circumstances are major, unplanned, unanticipated, and unavoidable disruptions in one’s life or work. If the Incomplete grade is granted, the completed course work is due to the Instructor by the final assignment Due Date of the following quarter. If the work is not completed within this time, the Instructor determines whether a reduced grade or a grade of F is warranted, based on the amount and quality of the work that has been completed. Further extensions of time are normally not granted.
 4. **Extensions.** Extensions of the Due Date for the final assignments are not permitted. Students who do qualify for an Incomplete should submit as much work as possible by the Due Date so that the Instructor has time to grade all work in time to meet the instructor’s deadline for submitting grades to the MJTI office. At the instructor’s discretion, work may be accepted later than the Due Date, with a deduction of grade for each late day.
 5. **Change of Student Status:** A student who has registered to take this course for credit may switch to the status of auditor any time before the semester deadline for the completion of course work, but the tuition differential will only be refunded if the switch is made in writing before the beginning of the course.
 6. **Blog privacy:** The course blog is accessible only with the user name and password provided to you. To ensure a positive forum for course interaction, access to the course blog will only be granted with the instructor’s permission. Likewise, students are asked to refrain from excerpting lessons or threaded discussions from the blog in any format. This will enable the cultivation of a safe and honest forum for dialogue.
 7. **Questions:** If you have any questions regarding assignments, feel free to e-mail them to me at MKBenBen@comcast.net.

16. STRUCTURED WORK HOURS

8 hours	Class time (podcast)
32 hours	Participation in asynchronous online discussion
12 hours	Final exam (3,000 words)
38 hours	758 pages of assigned reading
90 hours	Total structured hours