

Messianic Jewish Theological Institute
R 602 – Seminar in Talmudic Texts (2 quarter credits)

Instructor: Carl Kinbar

Location: Online at <http://mjti.blogs.com/r502>

Dates: April 7 – June 13, 2008

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The Bavli perek (portion) “Hamafkid” (based on Mishnah Bava Metzia Chapter 3) is one of the two p’rakim (along with “Eilu Metziot,” based on M. BM Chapter 2) traditionally most often used to introduce both young and adult learners to the Bavli. This seminar consists of an intensive study of the first part of Perek Hamafkid with Rashi’s commentary.

RELATIONSHIP TO CURRICULUM:

This course is an elective counting toward the Concentration Area course requirements for the MJS.

RELEVANCE:

This seminar will build the students skills in understanding and studying the Bavli, a foundational document of Judaism. Further, it will deepen the student’s knowledge of the foundations and shape of thought that underlie the structure and practices of Judaism to this day. As students understand rabbinic texts on their own terms, they have a basis to reflect on their relationship with Scripture and Messianic tradition. These competencies are necessary to a life and leadership characterized by a knowledgeable and integrated Messianic Judaism.

PREREQUISITE:

Introduction to Early Judaism 1 (or permission of the instructor)

COURSE FORMAT

Podcast, online lessons, and asynchronous online discussion, with optional chevruta (pairs) study.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS:

This course will be given online, and requires a Hebrew word processor. The student must have a computer with DavkaWriter 6, and internet access.

REQUIREMENTS

- Listen to all recorded lectures
- Read all assigned materials
- Participate in all online discussions
- Complete all written assignments.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND REFERENCE WORKS

- Abramson, Henry. *Reading the Talmud*. New York: Feldheim Publishers, 2006
- Artscroll Talmud, *Tractate Bava Metzia Volume 1*. New York: Mesorah Publications, 1995. Either the full or Daf Yomi size will do.
- Kraemer, David. *The Mind of the Talmud*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990
- Downloads from course weblog

RECOMMENDED READING

To be supplied at the beginning of the course

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

The student will prepare and participate in the eight blog discussion sections Perek Hamafkid and three sections on the Kraemer book. As will be explained in the Introductory Unit, those who are interested in being involved in traditional chevrotah study (by phone) will be matched with one or two other students in this course or R502, which is being held simultaneously.

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1 – Introduction to the Bavli; Hamafkid, Pt. 1

In this unit we will preview the syllabus, take a bird's eye view of the formation of the Talmud, then zero in to explain how a single page of the printed Talmud is put together. We will also begin our study of the first portion of the Talmud's discussion of Mishnah Bava Metzia, Ch. 3, called "Hamafkid."

Readings for Units 1 and 2

- Portion of Hamafkid
- Resources: Artscroll and Abramson on Hamafkid

Unit 2 – Hamafkid, Pt. 2

Readings for Unit 3

- Kraemer, Ch. 3, pp. 50-71
- *Online*: Abramson article
- Portion of Hamafkid
- Resources: Artscroll and Abramson on Hamafkid

Unit 3 – Hamafkid, Pt. 3

Readings for Unit 4

- Kraemer, Ch. 4
- Strack and Stemberger, "The Babylonian Talmud", pp. 191-224 [34 pp.]
- *Course Pack*: Kalmin, "The Talmudic Sugya" in Katz, ed. *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Vol. 4*, pp. 862-873
- *Online*: Rubenstein, "The Rise of the Babylonian Rabbinic Academy." *JSIJ* 1 (2002) 55-68 [14 pp.] at <http://www.biu.ac.il/js/JSIJ/1-2002/Rubenstein.pdf>
- Portion of Hamafkid
- Resources: Artscroll and Abramson on Hamafkid

Unit 4 – Hamafkid, Pt. 4

Readings for Unit 5

- Kraemer, Ch.5 and 6
- *Online*: Fisch, "Rational Rabbis: Its Project and Argument" at http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/journals/tr/volume4/number2/TR04_02_e01.html [15pp.]
- Portion of Hamafkid
- Resources: Artscroll and Abramson on Hamafkid

Unit 5 – Hamafkid, Pt. 5

Readings for Unit 6

- Portion of Hamafkid
- Resources: Artscroll and Abramson on Hamafkid

Unit 6 – Hamafkid, Pt. 6

Readings for Unit 7

- Portion of Hamafkid
- Resources: Artscroll and Abramson on Hamafkid

Unit 7 – Hamafkid, Pt. 7

Readings for Unit 8

- Portion of Hamafkid
- Resources: Artscroll and Abramson on Hamafkid

Unit 8 – Hamafkid, Pt. 8

EARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this course successfully, the student should be able to:

- describe how the Bavli reached its final form
- explain a standard academic model of the composition of the Babylonian Talmud
- describe the contents and dynamics of thought contained in the part of “HaMafkid” studied in this course

ASSESSMENT:

Grades will be awarded according to quality and quantity of blog participation.

THE 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 academic policies can be found in the MJTI Catalog.

COURSE POLICIES

1. **Preparation.** Each student is expected to be prepared for, and to participate, in the live and online class discussions.
2. **Dishonestly 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 agrees 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 (which can only be granted by the Provost) 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.

STRUCTURED CLASS HOURS

8 hours	Instruction (via course blog and podcast)
24 hours	Preparation of primary texts
16 hours	Asynchronous online discussion
<u>12 hours</u>	250 pages of secondary texts (selections from Kraemer, Abramson, Artsroll, etc.)
<i>60 hours</i>	<i>Total Structured Hours</i>