



MESSIANIC JEWISH THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE

Teaching and living a prophetic vision of Jewish life renewed in Yeshua

H503 – Medieval Judaism

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Blogsite: Orbund – <https://server11.orbund.com>

December 31, 2017– March 4, 2018 (Winter Quarter, 2017-18)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course studies the development of Judaism from the close of the Talmud to the dawn of the modern era. It focuses on the development of Jewish culture and the life of the Jewish community in Christian and Muslim contexts, with special attention given to the classic texts that emerged from this period – biblical commentaries, legal codes, mystical literature, and philosophical treatises.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM

This is a Core Course, required for the Jewish Studies and Rabbinic Studies programs.

RELEVANCE

This course is essential for the continuation of the historical background of the Jewish people. The historical period for this course starts with the close of the Amoraic period and the rise of Islam in the 7th century, and ends in the beginning of the modern period, circa 1700.

PREREQUISITES

None

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This is an online course. The student must have a computer and internet access. Please contact Joyce Klayman, our IT assistant, for technical help at jbklay@gmail.com.

COURSE FORMAT

Posted lectures and asynchronous online delivery and discussion (by discussion threads).

REQUIREMENTS

Reading all materials, submitting assignments on time, full participation in all blog discussions, and satisfactory completion of final examination.

REQUIRED TEXTS (The publication dates indicate the required edition of each text.)

- Cohen, Mark R. *Under Crescent & Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Frank, Daniel & Matt Goldish, eds. *Rabbinic Culture and its Critics: Jewish Authority, Dissent, and Heresy in Medieval and Early Modern Times*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008. (Selections)
- Goldish, Matt. *Sabbatean Prophets*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Lenowitz, Harris. *The Jewish Messiahs*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1998.

- Yuval, Israel Jacob. *Two Nations in Your Womb*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2006

RECOMMENDED READING

- *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*. Edited by Barry W. Holtz. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006. (Selections)
- Brooks, Andree Aelion. *The Woman who Defied Kings: The Life and Times of Dona Gracia Nasi*. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House, 2002.
- Garcia-Arenal & Wieggers, Gerard. *A Man of Three Worlds: Samuel Pallache, a Moroccan Jew in Catholic and Protestant Europe*. Translated by Martin Beagles. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Frydland, Rachmiel, *What the Rabbis Know about the Messiah* (Columbus, Ohio: Messianic Publishing Co. 2011).
- Gerber, Jane S. *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*. New York: The Free Press, 1994.
- Lowenthal, Marvin, trans. *The Memoirs of Gluckel of Hameln*. New York: Schocken Books, 1977.
- Marcus, Jacob Rader. *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook: 315-1791*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Hebrew Union College Press, 1999.
- Modena, Leon. *The Autobiography of a Seventeenth-Century Venetian Rabbi: Leon Modena's Life of Judah*. Translated by Mark Cohen. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Saperstein, Marc, ed. *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History*. New York: New York University Press, 1992.
- Scholem, Gershom. *Sabbatai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah*. Translated by R.J. Zwi Werblowsky. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1973.
- Scholem, Gershom. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

1. Completion of ALL **required readings**. There is approximately 900 pages of reading. That averages out to 20 pages a day, six days a week. You should read as much as you can before the first class. At least you should complete Mark Cohen's book before the first class.
2. Listen to the weekly podcast(s) before answering or entering into the discussion threads for the week. Each week runs from Sunday through Thursday. The instructor will post the lecture and initial questions on Saturday 7:00 pm Pacific time.
3. Regular and timely participation in the discussion threads posted on Orbund is crucial to learning in the course and to your course grade. Keep current and active during discussion times. The discussion threads will remain open for comments until Thursday midnight EST. During this time, you are expected to be robust and current in your posts, with organized thinking and logical presentation. You should listen to the lecture and post as early as Sunday; and continue to post throughout the open blog time.
4. Assignments: Additionally, there will be at least one assignment during the quarter requiring a paper relevant to the topics we are treating and a presentation to be shared with the class.
5. The final examination will be available on Orbund Friday morning, February 23, and is to be submitted on Orbund by 11:55 pm EST Sunday, March 4, 2018.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week #	Topic	Assignment
1- Sunday, December 31	Overview of the Course	Lecture # 1 Cohen (Parts I-III)
2- Sunday, January 7	The Church & the Jew	Lecture # 2 Cohen (Parts IV – V)
3- Sunday, January 14	Under Christianity & Islam	Lecture # 3 Yuval 92-256
4- Sunday, January 21	Spanish Expulsion and Impact	Lecture # 4 Frank & Goldish 273-287
5- Sunday, January 28	Jewish Writings	Lecture # 5 Frank & Goldish 57-81; 83-116 Presentations
6- Sunday, February 4	Jewish Philosophy, Heresy & Mysticism	Lecture #6 Frank & Goldish 117-159; 161-194
7- Sunday, February 11	The “Messiahs”	Lecture # 7 Lenowitz, 61-170 Goldish, Prophets
8- Sunday, February 18	Impact on the Modern Period	Lecture # 8 Frank & Goldish 1-53; 393-407

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Recite a description of the development of Judaism from the close of the Talmud to the dawn of the modern era;
- Analyze the interaction of Judaism with Christianity and Islam during the medieval period;
- Explain the evolution of Jewish mysticism and its impact on the Jewish world of thought;
- Analyze a sampling of medieval writings;
- Assess the impact of the Spanish Expulsion on world Jewry;
- Explain the rise and fall of false messiahs during the medieval/early modern period;
- Identify specific Jews who contributed to the development of Judaism during this period and recite their major contributions.

ASSESSMENT

Grades will be awarded according to the following criteria:

Quality of participation in discussion threads 33 1/3%

Quality of written assignments	33 1/3 %
Quality of final examination	33 1/3 %

THE GRADING SYSTEM

The basic letter grades have the following significance:

- A Exemplary
- B Adequate
- C Passing, but requiring substantial improvement
- P Passing (for use only if the Pass/Fail option is available and selected)
- 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 30 of the MJTI Catalog.

STANDARD MJTI ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

Assessing the Asynchronous Online Discussion

Assessment Criteria for Asynchronous Online discussion.				
<i>Analytical Reflection</i>	<i>Evidence/Support</i>	<i>Interaction</i>	<i>Writing</i>	<i>Total</i>
30%	30%	30%	10%	100%
Demonstrates a serious attempt to grapple with the Unit material. Analysis is reasonable and gives opportunity for interaction. Asks relevant questions.	Supports discussion points with references to assigned readings, logical analysis, and examples. Gives citations (work, page number) for material quoted or paraphrased.	Interacts with the instructor and other students. Discusses agreement or disagreement with classmates' analytical reflections and provide explanation of logic; and/or respond to questions posed in classmates' analytical reflections, and when appropriate, reference assigned readings, logical analysis, and examples.	Writes in clear, concise, and grammatically acceptable terms.	

Assessing Essay and Short Answer questions on Exams

Assessment Criteria for Essays and Short Answers				
	<i>A (exemplary)</i>	<i>B (adequate)</i>	<i>C (passing)</i>	<i>F (failed)</i>
<i>Quality of thought</i>	Fresh or even original	Mostly derivative or clichéd	Fully derivative; clichéd	No evident effort to understand
<i>Engagement with subject</i>	Deeply engaged	Modestly engaged	Superficially Engaged	Disengaged
<i>Organization</i>	Well organized	Somewhat choppy	Poor	Disorganized
<i>Mechanics of writing and documentation</i>	Nearly error-free	Some errors or sloppiness	Many errors and very sloppy	Filled with errors and sloppiness
<i>Argument and support</i>	Well argued and documented	Reasonable clarity and support	Roughly argued and poorly documented	No clearly supported argument or support

STRUCTURED WORK HOURS

10 hours	Lectures
19 hours	Participation in asynchronous online discussion
6 hours	Assignments
10 hours	Final exam (3,000 words)
45 hours	Approximately 900 pages of assigned reading
90 hours	Total structured hours