



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

R502 Early Rabbinic Judaism 2: The Talmud

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March 26–June 4; Spring 2022–2023

Populi (<https://mjti.populiweb.com>)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course builds on R501, exploring the textual and cultural development of Rabbinic Judaism in its two centers: the Land of Israel and Babylonia. The class focuses on the Babylonian Talmud (Bavli) with an introduction to the Jerusalem Talmud, looking at the development, structure, content, and modes of halakhic analysis. The cultural characteristics of the network of rabbis in the Land of Israel and the rabbinic class in Babylonia are also discussed.

RELATIONSHIP TO THE CURRICULUM

This is a Core Course for Master of Jewish Studies and Rabbinic Studies degrees.

RELEVANCE

Students who are familiar with the two Talmuds will be better equipped to reflect deeply on their relationship with Scripture and Jewish tradition, a reflection that is necessary in the development of a knowledgeable and integrated Messianic Jewish world view.

PREREQUISITE

Completion of R501 Early Rabbinic Judaism 1, or permission from the instructor.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This is a live, online course. Students must have a computer and reliable internet access.

COURSE FORMAT

Online webinar and asynchronous online discussion.

REQUIREMENTS

- Full participation in video conferences, online discussion threads, midterm exam, and a final paper.
- Each week I may also assign each student the responsibility of presenting some of the day's assigned reading to the class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic Literature*. Eds. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin S. Jaffee. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. **(Also available for free online at Internet Archive – [ww.archive.org](http://www.archive.org))**
- Rubinstein, Jeffrey L. *The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2003. **(Also available for free online at Internet Archive – [ww.archive.org](http://www.archive.org))**
- Wimpfheimer, Barry Scott. *The Talmud: A Biography*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018.
- Steinsaltz, Adin Even-Israel. *Reference Guide to the Talmud, 2nd ed.* Ed. Joshua Schreier. Jerusalem: Koren Publishers, 2014.
- Steinsaltz, Adin. *The Essential Talmud, 30th Anniv. ed.* New York: Basic Books, 2006.

SUGGESTED TEXTS

- Sachs, David L. and Yitzhak Frank. *The Gemara Card*. Jerusalem: Koren, 2016.
- Strack, H.L. and Gunter Stemberger. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Ed. and Tr. Markus Bockmuehl

ARTICLES PROVIDED BY INSTRUCTOR ON POPULI

- Talmudic texts for each week
- Selections from: Henry Abramson, *Reading the Talmud*. Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2006.
- Robert Goldenberg, “Why You Should Study the Talmud.” MyJewishLearning.com
- Jill Jacobs, “A Tale of Two Talmuds.” MyJewishLearning.com
- Louis Jacobs, “The Editing of the Talmud.” MyJewishLearning.com
- Benay Lappe, “How to Read the Talmud.” MyJewishLearning.com
- Isaac Lichtenstein, “Talmud on Trial” in *The Everlasting Jew*. Marshfield: Vine of David, 2013, 103-119.
- “What is the Talmud?” MyJewishLearning.com

RECOMMENDED READING

- Abramson, Henry. *Reading the Talmud: Developing Independence in Gemara Learning*. Jerusalem: Feldheim, 2006.
- Cohen, Abraham. *Everyman’s Talmud*. New York: Schocken Books, 1995.
- Frieman, Shulamis. *Who’s Who in the Talmud*. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1995.
- Jacobs, Louis. *Studies in Talmudic Logic and Methodology*. London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1961.
- Kaplan, Dovid. *The Ohr Somayach Gemara Companion*. Southfield: Targum Press, 2000.
- Neusner, Jacob. *Learn Talmud*. New York: Behrman House, 1979.

HELPFUL ONLINE RESOURCES

- “Talmud Words and Phrases” - MyJewishLearning.com
- Sefaria (sefaria.org)
- Halakhah.com - Soncino version as webpages and PDF’s

ASSIGNMENT INSTRUCTIONS AND DEADLINES

Classes will be held once a week on Sunday mornings at 10:00 ET. We will meet via Zoom for a live two and a half (2.5) hour interactive webinar.

Full participation in video conferences, online discussion threads, and completion of the assigned readings is expected of each student. I will also occasionally assign each student the responsibility of preparing and presenting some of the day's assigned reading to the class.

A midterm exam will be assigned in Week 4 consisting of a selection of essay questions. There will also be a final paper of approximately 12-15 pages (typed and double spaced). The assignment must be returned no later than **Sunday, June 4th by 11:59pm**.

If you have any questions, please feel free to e-mail me at rebyosh@simchatyisrael.org.

COURSE OUTLINE

Week & Date	Title of Lesson	Required Reading
Week 1 March 26-30	Introduction to Class / What is the Talmud <i>b. Brachot 8b (Broken Tablets)</i> <i>b. Kiddushin 81b (Regrets)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article – “What is the Talmud” • Article - Benay Lappe, “How to Read the Talmud” • Steinsaltz, <i>Ref. Guide</i>, 1-11 • Wimpfheimer, 1-8 • <i>Cambridge Companion</i>, 1-5, 38-57 • Abramson, 1-12 (Provided by instructor)
Week 2 April 2-5	The World of the Talmud(s) <i>b. Pesachim 99b (Passover Seder)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steinsaltz, <i>Ref. Guide</i>, 15-53 • Wimpfheimer, 9-40 • <i>Cambridge Companion</i>, 58-96 • Article - Jill Jacobs, “A Tale of Two Talmuds”
April 6-13 – Pesach Break – No Classes		
Week 3 April 16-20	Structure and Content <i>y. Brachot 2a (Shema)</i> <i>b. Brachot 2a</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article - Robert Goldenberg, “Why You Should Study the Talmud” • Steinsaltz, <i>Ref. Guide</i>, 76-101, 499-501 • Abramson, 12-19 (Provided by instructor) • Wimpfheimer, 64-65 • <i>Cambridge Companion</i>, 17-57
Week 4 April 23-27	Halakhic Concepts / Redaction and Printing MIDTERM EXAM <i>b. Taanit 2a (Prayer for Rain)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article - Louis Jacobs, “The Editing of the Talmud” • Steinsaltz, <i>The Essential Talmud</i>, 78-85, 95-101 • Rubinstein, “Legacy of the Stammaim,” 1-15, 143-162
Week 5 April 30 – May 4	Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steinsaltz, <i>Ref. Guide</i>, 119-133, 143 • Wimpfheimer, 41-99 • <i>Cambridge Companion</i>, 58-96

	<i>b. Bava Metz'ia 59a-b (Aknai's Oven)</i>	
Week 6 May 7-11	<p>Methodology (Part II) and Exegesis</p> <p>SPECIAL GUEST (Mad Women and their Un/Dead Husbands)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>m. Mikvaot 8:4</i> • <i>b. Ketubot 62b</i> • <i>b. Bava Metz'ia 62b</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steinsaltz, <i>Ref. Guide</i>, 211-212, 225-234 • Steinsaltz, <i>The Essential Talmud</i>, 95-101. • Wimpfheimer, 100-160 • <i>Cambridge Companion</i>, 144-197
Week 7 May 14-18	<p>Competition, Criticism and Polemics</p> <p><i>Messianic Selection</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>b. Sanhedrin 9aa (Yehoshua ben Levi)</i> • <i>b. Sanhedrin 98a/b (Leper Messiah)</i> • <i>b. Sukkah 52a (Zech. 12:10)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wimpfheimer, 161-208 • Steinsaltz, <i>The Essential Talmud</i>, 102-106 • Lichtenstein, "Talmud on Trial," 103-119 (Provided by instructor)
Week 8 May 21-25	<p>Exploring Talmud Today / Course Conclusion</p> <p><i>b. Chagigah 14b (Ma'aseh Markavah)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steinsaltz, <i>The Essential Talmud</i>, 290-303 • Wimpfheimer, 209-248

Final exam is due Sunday, June 4th by 11:59pm (your local time).

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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

- Demonstrate a basic familiarity with the Talmud.
- Demonstrate basic familiarity with Talmudic methodology.
- Describe the value of traditional and academic Talmud study.
- Describe the historic contexts of the *Bavli* and the *Yerushalmi*.
- Demonstrate an increased grasp of Rabbinic Hebrew and Aramaic.
- Learn and interact with a Talmudic *sugya* with readily available study aids.

ASSESSMENTS

Grades will be awarded according to the following criteria:

- Attendance, preparation, and participation in class (40%)
- Participation in online discussion threads (10%)
- Midterm exam (20%)
- Final ~3,500-word paper (30%)

GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades and grade point equivalents

A	100-94	C+	79.9-78
A-	93.9-90	C	77.9-75
B+	89.9-87	C-	74.9-70
B	86.9-83	F	Below 69.9
B-	82.9-80		

STANDARD MJTI ASSESSMENT RUBRICS

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.	

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR ESSAYS				
	<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 & support</i>	Well-argued and documented	Reasonable clarity and support	Roughly argued and poorly documented	No clearly supported argument or support

MJTI COURSE POLICIES

1. **Preparation:** Each student is expected to be prepared for and to participate in the 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 an 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 instructor.
3. **Incompletes:** Incompletes will only be granted when the instructor and Academic Dean agree that significant extenuating circumstances have prevented a student from finishing the coursework by the stipulated due date. Extenuating circumstances are major, unplanned, unanticipated, and unavoidable disruptions in one's life or work. To request an incomplete, fill out the form "Request for Grade Incomplete" on the MJTI Webpage (<http://www.mjti.org/forms>). The form will be automatically sent to the Registrar who will request permission from the Instructor and then the Academic Dean for final approval. If the Incomplete grade is granted, the completed coursework is due to the instructor within 8 weeks of the final assignment of that quarter. If the work is not completed within this time, the instructor, based on the amount and quality of the work that has been completed, determines whether a reduced grade or a grade of F is warranted. Further extensions of time, justified by extreme circumstances, are granted only by the Academic Dean.
4. **Leave of Absence/Withdrawal:** MJTI programs are designed to permit students to pursue their studies while managing the many responsibilities they have as adult professionals. MJTI will consider a leave of absence for a student who is experiencing hardships that make effective progress in her/his academic program unusually difficult. Students who, due to unforeseen and serious circumstances (including personal, family emergency, medical, and military service) are unable to take or complete a course during the academic year may submit a Request for a Leave of Absence status to the MJTI Registrar's office. Such status is granted at the sole discretion of the Academic Dean.

Students desiring to drop or withdraw from courses after registering may do so by submitting a Change of Course Status form to the Registrar. If the course is dropped before the quarter begins, the only financial penalty charged is a \$30.00 drop/withdrawal fee. If the change is requested after the quarter begins, the student will be refunded according to the refund policy stated on page 28 of the current catalog. Non-attendance does not constitute official withdrawal. A student who begins a course and does not officially withdraw will receive the grade earned for the entire course, which will usually be a failing grade. MJTI does not accept unofficial withdrawals from a class. A student who officially withdraws from a class will receive a W on their transcript.

5. **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.

6. **Late Assignments:** Each day or part of a day an assignment is late the grade is to be reduced by 10%. An instructor may adjust this policy to be lenient with a student when their situation warrants being handled with grace.
7. **Change of Student Status:** A student who has registered to take a course for credit may switch to the status of auditor up to, and including, the last day of the fourth week of class by submitting a Change of Status request form to the Registrar (<http://www.mjti.org/forms>). The tuition differential will only be refunded if the request form is received by the end of the fourth week of the course.
8. **Discussion privacy:** The course discussion is accessible only to those registered for the class through Populi. To ensure a positive forum for course interaction, students are asked to refrain from excerpting lessons or thread discussions from the course in any format. This will enable the cultivation of a safe and honest forum for dialogue.
9. **Instructors and Email:** Regardless of the course format, instructors shall be available during the course week for private contact from students via email. Instructors are required to respond within 24 hours of receipt (Sunday – Thursday) of student inquiries made via email. These guidelines apply both to an email from students and to student questions asked of the instructor in asynchronous discussion.
10. **Questions:** If you have any questions regarding assignments, feel free to e-mail them to the instructor at rebyosh@simchatyisrael.org.