

SYLLABUS

HEBREW COLLEGE Fall, 2010

Cantillation 1: Theory and Practice of Torah Cantillation CANTR529

Prof. Joshua Jacobson jjacobson@hebrewcollege.edu

The class meets Tuesdays, 11:15 a.m.–1:15 p.m. in room 102-103: September 21, October 5, 12, 19, 26, November 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, December 7, 14, 21, January 11..

Optional lab section: Thursday, 4:30–6:30 p.m. in room 108. All students are strongly encouraged to attend.

Students analyze the punctuation system underlying the chanting of the Hebrew Bible. Students are instructed in the syntactic parsing and correct contemporary pronunciation of biblical Hebrew, and learn a traditional Ashkenazic mode for the public cantillation of the Pentateuch. Prerequisite: Hebrew 4. While this course is primarily for cantorial and rabbinical students, others are welcome, provided they have an adequate sense of musical pitch and the ability to read and translate biblical Hebrew. Topics to be covered include: history of cantillation, halakhot and minhagim, syntactic analysis of biblical Hebrew, expert-level pronunciation of biblical Hebrew, expert-level performance of the standard and exceptional melodies for Ashkenazic Torah cantillation, pedagogy of cantillation.

Required Textbook:

Jacobson, Joshua. *Chanting the Hebrew Bible*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2002.

Students should bring a Koren edition of the Torah (the Shabbat Humash is recommended) to each class.

Students should also bring the textbook to class each week (even though it's so heavy).

Recommended books:

Jacobson, Joshua. *Chanting the Hebrew Bible: The Student Edition*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2005.

Tikkun Simanim (Get the newest and largest edition.)

You can buy textbooks at a good price through an online bookseller, such as amazon.com.

Grade will be based on:

- Class participation, weekly recitals and assignments
- A written final exam.
- Individual oral final exams (by appointment):
 - Students are expected to perform smoothly and confidently, demonstrating mastery of formal pronunciation, appropriate phrasing of conjunctives and disjunctives, expressive reading, and a deep understanding of the text.
 - Each student will prepare to cantillate his/her assigned aliyah of a Torah portion. The first three verses (only) will be read from the unpunctuated column of a tikkun.
 - Each student will chant (with 10 minutes preparation) several verses of Torah.
 - Each Cantorial student will chant verses demonstrating mastery of the various manifestations of the “Shirat Ha-yam” melody, as well as the procedures for chanting on a fast day, Simhat Torah, the Shabbat before Tish’a Be’av, the ending of an aliyah, and concluding each of the five “books” of the Torah.