LITURGY THE HIGH HOLIDAYS
CG-LITGY 593 HEBREW COLLEGE
Spring 2014

(Subject to revision)

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Course Description
We will study many of the distinctive passages of the synagogue liturgies for Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom Kippur. The majority of these appear within the Amidah, and we will consider their historical development, theological message, and ritual function. We will also look at liturgical units that appear outside of the Amidah, such as Kol Nidrei. Every passage we study will be analyzed as liturgical literature, looking at poetics, structure, and theme. We will also explore how piyutim expand the standard liturgical format for this holiday period.

Additionally and most importantly, we will work on using this literature as a worship tool and guiding congregants through the words. We will explore how the Mahzor’s ideas and imagery are in tension with our own metaphysical ideas and imagery. I hope that, by studying these texts closely, you will grow to appreciate them as maps through the spiritual journey of the Yamim Nora’im. I intend for this class to be a workshop for your eventual professional roles.

My goals are the following:
- you will gain command of the content, organization, and themes of the Mahzor so that you can communicate these to others;
- you will acquire a basic grasp of the historical development of the Mahzor so that you can address someone’s questions;
- you will reflect on the meaning of this liturgy;
- you will understand how the High Holiday liturgy varies from the rest of the year;
- you will become acquainted with the important secondary literature so that you have future resources.

Required Text – bring to every class:

Required Readings are drawn from (all should be on library Reserve):
Selected articles according to syllabus.
Recommended texts
Daniel Goldschmidt. *Mahzor le-yamim nora'im*. (2 vols.)
Rudolph Adler, "The Rabbinic Development of Rosh Hashannah," *CJ* 41:2
(Winter 1988-89).
Lawrence Hoffman, ed. *All These Vows.*
Dov Elkins, ed., *Yom Kippur Readings.* (Jewish Lights, 2005.)
*Gates of Repentance: The New Union Prayerbook for the Days of Awe.* (CCAR, 1978.)
Lawrence Hoffman. *Gates of Understanding 2: Appreciating the Days of Awe.* (CCAR, 1984.)
*The New Mahzor (Mahzor Hadash).* (Prayer Book Press, revised, 1978.)
*Mahzor Lev Shalem: Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*. (RA, 2010.)
*Yom Kippur Mahzor*; with commentary adapted from the teachings of Joseph Soloveitchik; ed. Arnold Lustiger. (K’hal, 2006.)

Course requirements (I reserve the right to change these):
1. Students are expected to attend all classes, read the assigned texts before class, and be prepared to report orally on the readings. Students are expected to participate in the oral reviews at the beginning of each class session. (10%)

2. One very short (1-2 pp.) written assignment. (10%)

3. Six outlines of designated sections of the service. (10%)

4. Seven (out of nine possible) written assignments (3-4 pp.; reflective essays, bulletin articles, lesson plans, or divrei Torah) that integrate your study of the liturgy with practical application or spiritual meaning. These must summarize and synthesize your knowledge of the facts of the material (from lectures and readings) while grappling with how you or your congregants/students experience a given piece of liturgy. These are due at the beginning of class on the dates announced. Late papers will be marked down accordingly. Spelling and clarity affect the grade. (70%)

No request for the grade of Incomplete will be granted except in the event of death in the student's immediate family, student's own hospitalization, or catastrophe.
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I. Additions to the b'rakhot of the Amidah that otherwise do not change.
   A. Write (for example): How would you explain, justify, preach, or teach these texts in the thematic context of the holidays? Or, how does the musical nusah amplify the meaning of these inserts (or not), and how would you explain that to a lay audience?

II. K'dushat ha-Yom.
   A. Read: Cohen 44-46.

   B. Outline: the 4th b'rakhah Shaharit yahid for both Rosh Hashannah (387-391) and Yom Kippur (593-597), noting shifts in mood and theme within the b’rakha. For extra benefit, compare the same to Shabbat and the Shalosh R'galim.

   C. Outline:
      1. the 4th b'rakhah RH Musaf yahid (519-531; designate as a ‘lump’ the Malkhuyot material, pp. 525 (bottom; Alenu) – 531 (top-middle; A’va);
      2. YK Musaf yahid (781-787) For extra benefit, compare to Musaf Shalosh R'galim.
      3. How does Shaharit compare to Musaf?

   D. Write (for example): How might you guide a congregant on his/her “experience” of the 4th b’rakha? Be sure to contextualize your comments within its content and historical development.

III. T'ki'ata (RH Musaf).
   A. Read: Cohen, 39-42, 93-100; Hammer 76-85.

   B. Outline: RH Musaf 3d - 6th b'rakhot yahid (519-543), noting themes and shifts in mood.
      Be sure to outline the previously lumped Malkhuyot material in the 4th b’rakha, noting its sections and biblical verses, etc.)
      Note the theme(s) of the material added to the 3d b'rakha. How do these ideas relate to the T’ki’ata?

   C. Write (for example): What language and imagery in each b'rakhah should a worshipper focus on? Do you agree with the theological assumptions of the T’ki’ata and, if not, how does that affect your experience of the RH Musaf? You might want to respond to some of the reading. Or, compare the presentation of this section in another Mahzor, asking if one version fosters a better or more honest worship experience, and why. Compare the traditional T’ki’ata to that in any Reform or Reconstructionist Mahzor. Or, explain how musical settings convey
the message of the liturgy.

IV. Avodah.
   A. Read and outline: 4th b’rakhah of **YK Musaf hazarah**, from *Atah bahartanu* through the end of the *Ashrei Ayin* piyyut (867-901). Note the various themes, and where thematic shifts occur, within the piyyut especially. (NB: The fourth b’rakhah hasn’t ended yet!)

   B. Read: Lev 16; Mishnah Yoma (English is okay) in Mahzor 262-438; Hammer 156-162; Swartz article (online).

   Why do we recite the Avodah? How does the depiction of the priesthood and the Temple evolve from Leviticus, to the Mishnah, and then to the piyyut?

   C. Write (for example): How do you experience this section, or how would you guide your congregants in their experiences, while being factual about content and historical development. Or use a comparative approach, e.g.: Cf. this section in the Harlow Mahzor; address issues of translation and placement. Or think about how Reform has handled the Avodah; *GOU* 130-146, making references to *GOR*. Explain which version you prefer and why. Or explain how the music ‘works’ for this section – what should a worshipper notice?

V. S'lihot.
   A. Outline:
      1. in Musaf, from end of the Avodah to the beginning of the Vidu’i (907-947);

      2. in Ma'ariv, from after the Amidah to the Vidu'i (125-165).

      Note themes, moods, and repetitive language by focusing on shorashim; note also changes in type of literature, e.g., prose to poetry.

   B. Read: Ex 34:4-12; Cohen 225-241.

   C. Write: How do the theological assumptions herein affect your experience of reciting (or leading) this material? Or, address the theological assumptions head-on, considering if you agree with it, and ask if that affects your experience of “davvening” this material. Or compare the traditional Martyrology to Harlow 554-568; consider which you prefer as a worshipper, and then consider whether one “davvens” the Martyrology. Or more basically, how do all the different pieces relate to one another? To the b’rakhah in which they occur? Or explain how the music interprets this material.

VI. Vidu'i.
   A. Outline the following (maybe as a chart), noting what units appear in all 3 places, what gets added, omitted, etc.:
2. Musaf Hazarah 949-967; distinguish among confession, s’lihot, and verses; observe how Vidu’i blends into the conclusion of the b’rakhah.

3. Ma’ariv 165-193; distinguish among confession, s’lihot, and verses.

B. Read: Cohen 155-163.

C. Write: Reflect on the experience of “davvening” a prescribed, repetitive confession by rote and with community, considering how you would guide others in this experience. Or compare the same unit – the content and translation -- in different Mahzors. Or address the music, and/or mumbling vs. sing-along settings.

VII. Minhah and Ne’ilah of Yom Kippur.
A. Read: Cohen 255-266.

B. Outline:
   1. **broadly** the main sections of Minhah and Ne’ilah; e.g., Ashrei, Torah Reading, Amidah, etc. Note what deviates from the usual pattern.

   2. the Vidu’i of each service (both yahid and the hazarah; do the Vidu’i only, but you’ll have four outlines!). Pay special attention to these Vidu’is: note differences; be more detailed with the new and/or unique material.

C. Write: How does the liturgy vary for Ne’ilah? Reflect on its unique theological message. Or what happens musically in YK Minhah and/or Ne’ilah?

VIII. Kol Nidrei.
A. Read:
   1. Mahzor, from Birkat ha-Talit to Birkat Sheheheyanu;
   2. Gershon, 117-139, or Dalia Marx in Hoffman, All These Vows, 26-30; Cohen, 139-140; Diamond in All These Vows, 73-79.

B. Write: With the secondary reading in mind, how do you make sense of the Kol Nidrei liturgy? Or, to what extent does the content play a role, as opposed to the music and ambience? How would you honestly guide a layperson through KN?

IX. K'dushta'ot: U-netaneh Tokef.
A. Read:
   1. Mahzor, RH Musaf hazarah, 3d b'rakhah, from U-vekhen u-lekhah ta'aleh kedushah, ki atah eloheinu melekh (after Melekh elyon piyyut) to the beginning of the Kedushah of the 3d b'rakhah (565-575);
   2. “Penitence, Prayer and (Charity?)”, by Menahem Schmelzer, in Minhah le-Nahum, ed. Marc Brettler. (What’s the main point?)

B. Write: an essay, d’var, etc. as usual. Incorporate the main point of Schmelzer's article. (Don’t get bogged down in the detail of the argument!) How
does it alter your understanding of the U’netaneh Tokef? Does it make you rethink the music’s meaning?

X. Hazkarat N’shamot.
A. Read: Yizkor service in the Mahzor; Cohen 42-82.

B. Write: Critique one Mahzor’s selections, including the English material. Or compare the material in another Mahzor (the Harlow Mahzor is especially interesting); or discuss GOU2 146-149, making references to GOR.