Introducing the Instructor
Welcome! My name is David Frankel and I will be leading you through this introductory course on the Parshanut (exegesis) of Rashi on the Torah. I live in Jerusalem with my wife and family. I received my Ph. D. in Bible from the Hebrew University and my ordination as Rabbi from the Schechter Seminary of Jewish Studies. I teach Bible and Jewish Thought to rabbinical students and Master students at Schechter, and on-line Bible courses at the Hebrew College.

How the course works
Each week (approx.) will constitute a study “unit.” I will post an introduction to each of these units and they will usually include a reading, and always include a specific study “assignment” with questions to be answered. You will be given three days to work on the assignment on your own and/or with your Chavruta (study partner). Following that time you will be expected to begin posting your answers to the assignment questions. I will be responding on-line to your answers and comments with further comments and questions of my own. You will also be expected to look at each other’s posts and my posts, and comment on them so that we engage in a real on-line dialogue. At the end of the seven-day period (approx.; exact dates of the beginnings and endings of the units will be posted) the unit will be closed, and no more posts will be accepted. At that point, the next unit will begin and the new assignment will be posted.

Be sure to keep track of the time framework so that you don’t miss the deadlines for submitting assignments.

In addition to the weekly written assignments, there will be two independent written assignments. These will be graded. The first one will be given in the middle of the semester, and will be relatively short (two to three pages). The second one will be a longer written assignment (about 8-10 pages) that will be given toward the end of the course to be handed in by the end of the course (exact dates will be posted). 50 % of your grade will be based upon your participation in the course via the postings and your weekly chavruta meetings. The other fifty percent of your grade will be based upon the two papers.

Weekly Chavruta Meetings – Each of the participants in the course is expected to find a chavruta (study partner) for the course. You are to meet once a week on google plus, where you have to open an account (find via google). You are expected to meet for about an hour to work on the weekly assignment. I will be joining each of those meetings for the first ten or so minutes to get you started and to answer questions. You will have to invite your chavruta and me to join you in a “hangout.” Before that, the people you meet
in a “hangout” have to be included in your “circles”. I will contact each of you and include you in my circles and then you can include me in yours. Hopefully, you will be able to figure it all out when you look at the site, explore and experiment. If not, you may have to seek out help with the people at Hebrew College. My own expertise in this area is rather limited. Since I live in Jerusalem, we will have to coordinate our meetings carefully as far as time is concerned. Usually, I should be seven hours ahead of Eastern time. We should make every effort to stick to set times on a set day, though life inevitably gets in the way.

**Book Requirements!!!**
Most of our studying of Rashi will focus on Bereshit (Genesis), though we will sometimes look at Rashi on the other books of the Torah. At the very least, you must acquire a Chumash Bereshit with Rashi. You must also have a full Tanach (preferably Hebrew and English) with you each time we study, as we will be referring to the Tanach as much as to Rashi. Better than a Chumash Bereshit with only Rashi would be a Mikraot Gedolot on Bereshit, which includes not only Rashi, but Ibn Ezra, Rashbam, Ramban and others. Make sure that your Chumash Bereshit has Rashi with the old Rashi script and not the regular script. It is essential that you learn how to read this script, if you do not already know it, as so much of Jewish literature is written in this script, and it is quite easy to learn. All other texts that we will be studying will be scanned and uploaded for you.

I would like you all to make every effort to work on Rashi using the Hebrew text alone. For difficult Aramaic words you can turn to the Dictionary of Marcus Jastrow which is on-line at [http://www.tyndalearchive.com/TABS/Jastrow/index.htm](http://www.tyndalearchive.com/TABS/Jastrow/index.htm). However, you should know that several English translations to Rashi do exist, and you may turn to them for help if you get stuck. An on-line translation is available at chabad.org. There is also the Artscroll-Stone version and the Silverman version.
Syllabus: **Selected Readings in Rashi on the Torah**

David Frankel, instructor  
CG-BIBLE-565  
Fall 2013-2014

1. Introductory Topics  
   a. What elicits biblical exegesis? (Sept. 16—30)  
   b. Where on the page of the *Mikraot Gedolot* can exegesis be found? (Oct. 1—7)  
   c. Inner biblical exegesis (Oct. 8—14)  
   d. The Modes and Assumptions of Rabbinic exegesis (Oct. 15—21)

2. Rashi on the Torah  
   A. *Peshuto Shel Mikra* versus *Derash* in Rashi’s Torah Commentary (Two weeks: Oct. 22—28; 29—Nov. 4)  
   B. Rashi and Rashbam: Similarities and Differences (Two weeks: Nov. 5—11; 12—18)  
   C. Jewish – Christian Polemics in Rashi and Other Commentators (Two weeks: Nov. 19—Dec. 3; Dec. 4—10)  
   D. Theological, Ethical and Social Concerns in Rashi’s Commentary (Dec. 11—17)

**Bibliography**

Shai Cherry, Torah Through Time: Understanding Bible Commentary from the Rabbinic Period to Modern Times, Phil. 2007, 7—39.  