Theology of the Jewish Year  
RB-JTHT-230  
Fall 2015-2016  
5775-5776  
Shanah Bet

Thursday, 11:30 am-1:00 pm

Instructor:  
Rabbi Or N. Rose  
617-559-8636  
orose@hebrewcollege.edu

Course Description:  
This course is designed to provide students with a context for in-depth reflection on the  
thetical motifs imbedded in, and emerging from, the various rituals and customs of the  
annual Jewish liturgical calendar. We will situate this discussion within a broader exploration  
of the nature of time in various Jewish theological sources. Our studies will be dedicated to  
the examination of 4 major topics: (1) Day & Night, (2) Shabbat, (3) Hanukkah & Purim,  
and (4) the Shalosh Regalim. We will analyze a variety of classical and modern Jewish texts  
and other cultural creations as well as relevant materials from other religious and secular  
traditions.

Required Books:  
-Michael Fishbane, Sacred Attunement  
-Irving Greenberg, The Jewish Way  
-Arthur Waskow, Seasons of Our Joy

Please also bring a Hebrew/English Tanakh and a siddur to all class meetings.  

*All other sources will be posted on Schoology and/or distributed in class.

Class Requirements:  
- Regular class Preparation, Attendance, and Participation  
- Weekly Online Havruta Exchanges  
- D’var Torah (instructions below)  
- Lesson Plan (final assignment; instructions below)

Class Meetings (11 total):  
- September 10, 24 / October 8, 15, 22, 29 / November 5, 19/ December 3, 10, 17
-Class Schedule & Assignments-

**Introductory Readings**


**UNIT I: Night & Day**

- Nehemia Polen, “Jacob’s Remedy: A Prayer for the Dislocated [A teaching from the *Sefat Emet, Va’Yetzei*],” *Jewish Mysticism & the Spiritual Life*, pp. 201-208


- “Prayer Before Dawn,” *Tzava’at Ha’Rivash* #16, translated by Or N. Rose & Ebn Leader in *God in All Moments*, p. 22-23


- “Why is the Afternoon Prayer Called Minhah?” *Kedushat Levi, Hayei Sarah*, translated by Or N. Rose

- *Hashkiveinu*, selected commentaries from *My People’s Prayer Book*

**UNIT II: SHABBAT**

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, selections from *The Sabbath* included in *Between Man and God*, pp. 214-229 (+ notes)


- “A Well in the Field,” Va-Yetzei, Sefat Emet, translated by Arthur Green, The Language of Truth, p. 44

- Traditional Friday Night Kiddush (My People’s Prayer Book)

- Marcia Falk, Friday Night Kiddush and Related Blessings, The Book of Blessings

- Traditional & Alternative Versions of Havdalah (My People’s Prayer Book and Siddur Kol Ha’Neshamah [Reconstructionist])

**UNIT III: SHALOSH REGALIM**

- **Pesach:**

  
  
  - Selections from the “Maggid” section of the Haggadah (My People’s Prayer Book)
  
  - Selections from The Women’s Seder Sourcebook, edited by Sharon Cohen Anisfeld, Tara Mohr, and Catherine Spector
  

- **Shavuot:**

  
  - Arthur Waskow, “Trek through Anxiety & Hope—Counting the Omer” and “Peak Experience—Shavuot,” Seasons of Our Joy, pp. 165-183, 185-203
  
  - “Black Fire on White Fire,” Kedushat Levi, Shavuot, translated by Or N. Rose in Speaking Torah: Spiritual Teachings from Around the Maggid’s Table, Volume II, pp. 219-220
  
  

- **Sukkot:**

  - Irving Greenberg, “Journey to Liberation: Sukkot,” The Jewish Way, pp. 94-118
  
  
  - Jonathan Wittenberg, “From Yom Kippur to Sukkot,” The Eternal Journey, pp. 81-83

-“Houses & Booths,” Mei Ha’Shiloah, Section II, Va’Yishlah
-Contemporary Ushpizin customs (Ritual Well, My Jewish Learning, AJWS, Hazon, etc.)

-Parker Palmer, “Autumn,” The Fetzer Institute

---

D’var Torah—Guidelines

Please write a d’var Torah (750 words) reflecting on one of the Jewish holidays. Please submit a written draft to me electronically the day before class (Wednesday, 6pm). You will then present a version of your work orally to the class the following day—8-10 minutes. We will create a roster of presenters during our first session.

Your presentation should include the following elements:

- One biblical source
- One pre-modern Jewish source (Rabbinics through Hasidism)
- One modern or contemporary source (Jewish or non-Jewish)

Questions to consider as you write your d’var Torah:

- Whom are you addressing?
- Why do you care about this issue?
- Why should your reader care about this issue?
- What is one major idea or question you want the reader to recall after reading or hearing your piece?

---

Final Assignment—Guidelines

Please prepare a lesson plan for adult learners in a synagogue or other communal setting on one Jewish holiday or observance that we did not explore in this course. The session you are designing is 90-minutes and has 20 participants from different walks of Jewish and interfaith life. In preparing your lesson plan, please include the following elements:

- Title
- Goals (2-4)
- Introduction
- Session Elements (examples: havruta study-30 minutes; film clips-10 minutes; group discussion-20 minutes; journaling-15 minutes; etc.)
- Textual and other sources
- Guiding Questions (3-5)
- Conclusion
- For Further Exploration (resources for your students)

Length: 2,000 words (maximum); Due: December 28, 2015