Note: Please bring a complete Tanakh to every class, including the first. You should also have a Torat Hayyim edition of Vayikra, and a Jewish Study Bible (ed. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler, Oxford University Press, 2004).

In addition, we will be reading the following three books intensively and you should consider purchasing them:

- Ellen F. Davis, Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible, Foreword by Wendell Berry (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

In addition to class requirements from first semester including final paper, you will be asked to give an oral presentation summarizing a secondary reading—for example, a chapter from one of the above books—and lead class discussion on it.

#1. Introduction: Reprising themes from first semester. [Parashat Tzav] Disposition of Sacrifice; Priestly Perquisites Disposition of Olah: Lev. 6:1-6, the deshen (residue) [Sefat Emet on terumat ha-deshen.] Disposition of Minhah: Lev. 6:7-11. The azkarah: Lev. 6:5 [cf. 24: 5-9]; the meaning and significance of noteret. Key terms: hiktir, saraf, akhal. Disposition of hattat: Lev. 6:17-23. Disposition of Shelamim: Lev. 7:11-18; note, in v. 18, the importance of eating the meat in the proper time frame. Cf. Lev. 19:5-8; 22:29-30; Ex. 12:10. In what case is the hide not given as a perquisite (“perk”) to the priest? What does this mean? What is the significance of 6:23 “But no hattat may be eaten from which any blood is brought into the Tent of Meeting ...”? Lev. 7:28-34. Verse 30: Yadav tevi’enah: ‘His [=the Israelite’s] own hands shall bring the fire-offerings of the Eternal’ Significance of the waving. The importance of the sense of touch, the tactile, in Vayikra’s embodied theology. [intimacy by proxy: business cards in the far East]

priests as “sacred vessels” to the anthropocentric view: priests as representatives of the people and as individuals in their own right—individuals who will need to go deeper to seek their own atonement…. Recall Lev 1—the emergence of individuated agents out of communal space. Recall also the introduction of the incense altar following the section on the ordination of the priests in Exodus, suggesting that only after the corporate nature of the Tabernacle is established do we now begin the development of priests as individuals]

#2. The eighth day of consecration. How do the rites of this day differ from those of the previous seven days? What surprises us about Lev. 9:1?
The Priestly Blessing. Why do Moses and Aaron enter the Ohel Mo’ed?

#4. Animals and humans; domestication. Kashrut. [Jared Diamond Guns, Germs & Steel; Michael Pollan, Omnivore’s Dilemma; Jonathan Safran Foer, Eating Animals]

#5. Tume’ah and taharah as Sanctuary-mindfulness. Reading: Ramban on Lev. 11:8, s.v. uve-nivlatam lo tiga’u.—the command is a call to awareness, to mindfulness. Compare Hanna Liss, “Ritual Purity and the Construction of Identity,” in The Books of Leviticus and Numbers, edited by Thomas Romer (Leuven, 2008), pp. 329-354.

# 6. Tzara’at and boundaries: somatic, sartorial, social
Reading: Sefat Emet on Lev. 13:2. No’am Elimelekh on Adam ki yihiyeh be-or besoro se’et o sapahat o bahevet…--positive traits inhibited by stereotyped patterns ingrained in childhood; on zot tihiyeh torat ha-metzora-- the baal teshuvah uplifts the prayers of the zaddik

#5. The meaning of Yom Kippur. Lev. 16. The hidden and manifest Glory. Penetrating the inner sanctum, the ultimate repository and reservoir of Divine Purity. Tume’ah as “implication/entanglement” Rabbi David Pardo, Maskil le-David on Lev. 16: 16; God wants to be implicated in Israel, just as Israel wants to rise to purity and holiness.
→The pattern of dovetailing—notice how 16:6 prepares for 16:11, while 16:9 prepares for 16:15. Meanwhile, 16:7,8&10 prepare for 16:20b, 21 & 22. What does this dovetailing accomplish? [contrast the lack of dovetailing—that is, the discrete completion of each stage—in the inauguration rites at Lev 9]
→Sa’ir la-Azazel—Ramban on Lev 16:8, 16:21—s.v. ve-natan otam al rosh ha-sa’ir.
Note how 16:7 & 16:10 support Ramban’s view that even the sair la-azalel is an offering (not a sacrifice) to God—yo’omad chai lifnei Hashem le-khaper alav…; God is present (even) in the sending-out-of-the-camp…

Reading: Bonna Devorah Haberman, “The Yom Kippur Avodah within the Female Enclosure.”

#6. Blood: Lev. 17: 11—“Ki nefesh ha-basar ba-dam hi…ki ha-dam hu, ba-nefesh yekhaper”
Blood as essence of life; killing animals is shedding blood Lev. 17:11-14; cf. Deut. 12:27
• the meaning of Lev. 19: 26—“Do not eat upon the blood, you shall not indulge in sorcery or divination”—compare 1Samuel 14:32—33. A divinatory practice?
• →Compare II Samuel 23:14-17. Why does David not wish to drink the water? What does he do instead?
Assignment: Ramban on Lev 17:11-12, s.v. “Ki nefesh ha-basar....” Note Nahmanides’ view of intimate proximity of animal and human life. Cf. Anne Fadiman, Spirit Catches You, p. 107: “The souls of sacrificed animals are precious and vitally connected to human souls. Animals are not considered to be as far removed from the human species as they are in our world view.” (quoting Dwight Conquergood)
Ramban on Lev. 18:4, s.v. et mishpotai ta’asu—the mitzvot give life—in accord with your understanding of ‘life’.


Assignment: Ramban on Lev 19:2, s.v. Kedoshim tiheyu.

#7. The sacred calendar of Lev. 23; comparison to other calendars, e.g. Num. 28 and Deut. 16. The role of Shabbat in the festival cycle. Why the double beginning (23:2, 4) and the double ending (23:37, 44)?

#8. Lev. 24:13-23—the Nokev Shem. Why placed at this point? Compare to Ex. 2:11—Va-yigdal Moshe va-yetze el ehad…. Ex. 18:7—Va-ierge Moshe likrat hotno…. Va-yomer Yitro ‘Barukh ha-Shem…’ Ex. 21:22-27 (ayin tahat ayin)—what similarities and differences do you see? Note that ‘mum’ ‘blemish’ is a disqualification for sacred service—compare to Lev. 21:21—kol ish asher bo mum….lo yigash le-hakriv…et lehem Elo-hav…. Name theology in Vayikra: The meaning of Kiddush ha-Shem and Hillul ha-Shem. Swearing falsely with God’s Name as Hillul ha-Shem—Lev 19:12; Priestly holiness as safeguarding the sanctity of the Name: Lev 21:6. A priest bearing tume’ah approaching the sancta desecrates the Name: Lev 22:2 Uttering (nokev)the Name: Lev 24:11, 16

Compare Ex 33:17 va-eida-akha be-Shem; Lev 20: ki mi-zar’o natan la-molekh,le-ma’an tame’ et mikdash, u-le-hallel et Shem kodshi [note ‘Panai’]

Lev 22:32 Ve-lo tehalleu et Shem kodshi/ve-nikdashsi be-toh Bnei Yisrael

Compare Malachi 1: 6-7 …ha-konim bozei Shemi….Magishim al mizbehi lehem me-go’al…

“ve-natai Panai …” is applied only in three circumstances: Lev 17:10—one who eats blood (attempting to internalize life-spirit as practice of power); Lev 20:3, 5—one who “gives of his seed” to Molech——commiting idolatry, murder, destroying seed; Lev 20:6—Turning to Ovot, Yidonim—internalization of the ghost for visitation with the dead, divination. cf. Lev 26:17---misuse of land and its sacred personhood …..

Lev 24: 16, 22--One law for the ger and the ezrah

#9. Sabbatical year and Jubilee. The land as living person.

Compare Jer. 16:7-8; Hosea 14: 6-8; Joel 4:18; Amos 9:13-15; Psalms 65: 8-14; Ps 104.


Christian views of sacrifice. Epistle to the Hebrews: critique of the Aaronide priesthood as itself in need of atonement, and of Jewish sacrifice as perennial process vs. once-and-for-all redemptive event (ch. 7).


The notions of mattir; piggul. Mishnah Zevahim 4:6; lishmah, shelo-lishmah. (Cf. Rashi on Lev. 7:18 and 19:5-8.)

Mishnah Zevahim 1:1-4; Mishnah Zevahim 2:2-5. The four critical parts of the blood rite. The correspondence to the four stages of the meal offering. Menahot Ch. 1; Ch. 13:11.

The linkage of mattir and piggul: Zevahim 4:1-4. Piggul is possible only when there is no other essential flaw in the sacrifice. It is the taking of sacred energy--that which could have, would have, should have been kodesh--and
perverting it, reversing its direction but not its power. This is *piggul*. That which could not have been holy cannot be *piggul*. *Zevahim* 3:6—thoughts which do not cause *piggul*.


#12. The Book of Leviticus in Aggadic Thought. The primacy of ethics in Midrash. Selected texts from *Vayikra Rabbah* Recommended edition: Mordecai Margoliot (Jerusalem 5732 [1972]). Midrash Tanhuma. Substitutes for sacrifice in Rabbinc Judaism: Study, prayer and deeds of lovingkindness. Avot de-Rabbi Natan 4 (“We have an atonement like the Temple sacrifices...”); “Whoever engages in study of the laws of Olah... (Menahot 110a)”; “daily prayers (Tefillot) were instituted in correspondence with the Tamid offerings” (Berakhot 26b) The development of the synagogue and bet midrash.


Ramban (Nahmanides), *Torah Commentary* Introduction to Exodus —the climax of the Redemption is the making of the Tabernacle and the dwelling of the Shekhina there—this is homecoming. Commentary to Ex. 25:1 (pp. 434-437)—“the main purpose of the Tabernacle was to contain a place in which the the Divine Glory rests, this being the ark...”

Introduction to Leviticus (pp. 3-5); Introduction to Numbers (pp. 3-4)

R. Bahya ben Asher, *Torah Commentary* to Ex. 25:7 (ed. Chavel [Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1981], vol. 2: 266-7—the significance of the fifteen items listed for contribution to the Mishkan; Commentary on Lev. 1:9 (vol. 2 pp. 399-403)—the meaning of *olah re’ah niho’ah*.

Sacrifice and Sanctuary in Zohar.

Reading: Isaiah Tishby, *The Wisdom of the Zohar* I: 319-322 (“The Unification of the Sefirot through the Mystery of the Light of the Lamp”)


Ani & ayin: personal, collective, transpersonal identity.

*Rosh Hashanah*, s.v. “Inyan ha-prishah le-kohen ha-gadol” (I:367a-369a)

“One & one....One & seven”: meditative awareness of continual creation.


R. Jacob Leiner, *Sefer Bet Ya’akov al Sefer Va-Yikra*. (selections)

Sacrifice and Sanctuary in contemporary Jewish Thought. Summary and review. Tracking the influence of Leviticus and Deuteronomy in various periods. Can you point to “Priestly” and “Deuteronomic” postures in the medieval period? In today’s world?
Bibliography

Anderson, Gary. "Sacrifice and Sacrificial Offering", in Anchor Bible Dictionary volume 5, cols. 870-875, 882-886
Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard. The Savage in Judaism, pp. 134-140
Knohl, Israel. The Sanctuary of Silence (Augsburg Fortress, 1995).
Milgrom, Jacob (trans.). Leviticus. The Anchor Bible.
_____.. Numbers. Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary.
Wright, David. “Uncleanness, OT”—in Anchor Bible Dictionary

Additional Readings

Animals and Humans
Biblical Cosmology/Jewish Biblical Theology


Priestly Worldview


Death of Nadav and Avihu—Torah’s Midpoint ("darosh darash")—Moses and Aaron


*Hattat* and other Sacrifices


Blood, Circumcision, and Covenant


Tzipporah, Moses, and the “Bridegroom of Blood”


Sacred Space and Sanctuary


Land Alive: Leviticus and Ecological Consciousness


Second Temple, Purity, and Sacrifice


Sacrifice: A Comparative Perspective


*Vayikra* and the Structure of Torah;
*Vayikra* in Canonical Perspective


[semihah as ‘pre-sanctification’ of the animal; press of the five-fingered Hand to transmit the Spirit]