

Introduction to Judaism 5784 (2023-2024) - Syllabus

This course will present an overview of major aspects of Judaism, including practice, belief, and history. Students will be exposed to Jewish thought and practice through lectures, class discussions, and readings. Because Judaism is not something that can be fully understood from books and lectures, there will be several assignments and activities designed to give participants "real-world" Jewish experiences.

This class is being taught by five Rabbis, from four different synagogues as well as from Jewish Silicon Valley. This will give you exposure to a variety of approaches to Judaism. Please note that, if we return to in person learning, the location of the class will change according to who is teaching on that particular night. All teachers and locations are listed on the syllabus.

This course is open to Jews and non-Jews, those seeking to convert to Judaism, as well as those who are interested in learning more about Judaism. Conversion candidates should meet with their sponsoring Rabbi for additional requirements.

Class will begin at 7:00 pm with a 30 minute Introduction to Hebrew class, taught by Mike Maiten, followed by a 90 minute class on that week's topics. Try to attend class each week. If you know that you are going to be absent, please email the instructors teaching that session and inform us through email at Zohars@jvalley.org

The fee for the class is \$180 and includes all books and materials.

Participating in Shabbat services

Class participants are welcome to join all four synagogues for services at any time. Each synagogue has its own way to access services which at this point in the pandemic is somewhat fluid. For security and health reasons, you may need to sign up in advance or supply a password. Links and instructions for each are included below:

Congregation Beth David

<https://bethdavid.mhsoftware.com/View.html> - This is a link to the synagogue calendar,.

Temple Emanu-El

<https://www.templemanjose.org/calendar> - This is a link to the synagogue calendar. Friday services are usually at 7:00 pm, the fourth and fifth Fridays at 6:30 pm.

Congregation Shir Hadash

www.shirhadash.org/calendar - This is a link to the synagogue calendar. Shabbat services are usually held at 6:00 pm Friday and 10:30 am Saturday morning.

Congregation Sinai

<https://www.sinai-sj.org/saturday-morning> - Sinai's Shabbat morning services begin at 9am.

Class Shabbat Service Experiences

Service and lunch at Sinai on -

Service and dinner Shir Hadash -

Lunch at Congregation Beth David -

Temple Emanu-El Dinner: _____

Holiday Services ?

Books - all books are provided. Please make arrangements to pick up your copies with zohar

1. JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh
2. *Essential Judaism*, George Robinson
3. *It's a Mitzvah: Step-by-Step to Jewish Living*, Bradley Shavit Artson
4. *The Jewish Holidays*, Michael Strassfeld
5. *The New Reading Hebrew* - textbook
6. *Practice, Drill and Review for New Reading Hebrew (Sefardi)* - Workbook

7. *Yedid Nefesh* - benscher

Schedule

Date	Subject	Teacher	Location	Reading Assignment
10/24	Introduction and Orientation to the Course: Jews and Judaism: a Faith or a People? Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist Judaism	All rabbis	APJCC	
*11/7	Holidays: Jewish Calendar, Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur	Rabbi Nico Socolovsky	Congregation Shir Hadash	Strassfeld, pp. 95-123, 201-203 Robinson, pp. 79-103 <i>Shabbat for a Day</i> activity--see class documents
11/14	Holidays: Succot, Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah	Rabbi Dana Magat	Temple Emanu-El	Strassfeld pp 125-159 Robinson pp. 103-113
**11/21	History: The Hebrew Bible	Rabbi David Kunin	Congregation Beth David	Robinson, pp. 140-177
11/28	Observance: Kashrut	Rabbi Josh Berkenwald	Congregation Sinai	Robinson, pp. 254-262, 585-594 Artson, pp. 84-95 Stern, <i>How to Keep Kosher</i> (available as a PDF download on the class website)
12/5	Observance: Mitzvot	Rabbi Josh Berkenwald	Congregation Sinai	Robinson, pp. 198-250
12/12	Holidays: Chanukah; December Dilemma: Being Jewish in a non-Jewish world	Rabbi Nico Socolovsky	Congregation Shir Hadash	Robinson, pp. 114-117 Strassfeld, pp. 161-177

12/19	History: The Rise of Rabbinic Judaism	Rabbi David Kunin	Congregation Beth David	Robinson, pp. 315-364
1/9	History: The Middle Ages Into Modernity; Mysticism Holidays: Tu B'shevat	Rabbi David Kunin	Congregation Beth David	Robinson, pp. 365-407 Strassfeld, pp. 179-185
1/16	History: The Middle Ages into Modernity: Jewish Philosophy Holidays: Purim	Rabbi Hugh Seid-Valencia	APJCC	Robinson, pp. 408-460 Strassfeld, pp. 187-198
1/23	History: Modern Judaism	Rabbi Nico Socolovsky	Congregation Shir Hadash	Robinson, pp. 461-506
1/30	Observance: Life Cycle- Part I	Rabbi Dana Magat	Temple Emanu-El	Robinson, pp. 177-197 Artson, pp. 62-73

2/6	Holidays: Passover	Rabbi Josh Berkenwald	Congregation Sinai	Strassfeld, pp. 5-45
2/13	Holidays: Omer, Lag Ba'omer, Shavuot	Rabbi Dana Magat	Temple Emanu-El	Strassfeld, pp. 47-56, 69-83
2/20	Observance: Life Cycle- Part II	Rabbi Dana Magat	Temple Emanu-El	Robinson, pp.263-315
2/27	Holidays: Yom HaShoah, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Tisha B'av	Rabbi Nico Socolovsky	Congregation Shir Hadash	Strassfeld, pp. 56-68, 85-94
3/5	Bal Tashchit, Bikkur Cholim, Hachnasat Orchim, Ma'akhil Re'evim, Shemirat HaLashon, Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim	Rabbi Josh Berkenwald	Congregation Sinai	Artson, pp. 50-61, 62-73, 74-83, 148-157, 196-215
3/12	Observance: Prayer and Ritual Our Local Jewish Community	Rabbi Hugh Seid-Valencia	APJCC	Robinson, pp. 9-76 Artson, pp. 174-185
3/19	Belief: Sin, Redemption, Life	Rabbi Hugh	APJCC	

	After Death	Seid-Valencia		
3/26	Belief: God, Torah and the People of Israel	Rabbi David Kunin	Congregation Beth David	Artson, pp. 14-31
4/2	History: Contemporary Questions	Rabbi Hugh Seid-Valencia	APJCC	Robinson pp. 507-524
4/9	Being Jewish in the World Today The Conversion Process and next steps Wrap – Up, Completion Ceremony	All rabbis	APJCC	

*11/7 session was rescheduled to 6-7:30pm and will take place at the same location - Congregation Shir Hadash

**11/21 There will be no Hebrew class at this session. Rabbi Kunin will start the session at 7pm