

**Spertus Institute of Jewish Studies**  
**Summer 2010 Distance Learning Seminar**  
**Sunday, July 11-Thursday, July 15**

**Course Offerings**

**MORNING COURSES**

Sunday, 2:30pm-4:30pm, Monday-Thursday, 9am-1pm

**4123A The Passover Haggadah: A Textual, Historical, Theological and Liturgical Analysis (3 quarter hours)**

[Fulfills the MSJS/MSJE CORE Course Jewish Practices; Open to Masters and Doctoral students]

*Dr. Byron Sherwin*

The Passover Haggadah is arguably the most popular Jewish book. It has appeared in more editions than any other Jewish text. More Jews have read the Haggadah than any other Jewish liturgical text. With reference to the traditional Ashkenazic Haggadah in Hebrew/Aramaic with an available English translation, we shall examine the historical development of the Haggadah-text and related rituals, primarily in the talmudic and medieval periods. Attention will also be given to the history of illustrated Haggadot and to various modern and contemporary versions of the Haggadah.

**4149 Prophecy in Ancient Israel (3 qh)**

[Open to Masters and Doctoral students]

*Dr. Benjamin Sommer*

An examination of the writings of ancient Israelite prophets through which we will attempt to construct a history of the prophetic movement and to answer the question, "what is a prophet?" Topics include: the messages of the prophetic books; the historical evolution of prophecy; parallels with ancient Near Eastern prophecy, the role of prophecy in early Judaism and Christianity, major themes of prophetic thought, different types of prophecy.

**4172 Biblical Samson Seen Through the Eyes of the Rabbinic Sages (3 qh)**

[Open to Masters and Doctoral students]

*Dr. Bernard Grossfeld*

This course will provide a profile of the complex and intriguing Biblical Samson as he is portrayed in the Rabbinic texts of the Talmud and Midrash. We will consider various aspects of his character, and, along the way, evaluate some popular characterizations that have developed over time.

**AFTERNOON COURSES**

Sunday, 4:30pm-6:30pm, Monday-Thursday, 2:00pm-6:00pm

**5506 Intergroup Relations (3 qh)**

[DSJS CORE Course; open only to DSJS students]

*Dr. Victor Mirelman*

How has Jewish life, particularly in the Diaspora, dealt with being a minority group and culture? How has it related to the majority culture? Where can dialogue with other groups be maintained or where are they dangerous to Jewish integrity and authenticity?

**4151 The Dead Sea Scrolls: Between the Bible and Rabbinic Judaism (3 qh)**

[Open to Masters and Doctoral students]

*Dr. Leonard Greenspoon*

An introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls and various theories about their origin, in this course we consider the light that the Scrolls shed on the textual history of the Hebrew Bible and on developments in Judaism during the Hellenistic period. This course does not presuppose knowledge of Classical Hebrew, but activities will be available for those with this linguistic ability.

## **AFTERNOON COURSES *continued***

Sunday, 4:30pm-6:30pm, Monday-Thursday, 2:00pm-6:00pm

### **4413A Engaging with Prayer and Spirituality (3 qh)**

[Open to all students and ideal for MSJE students]

*Dr. Elliot Lefkovitz*

This course will focus on providing a deeper understanding of Jewish prayer as a means to enhancing Jewish spirituality. This course will delve into ways by which Jewish worship experiences can provide a path to holiness. The course will begin with a discussion of the definition of prayer, the goals of Jewish worship and the obstacles and challenges to achieving meaningful prayer experiences. Among these challenges are the values of contemporary American popular culture, the tension between keva and kavana, the issues surrounding communal prayer and the use of Hebrew in prayer. Foci for discussion will be: research about faith development; Jewish conceptions of God and their influence on prayer; the development and structure of the Siddur; techniques for increasing the impact of prayer; and a segment on teaching prayer.

### **4194 Jewish Thought in the 20th Century (3 qh)**

[Open to Masters and Doctoral students]

*Dr. Claire Sufrin*

This seminar asks two questions. First, what were the major philosophical and theological challenges of the last century? Second, how did Judaism change as Jewish thinkers began to address these challenges? We will pursue answers to the questions in the writings of Martin Buber, Mordechai Kaplan, David Hartman, Rachel Adler, and Arthur Green. Our conversation will touch on themes such as selfhood and community, mysticism and rationality as well as shifting concepts of God, Torah, and Israel.

## **EVENING COURSE**

Sunday, 7:15pm-9:45pm; Monday-Wednesday, 7pm-9:30pm

### **4176 The Stranger within Your Gates:**

#### **An Examination of Talmudic and Midrashic Sources on Conversion (1.5 qh)**

[Open to Masters and Doctoral students]

*Dr. Gary Porton*

The phenomenon of the convert is a rabbinic idea, not a biblical concept. This course will examine how this concept developed in the rabbinic texts along with the ritual which changed a person from a non-Israelite to an Israelite. We will review the development of the concept of the convert and the conversion ritual through a close reading of some of the major rabbinic passages from Mishnah-Tosefta, through the Midrashim, and ending with the two Talmuds.

## **SUMMER 2010 SEMINAR FACULTY**

**Leonard Greenspoon** holds the Klutznick Chair in Jewish Civilization at Creighton University, where he is also Professor of Classical & Near Eastern Studies and of Theology. A graduate of Harvard, he is the author or editor of more than a dozen books and several hundred articles or book chapters. He specializes in translations of the Bible (from the Septuagint to contemporary versions) and the Bible (and, more broadly, religion) in popular culture.

**Bernard Grossfeld** served for many years as Chair of Hebrew Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Ordained by the preeminent halakhist Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Professor Grossfeld received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University. One of the world's leading authorities on Aramaic, he has published widely on the Targum (Aramaic translation of the Bible), and he is the author of many books and articles. A native of Vienna, he served as a military chaplain in the U.S. Air Force.

**Elliot Lefkovitz** is Professor of Jewish History and Holocaust Studies, and Jewish Education. A veteran Jewish educator who has served as director of a number of Jewish religious schools, he uniquely combines scholarship with pedagogy. Professor Lefkovitz received his Ph.D. from the University of Michigan and has published studies on modern Jewish history, Jewish education, and Holocaust survivors, and has also taught for many years at Loyola University-Chicago.

## SUMMER 2010 SEMINAR FACULTY *continued*

**Victor Mirelman** is Professor of Jewish History at Spertus. Previously, Dr. Mirelman taught at The Hebrew University, Columbia University, and The Jewish Theological Seminary. Ordained by The Jewish Theological Seminary, he received his Ph.D. from Columbia University. He is a leading expert in the history of the Jews in Latin America and published a definitive history of the Jews of Argentina.

**Gary Porton** served as the Sarah and Charles Drobny Professor of Talmudic Studies and Judaism at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. He received his B.A. in History from UCLA, his M.A. in Judaic Studies from HUC-JIR, and his Ph.D. from Brown University. He is the author of 7 books, over 35 book chapters and journal articles, and over 80 dictionary and encyclopedia articles and entries. Most of his publications focus on Judaism in Late Antiquity.

**Byron Sherwin** is Distinguished Service Professor and Director of Doctoral Programs at Spertus. He served for many years as Vice President for Academic Affairs. He was ordained a Rabbi by the Jewish Theological Seminary, where he was a protégé of Abraham Joshua Heschel. Sherwin received his Ph.D. from The Committee on the History of Culture of the University of Chicago. His fields of interest are Jewish theology, ethics, mysticism, education, and Holocaust studies. He is the author or editor of 26 books and over 150 articles, including *Toward a Jewish Theology*, *Jewish Ethics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, and *Sparks Amidst the Ashes: The Spiritual Legacy of Polish Jewry*, and *Golems Among Us: How a Jewish Legend Can Help Us Navigate the Biotech Century*.

**Benjamin D. Sommer** is Professor of Bible at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Previously, he served as director of the Crown Family Center for Jewish Studies at Northwestern University. He is the author of two award-winning books: *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel* (2009) and *A Prophet Reads Scripture: Allusion in Isaiah 40–66* (1998). Dr. Sommer is also the editor of the Psalms volumes of the Jewish Publication Society Bible Commentary series and is writing the first book of that five-volume set. His current research is for a book tentatively entitled *Artifact or Scripture? The Jewish Bible Between History and Theology*, which will examine whether the Bible, understood as the ancient Near Eastern document it is, can be relevant to modern Jewish thought. Dr. Sommer has been a visiting faculty member at various institutions, including Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the Shalom Hartman Institute, and the University of Chicago, where he earned his Ph.D.

**Claire Sufrin** holds a Ph.D. in Religious Studies from Stanford University, with a specialization in modern Jewish thought. Her current research addresses the relationship between philosophy of history and the Hebrew Bible in the work of Martin Buber. In addition, she is also interested in contemporary concepts of *halakhah* (Jewish law) and the relationship between religion and literature. Before her recent move to the Chicago area, Dr. Sufrin taught for three years at Northeastern University in Boston.