**INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM**

**Rabbi Mark Sameth**

**2014 - 2015 Syllabus**

**Sundays 11:30 am to 1:00 pm**

**(final version, 11/14/14)**

*FIRST SEMESTER*

1. October 26: **INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM**

“What is Judaism” Jacobs (xerox)

“Belief in Action” Jacobs (xerox)

2. November 2: **INTRODUCTION TO THE TORAH**

Telushkin ## 1-63 (pp. 1-112)

“Blessing for Torah Study” (xerox)

“Commentaries on the Torah Portion of the Week” (handout)

“The Books of the Bible” (xerox)

“Our Literary Legacy” Ammiel Hirsch (xerox)

“The Bible and Jewish History” (xerox)

“Biblical and Rabbinic Foundations” Yerushalami (xerox)

“Who Wrote Genesis?” Allen Kaplan (xerox)

“Divine Authorship?” Jeffrey Satinover (xerox)

“God and the Bible” Kushner (xerox)

3. November 23: **THE RABBINIC PERIOD: THE MISHNAH AND THE TALMUD**

Telushkin ## 67-70 (pp. 119-125); ## 73-84 (pp. 131-158)

“Sources of Jewish Law” (xerox)

“A Page from the Talmud” (xerox)

“The Talmud” (xerox)

“Appendix: Orders and Tractates…” (xerox)

“Prohibitions Against Work on Shabbat in the Torah” (xerox)

“Prohibitions Against Work on Shabbat in the Mishnah” (xerox)

“Prohibitions Against Work on Shabbat in the Talmud” (xerox)

“Response – Mitzvah (Divine Commandment) L. Kushner (xerox)

“Mitzvah Without Miracles” Gittelsohn (xerox)

“Religious Authority: Who Commands” Gillman (xerox)

4. December 7: **JEWISH TIME I: SHABBAT**

Telushkin ## 314-317 (pp. 599-605)

“Baking and Braiding a Challah for Shabbat” (xerox)

“How to Light the Sabbath Candles” (xerox)

“How to Make Shabbat Evening Kiddush” (xerox)

“How to Make Havdallah” (xerox)

“Shabbat at Home” (xerox)

“The Art of Jewish Living: the Shabbat Seder” Dr. Ron Wolfson (xerox)

“The Sabbath” Abraham Joshua Heschel (xerox)

“The Sabbath” Samuel H. Dresner (Xerox)

5. December 14: **CHANNUKAH/JUDAISM & CHRISTIANITY**

Telushkin ## 64-66 (pp. 115-119)

Strassfeld pp. 161-168, 173-177

“The First Book of Maccabees” (xerox)

“Lighting Hannukah Lights” (xerox)

“Hannukah Insertion” (xerox)

Telushkin ## 71-72 (pp. 126-131)

“Of God and Man” Stuart Rosenberg (xerox)

“Confronting the December Dilemma” Ron Wolfson (xerox)

“Being a Jew at Christmas” Faye Moskowitz (xerox)

“Beliefs” Steinfels (xerox)

“Where’s Rabbi Waxman” (xerox)

*SECOND SEMESTER*

6. January 11: **PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY:**

##### FEELING AT HOME IN THE SYNAGOGUE

##### Telushkin ## 331-346 (pp. 641-670)

“Understanding Jewish Prayer” chs. 1 & 5 Petuchowski (xerox)

7. January 25: **JEWISH THEOLOGY/THEODICY**

Telushkin ##283-287 (pp. 545-551)

“Describing God” Kenneth Seeskin (xerox)

“Revelation: What Really Happened” Neil Gillman (xerox)

“What We Believe About God” Harold Kushner (xerox)

“Yigdal: Maimonides’ 13 Principles of Belief” (xerox)

“Contemporary Jewish Theology” Dorf & Newman (xerox)

“The Book of Job” chapters 1-3, 39-end.

“Sometimes There is no Reason” Harold Kushner (xerox)

“Suffering: Why Does God Allow It?” Neil Gillman (xerox)

8. February 1: **JEWISH MYSTICISM: KABBALAH**

Telushkin #106 (pp. 200-202)

“Kabbalistic Texts” Lawrence Fine (xerox)

“The Turn to Mysticism” Eugene Borowitz (xerox)

9. February 22 **JEWISH DENOMINATIONS**

Telushkin #120 (pp. 230-232)

#121 (pp.233-234)

#206 (pp. 396-398)

#218 (pp. 420422)

#225 (pp. 436-438)

“Modern Jewish Religious Movements” David Rudavsky (xerox)

REFORM: “Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective” (xerox)

CONSERVATIVE: “A Statement of Principles: Emet ve-Emunah” (xerox)

RECONSTRUCTIONIST: “Where We Stand: Theory and Practice of Contemporary Reconstructionism” (xerox)

“The Question of Authority” Dorf (xerox)

“Four Basic Religious Issues That Divide Us” Gillman (xerox)

“Zecharias Frankel on Changes in Judaism” (xerox)

“The Trouble With One Size Fits All Judaism” Winkler (xerox)

10. March 1: **LIFECYCLE EVENTS I: BRIT MILAH (BRIS), SIMCHAT BAT, BAR AND**

**BAT MITZVAH (B’NEI MITZVAH)**

Telushkin ##273, 318, 319 (pp. 526-528, 609-613)

“Bar/Bat Mitzvah” Sharon Strassfeld (xerox)

“Brit Milah Ceremonies” pp. 23-37 (xerox)

11. March 8: **LIFECYCLE EVENTS II: MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, DEATH AND MOURNING**

Telushkin #332 (p. 617)

“The New Jewish Wedding” Anita Diamant (xerox)

“The Jewish Wedding” Bradley Artson (xerox)

“Marriage” (traditional wedding ceremony) (xerox)

“Take Back The Waters” Elyse Goldstein (xerox)

“Why I Won’t Perform an Intermarriage” Maurice Davis (xerox)

“Marriage of Christians and Jews” Ronald Osborne (xerox)

“Time Bombs” Paul and Rachel Cowan (xerox)

“Jewish and Gay” Janet Marder (xerox)

Telushkin ##326-328 (pp. 626-632)

“Death and Mourning” Donin (xerox)

12. March 15: **KASHRUT: KEEPING KOSHER**

Telushkin ##330 (pp. 634-637)

“Kashrut: The Spirituality of Food” Ariel (xerox)

“The Forbidden Oreo” Hammerman (xerox)

“Sources on Kashrut” (xerox)

“Jewish Dietary Laws” Dresner (xerox)

13. March 22: **JEWISH TIME II: THE PILGRIMMAGE FESTIVALS (PART ONE) –**

**SUKKOT AND SHAVUOT (FESTIVAL OF BOOTHS, AND FESTIVAL OF WEEKS)**

Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles):

Strassfeld pp. 125-147

Telushkin #295 (pp. 570-572)

Shavuot (The Festival of Weeks):

Strassfeld pp. 69-83

Telushkin #309 (pp. 592-593)

14.April 12: **JEWISH TIME III: THE PILGRIMMAGE FESTIVALS (PART TWO) – PESACH**

(FESTIVAL OF PASSOVER)

Pesach (Passover):

Strassfeld pp. 5-46

Telushkin ##302-304 (pp. 581-586)

15.April 19: **THE HOLOCAUST**

Telushkin Part 7 (pp. 346-388)

“Through the Shadowed Valley” Eugene Borowitz (xerox)

16. April 26: **ISRAEL – THE LAND AND PEOPLE OF**

Genesis 12:1-6; 13:14-17; 15:1-21

Telushkin Part 6 (pp. 260-342)

“A Solution of the Jewish Question” Theodor Herzl (xerox)

“Ahad ha-Am (Asher Zvi Ginsberg)” (xereox)

“Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook” (xerox)

**AND SOME FINAL THOUGHTS**

“The Circle of Community” Barry Holtz (xerox)

“Some Affirmative Ways of Meeting God” Harold Kushner (xerox)

“Why Don’t Most Jews Do Very Much?” Eugene Borowitz (xerox)

NOTES:The “reader” is available from Sir Speedy, 467 Bedford Road, Pleasantville, NY 10570, (914) 769-2020. Call Carlos for pricing and to place an order in advance… The main text – *Jewish Literacy* by Joseph Telushkin - can be purchased anywhere, but we recommend *The Village Book* store in Pleasantville. 10 Washington Avenue, Pleasantville, NY 10570, (914) 769-8322. Support your local bookstore!