

# JUDAIC STUDIES (JUST)

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## **JUST 3023 Great Thinkers: Maimonides–Politics, Prophecy and Providence (4 Credits)**

Using "The Guide for the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the central figures in medieval philosophy and Jewish thought. Our study includes analyses of his ideas on: principles of faith, human perfection, intellectual vs. "imaginational" approaches to truth, pedagogy and politics, reasons for the commandments, the nature of God and divine will, the limits of human knowledge, the mechanics of prophecy, and the parameters and implications of providence. Cross listed with PHIL 3023 and RLGS 3023. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **JUST 3024 Maimonides: Greek, Islamic, and Christian Encounters (4 Credits)**

Using the "Guide of the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), a central figure in the history of philosophy and in the history of Jewish thought. In this course, we examine in depth the relationship between Maimonides' core ideas and various Greek, Muslim and Christian thinkers, including: Aristotle, Plotinus, al-Farabi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), al-Ghazali, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), and Aquinas. Topics to be explored include: what is "metaphysics?"; God's unity and essence as existence itself; the mystery of knowing and not knowing God (including a consideration of God's ways as well as "negative theology"—viz. the extent to which we do not know God); God as pure intellect; the nature of the cosmos and the "separate intellects"; creation vs. eternity vs. emanation: philosophical and religious perspectives on the origins of the universe and implications for "living in the world with/out God." In our study, we will also address the methodological implications of cross-religious and cross-language analyses, and how to spot and address (in your own work and in the work of others) tacit cultural biases at play in the interpretive process. Cross listed with PHIL 3024 and RLGS 3024. Prerequisite: Junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **JUST 3026 Levinas and the Political (4 Credits)**

Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), famous for his arresting insight of "ethics as first philosophy," is a key figure in the histories of phenomenology, metaphysics, and theology. In this class, we examine the implications of Levinas' thought for politics and the political through close readings of his insights on peace, proximity, and justice in such works as "Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism" (1934), Totality and Infinity (1961), Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence (1974), and "Peace and Proximity" (1995) in dialogue with key companion works in political thought and political theology, including Benjamin on Divine Violence, Butler on postmodern politics, Connolly on agonism, Critchley on anarchism, Marxist intersections, and Derrida and other "Jewish theologies" of messianistic impossibility. Themes addressed include: Justice; Covenant; Law; the grounding and paradox (or betrayal) of politics-with-ethics; phenomenologies of hospitalities and strangers, friends and enemies; liberalisms, socialisms, fascisms; revolutions and anarchies; agonisms v. antagonisms; impossibility; messianisms without Messiahs; logics of works v. logics of grace; on the role of love v. justice; anarchic grounds; temporalities of covenant and justice; fraternity; forgiveness and its limits; "the 3rd"; rational peace, peace between the wars, and impossible peace. This course is cross-listed: PHIL and JUST. Pre-reqs: This course is open to juniors and seniors except by special permission of the instructor.

## **JUST 3150 The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls (4 Credits)**

This course includes an advanced study of the Dead Sea Scrolls with a particular focus on the Bible as it appears in the Qumran library. We will discuss the variant versions of the Bible, some of which were previously unknown before the discovery of the Scrolls, and how the findings of the Scrolls may question the very idea of "Bible" itself in the context of the late Second Temple Judaism. Further, we will place particular emphasis on studying the way biblical texts were engaged, interpreted and even written by the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this way, we shall explore the origins of biblical interpretation and how the notion of the Bible came to be. Cross listed with RLGS 3150. Prerequisites: None. The Scrolls will be read in English translation, but those with Hebrew reading skills will have an opportunity to read/translate portions of the Scrolls in community.

## **JUST 3152 Philosophy Meets Mysticism: A Greek, Jewish and Islamic Neoplatonic Journey (4 Credits)**

Neoplatonism is a unique genre - somewhere between philosophy and mysticism. In this course, we investigate some of the leading themes of Neoplatonism, tracing the Greek ideas of Plotinus (the third century "father of Neoplatonism") into later Jewish and Islamic textual traditions. As part of our journey, we investigate a host of philosophical writings, including the Theology of Aristotle and the Liber de Causis, as well as works by Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, Ibn Tufayl, Avicenna, Isaac Israeli, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and Abraham Ibn Ezra. Themes to be covered include emanation and creation, apophatic discourse, divine desire, the theological significance of imagination, inward reflection, and the call to virtue. Cross listed with PHIL 3152. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

## **JUST 3700 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-4 Credits)**

Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

## **JUST 3703 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-4 Credits)**

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## **JUST 3704 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-4 Credits)**

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## **JUST 3740 Bodies and Souls (4 Credits)**

This course examines the unique place of the body in biblical religion. We ask how the Bible and its interpreters have shaped current views on sex and the gendered body in Western society. How has the Bible been (mis)used in relation to current understandings of the physical body? Is the saying that a "human" does not have a body, but is a body as true for the Hebrew Bible as the Christian New Testament? How has Judaism and Christianity (de)valued sexuality, procreation, and celibacy? How do the biblical traditions shape our modern opinions about the ideal physical body and body modifications? How can we understand "out-of-body" experiences and notions of death and afterlife in Western religion? Students are encouraged to interpret the Bible and their own beliefs from a uniquely embodied perspective. Cross listed with GWST 3740, RLGS 3740.

**JUST 3891 Justice: A Biblical Perspective (4 Credits)**

This course explores the ways in which the Bible has been applied to questions of social justice in contemporary society. In addition to studying major theological and philosophical theories of justice, students read a variety of biblical texts related to major issues of social and economic justice such as world hunger, the poor, revolution, just war theory and pacifism, environmentalism, and the role of government. This course includes a service-learning component. Cross listed with RLGS 3891.

**JUST 3991 Independent Study (1-5 Credits)**

Prerequisites: HEBR 1003 or JUST 1003 or equivalent and instructor's permission.

**JUST 4700 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-5 Credits)**

Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

**JUST 4701 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-5 Credits)**

Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

**JUST 4702 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-5 Credits)**

Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

**JUST 4991 Independent Study (1-10 Credits)**