



THE SCHOOL FOR RABBINIC STUDIES
 (A DIVISION OF THE AMERICAN SEMINARY FOR CONTEMPORARY JUDAISM)

Requirements and Curriculum for Rabbinic Studies

COURSE CODE:	CLASS:	CREDITS:
RSRS-H-1	Hebrew 1	3
RSRS-H-2	Hebrew 2	3
RSRS-H-1	Hebrew 3	3
RSRS-H-1	Hebrew 4	3
RSRS-BI	Biblical Israel 1	3
RSRS-ERJ-1	Early Rabbinic Judaism 1	6
RSRS-MG-1	Mikraot Gedolot	1
RSRS- B2	Biblical Israel 2	3
RSRS-ERJ-2	Early Rabbinic Judaism 2	2
RSRS-MTS	Methods of Textual Study-Judaic Resources	3
RSRS-MJ	Medieval Judaism	3
RSRS-TT 1	Talmudic Text 1 The Talmudic Process	3
RSRS-TT 2	Talmudic Text 2 The Talmudic Process	3
RSRS-TT 3	Talmudic Text 3 The Talmudic Process	3
RSRS-T 1	Theology 1	3
RSRS-T 2	Theology 2	3
RSRS-BLR 1	Biblical Literature and Religion 1	3
RSRS-BLR 2	Biblical Literature and Religion 2	3
RSRS-NP 1	Nusach and Practicum 1	3
RSRS-NP 2	Nusach and Practicum 2	3
RSRS- BTG	Biblical Text and Grammar	3
RSRS-MJH	Modern Jewish History	3
RSRS-B1	Bible 1	3
RSRS-B2	Bible 2	3
RSRS-HP	Introduction to Halakhic Process: History and Practice	3
RSRS-MT 1	Midrashic Texts 1	3
RSRS-MT 2	Midrashic Texts 2	3
RSRS-JL 1	Jewish Literature 1 Classics	3
RSRS-JL 2	Jewish Literature 2 Classics	3
RSRS JHEL	Jewish History/ European Liturgy	3
RSRS-H 1	Homeletics 1	3
RSRS- H 2	Homeletics 2	3
RSRR-PR	Practical Rabbinics and Jewish Practices	3
RSRS-RI 1	Rabbinic Intern Experience 1	3
RSRS-RI 2	Rabbinic Intern Experience 2	3
RSRS-RI 3	Rabbinic Intern Experience 3	3
RSRS-RI 4	Rabbinic Intern Experience 4	3
RSRS-PH	Practical Halacha	3
<u>ELECTIVE COURSES</u>		
RSEC 1	Confronting Modernity	3
RSEC 2	Modern Jews and the Search for Meaning	3
RSEC 3	Modern Judaism	3
RSEC 4	Modern Jewish Thought	3
RSEC 5	Jewish Music Through the Ages	3

Course Descriptions

1) Fall

Hebrew 1:

Candidates are expected to have already either completed four semesters of college level Hebrew, or have a comprehensive understanding of the Hebrew language. This course is designed to incorporate the linguistic knowledge that the student has already attained and fine tune it so that both modern Hebrew texts and ancient Hebrew texts can be studied with equal ability. Discussion of idiomatic and cultural differences between ancient texts and modern texts will be compared and examined.

Biblical Israel:

Presents the Tanakh and early Jewish history, focusing on the role that key texts and events played in the formation of religion and culture in Ancient Israel. It also introduces the role played by these texts and events in the ongoing life of the Jewish people the student will also make use of other credible historic sources and even examine available archaeological data.

Early Rabbinic Judaism 1 (6 Credits)

This two-part course provides an introduction to the nature and purpose of the core texts of early Rabbinic Judaism. These texts, especially the Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud (or Bavli) played a decisive role in determining the shape of Judaism for subsequent generations. Part 1 introduces the cultural and textual development of early Rabbinic Judaism in the Land of Israel. It focuses on the Mishnah, the foundation of the Bavli, as well as the Tosefta, midrash collections, and the Jerusalem Talmud (Yerushalmi).

Mikraot Gedolot 1

The student will delve into an in depth examination of the history and substance of this work, Although the name "Mikra'ot Gedolot" was first attached to a version of the Bible that was printed in Venice by Daniel Bomberg of Antwerp, the Christian publisher of many standard Jewish religious texts, the name has been used for several different editions that have been printed over the years by a variety of Hebrew publishers.

Certain basic components are found in all subsequent editions, such as the Biblical text itself, the masoretic notes, the Onkelos Targum and Rashi's and Ibn Ezra's commentaries.

The Mikra'ot Gedolot includes the entire Bible. The Masoretic notes to the Biblical text were carefully edited by Jacob ben Hayyim Ibn Adoniyahu, and established themselves as the standard version of the Masorah.

2)Spring

All spring classes are the natural extensions of the Fall classes.

For example:

Early Rabbinic Judaism 2

Introduces the content and thought of the Bavli in its relationship to earlier rabbinic texts and in the historical and cultural setting of the Babylonian Jewish community. Special attention is paid to the Bavli's characteristic modes of halakhic analysis, which are responsible for making the Bavli the fountainhead of traditional Jewish thought and practice.

Year Two

Fall

Methods of Textual Study-Judaic Resources
Genres and Themes of Biblical Literature.

Students will read extended selections in Hebrew from the major biblical genres, including narrative, law, prophecy, Psalms and wisdom literature. Particular attention is paid to a thorough understanding of the Hebrew text, and to the linguistic and literary characteristics of the different genres. Examines various biblical passages from a wide variety of genres—law, narrative, hymns and oracles—and considers the process by which they obtained their current contextual forms. At the same time, the course explores the compositional origins of these passages and attempts to identify how the passages may have been conceived for very different purposes than their current respective functions. Students will encounter the forces that shaped the way biblical writers composed their work and how later editors compiled, shaped and ultimately reinterpreted their sources. Investigating and challenging the centuries of misinterpretation and neglect of Torah.” “Master the important principles for discovering the depth of the plain text (p’shat) meaning of the Word of G-d.”

Medieval Judaism

Studies the development of Judaism from the close of the Talmud to the dawn of the modern era. Focuses on the development of Jewish culture and the life of the Jewish community in Christian and Muslim contexts, with special attention paid to the classic texts that emerged from this period – biblical commentaries, legal codes, mystical literature, and philosophical treatises.

Hebrew III

A natural progression of Hebrew I and II.

Talmudic Text I - The Talmudic Process

Introduction to Rabbinic Literature: The Tannaim (Introduction to Rabbinic Literature:)
The Amoraim (Introduction to the Jewish Talmud [oral tradition] with major teachings of the rabbinic sages).

In these courses, students will learn the skills of analyzing a variety of talmudic texts, aggadic and halakhic. How are talmudic sugyot (thematic units of a talmudic tractate) constructed? What are the recurring technical terms of a talmudic "discussion"? What are the conceptual assumptions of talmudic discourse? What are the social and cultural contexts of the sugyot? Students will learn basic talmudic terminology, including a glossary of Hebrew and Aramaic terms and concepts, and how to use reference tools to help them decipher and understand a talmudic sugya. This course also includes selections from the commentaries of Rashi and of the Tosaphot with an examination of their interpretive concerns and methods. Students will be required to record selections from the talmudic texts in order to improve skills in reading rabbinic Hebrew.

Theology I

Introduction to Jewish Religion and Culture

This course is designed to introduce the student to the philosophical, cultural, historical and theological features of what is now called Judaism and its stages of development over time.

Biblical Literature and Religion I

This course examines various biblical passages from a wide variety of genres—law, narrative, hymns and oracles—and considers the process by which they obtained their current contextual forms. At the same time, the course explores the compositional origins of these passages and attempts to identify how the passages may have been conceived for very different purposes than their current respective functions. Students will encounter the forces that shaped the way biblical writers composed their work and how later editors compiled, shaped and ultimately reinterpreted their sources.

Nusach and Practicum I

Learning the basic Nusach for Weekday, Shabbat and Shalosh Regolim (Festival) prayer services. Demonstrating an ability to lead those services.

Spring

Biblical Text and Grammar

Genres and Themes of Biblical Literature. Students will read extended selections in Hebrew from the major biblical genres, including narrative, law, prophecy, Psalms and wisdom literature. Particular attention is paid to a thorough understanding of the Hebrew text, and to the linguistic and literary characteristics of the different genres.

Modern Jewish History

A continuation from Medieval Jewish History, this course continues from the Enlightenment to the Present "The highs and lows of Jewish events, " including discussions of events which preceded current events, and current events.

Hebrew IV

Natural continuation of Hebrew III.

Talmudic Text II

A natural continuation of Talmudic Text I

Theology II

Medieval Philosophy Modern Philosophy Personal Theology Mysticism "Discover the wit and wisdom of the great Jewish sages of history." Knowledge of Jewish ethics and philosophy (with an emphasis on Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel);

Biblical Literature and Religion II

A natural continuation of Biblical Literature and Religion I.

Nusach and Practicum II

Learning the basic Nusach for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur prayer services. Demonstrating an ability to lead those services.

Year Three

At ASCJ

Fall

Talmudic Text III

A natural continuation of Talmudic Text II

Bible I

Familiarity with the Bible, including main themes of the Torah, the basic teachings of each of the prophets, and a knowledge of the writings; Familiarity with Jewish perspectives on Biblical interpretation; Introduction to Bible, Introduction to Parshanut, Parashat Hashavua, Nevi'im, Rishonim, Aharonim, and Ketuvim.

Introduction to Halacha

The Halakhic Process: History and Practice

Studies the historical formation of halakhah in communal context from the Mishnah to the present. Examines concepts involved in halakhic decision making, such as responsa (authoritative answers to specific halakhic questions), takkanot (authoritative rulings made in response to perceived communal needs), halakhic codes (works that systematize halakhah), and minhag (custom).

Midrashic Texts I

Learning the story between the lines of the Torah, through an intellectual and critical examination of the Midrashic Texts.

Hebrew V

A natural continuation of Hebrew IV

Spring

All courses are the natural progressions of preceding course in topic.

Year Four

Fall

Jewish Literature 1- Classics

Jewish History/ European Liturgy

A survey course on the development of the liturgy, and an examination of the outside sociological and political forces which had an affected on it.

Homeletics I

This course is designed to give each student the essential skills necessary to adequately research, write and present sermons and D've Torah of interest, for congregations, classes and other synagogue settings. The course will also explore techniques for presenting short talks for a variety settings where a rabbi may be called upon to speak (sometimes with little or no advance preparation).

Practical Rabbinics and Jewish Practices

Explores Jewish prayer and the life-cycle and calendar events of Judaism, with an understanding of how they form the structure of Jewish life.

The skills that are developed in this course are considered essential to the congregational rabbi. Among those skills, abilities and subjects to be presented and studied will include, but not be limited to: officiating of Jewish weddings, funerals, unveilings, britot, baby namings, conversions, and b'nai mitzvah, basic bimah etiquette as well as other Jewish Life Cycle and Ceremonial/Ritual events and practices. Will also explore elements of American "Church Law."

Rabbinic Intern Experience I

To be discussed with Student advisor.

Elective Course in field of concentration.
(Speak with Student advisor.)

Spring

All courses are the natural extensions of the Fall semester

Year Five

Fall

Practical Halacha

This course will examine the most significant and crucial rabbinic rulings and decisions over the centuries. The student will also explore and examine contrasting rabbinic responsa to situations, problems and conditions that have affected Jewish Life, vis a vis the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements. By doing so, students will develop an understanding of how rabbinic rulings in the various movements were and are promulgated and implemented within the American and World Jewish Communities.

Three *Field of Concentration Courses*

Rabbinic Intern Experience III

Spring

Four Field of Concentration Courses

Rabbinic Intern Experience IV

Thesis Paper (To be discussed with Academic Advisor)

Elective Courses

Confronting Modernity, Confronting the Past: Ideologies of Judaism in the 18th and 19th Centuries

This course seeks to examine the intellectual, religious and cultural dimensions of the Jewish confrontation with modernity. Through a careful reading of primary texts, students will encounter various movements and thinkers, and attempts to navigate the continuities and discontinuities of Judaism in the modern era. Examining the years between 1780 and the middle of the 19th century, the course will focus on the ways in which Jews read and reinterpreted their biblical and rabbinic heritage. The course will also consider new ways that Jews viewed their past, especially the emergence of a new historical consciousness and its impact on contemporary Jewish society.

Modern Jews and the Search for Meaning: From Modern Jewish History to Modern Jewish Thought

For the first time ever, in the modern period, Jews became free citizens of the countries in which they resided. Powerful new ideas—such as the Enlightenment, the Emancipation, individual rights, the separation of church and state, nationalism, Zionism, and other social and political changes—drove this sea change. Modern Jewish thinkers responded to these distinctly modern developments by fashioning innovative and far-reaching visions of Judaism and Jewish tradition. This course will explore the work of Martin Buber, Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, Rabbi Joseph Dov Soloveitchik, and Emmanuel Levinas in order to consider the modern conceptions of Judaism available to Jews today. As Jewish educators, we will also be reflecting on the special value of diverse "modern" approaches to Judaism in professional educational settings.

Modern Judaism

Studies the rise of Reform, Conservative, and other forms of Judaism in the nineteenth and twenties centuries, with an emphasis on the impact of modernity.

Modern Jewish Thought

Examines the writings of seminal Jewish theologians and philosophers of religion of the modern era, such as Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Joseph Soloveitchek, giving special attention to their views on the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, and between Judaism and the modern world. The course will also examine how Jewish religious thought has been affected by the Shoah and by the birth and history of the State of Israel.