

CJS 290H1S
WISDOM IN JEWISH THOUGHT
Mondays 10am – 12pm
Sidney Smith Hall, Room 1084

Course Instructor: Dr. Sol Goldberg

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Office Hours: Mondays 3–4pm or by appointment

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Course Description

What do Jewish philosophers strive to know? By what conventional, natural or supernatural means is their wisdom acquired and how rare is it? Do they possess special faculties or merely highly refined ordinary faculties? Do they know something different from what their Christian and Muslim counterparts or from what philosophers generally come to know? How specifically Jewish is their wisdom, and what value does it have if either exclusively Jewish or accidentally Jewish? This course will examine notions wisdom in the Jewish philosophical tradition. Students will be exposed both to the intellectual and moral virtues that have historically been prized and to the relation that these virtues have had to their larger cultural contexts. Special attention will be paid to the question of whether wisdom is defined as universal (i.e., as open to all of humanity) or as particular (i.e., as open to only a privileged portion of humanity), and the implications of defining in either way.

Evaluation

Participation	10%
Responses Papers	50% (5 x 10%)
Essay	20%
Final Exam	30%

Class Schedule

January 10	Introduction
January 17	Exodus, Plato, and Kafka
January 24	Philo Judaeus: <i>On the Creation & The Decalogue</i>
January 31	Yehuda Halevi: <i>The Kuzari: In Defense of the Despised Faith</i>
February 7	Moses Maimonides: <i>The Guide of the Perplexed</i>
February 14	Baruch Spinoza: <i>Theological-Political Treatise</i>
February 21	READING WEEK
February 28	Solomon Maimon, <i>An Autobiography</i>
March 7	Hermann Cohen, <i>Religion of Reason: Out of the Sources of Judaism</i>
March 14	Franz Rosenzweig, "Apologetic Thinking"
March 21	Emmanuel Levinas, "Revelation in the Jewish Tradition" & "A Religion for Adults"
March 28	Leo Strauss, "The Mutual Influence of Theology and Philosophy" & "What Is Liberal Education?"
April 4	Michael Walzer, "Nation and Universe"

"BLACKBOARD"

All of the course readings will be available on "blackboard." Please log-in to portal.utoronto.ca, and follow the instructions in order to find this course. It is essential that you check "blackboard" regularly, as instructions for all assignments and notifications about any last-minute changes will be posted there.

TRANSPARENCY & ON-GOING STUDENT INPUT

Students, I believe, have the right to inquire about the pedagogical methods and objectives adopted in the course. Although students should not expect everything in the course to be exactly as they would wish it, they may expect me to have justifications for why I have decided to do things one way rather than another. Please ask at any point during the semester if you are not clear about the purpose or value of a topic, text, or assignment. It is the responsibility of a teacher to accommodate as many learning styles as possible. But this responsibility assumes that students make known their difficulties as soon as they arise.

EMAIL POLICY

I try to answer emails as quickly as possible. But bear in mind that I am not always online and that the quantity of emails which I receive is greater at some points in the semester than at others. This is to say: please don't be surprised if I don't immediately reply to all of your emails. Expect an answer within 48 hours, especially if the issue can be handled quickly over email. If you anticipate that an issue requires a discussion (e.g., questions about your essay), then it is best to make an appointment to meet with me in person.

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students with diverse needs are welcome in this course. Please contact the Accessibility Centre for needs assessment, referrals and arrangements. The instructors will be glad to provide whatever assistance is necessary. <http://www.accessibility.utoronto.ca/>

CLASSROOM CONDUCT

Please switch off cell-phones before class; do not talk to your classmates; use laptops only for taking notes. Distraction of other students is unacceptable.

PLAGIARISM

From the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: "It shall be an offence for a student knowingly:

To represent as one's own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another in any academic examination or term test or in connection with any other form of academic work, i.e. to commit plagiarism. Wherever in the Code an offence is described as depending on 'knowing,' the offence shall likewise be deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known."