

Jewish Studies 10 Syllabus - School year 5775/2014-15

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Handouts available at [rabbilevingston.wordpress.com](http://rabbilevingston.wordpress.com) and through [dropbox.com](https://www.dropbox.com)

### Blessing over study:

ברוך אתה ה' אלוהינו מלך העולם - אשר קדשנו במצותיו וציונו לעסוק בדברי תורה

### Overview:

Welcome to Jewish Studies 10! This year, we have several major goals before us:

- To discuss the textual and philosophical foundations of Jewish ethical thinking
- To test the relevance of those foundations against real-life moral dilemmas
- To lead each student towards developing her or his own moral outlook
- To complete a significant piece of research involving traditional and contemporary sources in an area of Jewish ethics

As we learn together, there will be many opportunities to speak about ethical practices not only in the world of the Bible and the ancient rabbis, but also in our world. We should begin with our own affirmation of the Derech Eretz pledge, which includes pledges to act with honesty, honor, humility, modesty, and with a sense of community and fellowship.

How do you think this will play out in our class? Consider the following circumstances:

- ...when we break into small groups to create a group project
- ...when we turn to a classmate because we need help with homework
- ...when we aren't sure about the citation of someone else's work
- ...when we are working with someone whom we didn't necessarily choose
- ...when we get a grade that is superior to that of a classmate and friend
- ...when we are tempted to disengage and escape online to another site

### "Studentship":

You are executives! You have information to manage, places to be and projects to complete!

*What to bring to class:* Kippah; Pencil, Pen and Paper; Charged iPad or charger in hand

*Managing time:* Make a rest stop on the way to class and bring your school supplies with you

*Observe the Ten Minute Rule:* nobody should leave in the first or last ten minutes of class

### How to turn in your work:

Please use email to send your papers to Rabbi Levingston using proper document format.

Papers without proper formatting will be sent back and marked late.

Document name format:

"student name assignment name date.doc" or ".....pdf"

Example: "bonaparte.ethics in medicine.sept 12.doc"

On the document itself, include a heading that uses this format:

First name last name

Paper title

Date

Example: Napoleon Bonaparte

Medical ethics in business

September 12, 2014

*Late policy:* Items are due at the start of the class period on the due date. You have three more class days to turn in a late assignment. Anything received after that will be marked late by 10%, and the on-time percentage will be reduced.

**How to communicate:**

Let your teacher know if you will be absent for sports, MD appointments, etc.

Let your teacher know if anything is confusing you; email is a great way to establish contact when you are in danger of falling behind.

Your teacher cannot give you credit for an assignment that has not been received

**Acceptable use of technology:**

Let's discuss the ethical implications of being networked all of the time. What ethical and philosophical questions can we ask about the pursuit of knowledge of good and evil, about privacy, and about establishing community and trust?

What does it mean to be a digital citizen in this class?

**iPad use:**

You have been invited to an Edmodo site and to a Dropbox site where some documents will be made available for you to download into Notability as follows:

\*First create a "Category" or "Divider" called JS 10/Levingston

\*Then with that category folder opened up, create "Subjects" (colorful banner):

Handouts, worksheets

Readings, sources

My assignments, LEV talk notes

Miscellaneous items

**Rubric for assignments and papers:**

10% - Mechanics

50% - Working with sources/texts and ideas that we are studying

30-40% - Establishing an author's voice and a philosopher's voice;  
developing a meaningful and strong thesis and argument

10% - Group contributions (for group projects)

**Trimester grade:**

35% - Participation: In-class, online, in class discussions, in group work

30% - Assignments: written, iPad-based, exit cards, homework, small-scale projects

30% - Assessments: papers, quizzes, tests, capstone project

5% - On-time percentage (1 point for on-time, 0 points if late)

[Assignments also are marked down 10% if they come in any time after the due date.]

**Mechanics of citations - footnote style is sufficient for this class. Examples:**

**Newspaper article:**

Philadelphia A. Freedom, "Where is Grammar At?" Philadelphia *Inquirer*, September 1, 2012, A2.

**Website:**

David Kaiser, "I Didn't Write That" <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/04/opinion/sunday/i-didnt-write-that.html?hp> (accessed 4 November 2012).

**Footnote style for a book:**

Jersey B. Shore, "Insights on Tanakh" (Waltham, MA: Brandeis Univ. Press), 2012, 35.

**Mishnaic passage:**

mBerachot 1:1 [no need to cite page numbers as this is in the public domain]

**Biblical passage in Hebrew:**

Bereishit 1:1 (Hebrew).

**Biblical passage in translation:**

Bereishit 1:1 in Jewish Publication Society and Rabbinical Assembly, *Etz Hayyim*.

**Rabbinic legal code:**

Moses Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Ramba"m For All (Fall 5763).

**Project #1 - LEV talks (Learning/Living, Ethics, Values)**

As a way of bringing the ethical issues alive for discussion, we will take turns presenting different ethical issues from the news in brief presentations of approximately five minutes in Prezi, Keynote or Powerpoint in approximately seven slides:

- a) Slide 1 should begin with a full citation of your article (examples above) and a description of a news item of interest to you that brings together a contemporary issue or event and a conflict of values
- b) Slides 2-4 should show
  - \*who and what are the subjects of the ethical issue;
  - \*where and when the issue began to unfold;
  - \*how ethical and moral issues are involved;
  - \*why certain values are at stake
- c) Slide 5 should connect your issue with our studies in JS with at least two quotations with full citations from biblical or rabbinic sources. Just referencing "Einstein" and "the web" isn't sufficient
- d) Slide 6 should show different and opposing ethical positions related to your topic and pose at least two questions for class discussion
- e) Slide 7 should show your own reasoned responses to your own questions and how your responses fit with what you believe Jewish tradition would say along with textual substantiation for what you believe Jewish tradition would say
- f) Be sure to have at least two images in the presentation

Resources for current events projects:

<http://www.globalethics.org/newsline/2013/08/12/choices-in-a-cheating-culture/>

New York Times [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), Philadelphia *Inquirer* [philly.com](http://philly.com), Jewish Exponent, Washington Post,

Rubric for LEV talks:

- 1 (4 pts). Appropriateness of the issue, relative sophistication of the story, understanding of moral issues
- 2 (2 pts). Clarity of the visual presentation and mechanics - spelling, grammar, word choice, etc.
- 4 (2 pts). Clarity and quality of the connection to Jewish issues and texts
- 5 (2 pts). Clarity of the oral presentation and ability to elicit students responses

Timetable:

Thursday 2 Oct (D8 - work period in the library)

Friday 31 October (E7) \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday 21 October (D8) \_\_\_\_\_

Monday 10 November (D8) \_\_\_\_\_

Wednesday 22 October (E7) \_\_\_\_\_

Tuesday 11 November (E7) \_\_\_\_\_

Thursday 30 October (D8) \_\_\_\_\_

**Assignment #1 - first written assignment: to be written in class on Tue., 9 Sept. 2014 (D)**

**Due in class on Wed., 10 Sept. (E)**

- a) Make sure you have a proper heading
- b) Describe what you think is meant by the term, "ethics"
- c) Discuss ways in which you believe you lead an ethical life
- d) Discuss ways in which you think your ethical life reflects Jewish values
- e) Describe one incident that took place in your elementary school years that has come to shape your ethical outlook
- f) Describe an ethical role model in your life; how does that person live his or her life and give at least two specific examples
- g) Finally, describe at least one area in which you think you could change or improve your ethical practice for the better to be more ethical
- h) Find passages in each of the three sections of the Tanakh that sum up your moral and ethical outlook. Be sure to look in less familiar passages such as the Psalms, various prophets and the Book of Proverbs)

**Assignment #2 - interview due in class on Tuesday 16 September (B)**

Conduct an interview with a Jewish adult of your choosing (someone out of college, preferably a parent) and ask these two questions:

- a) What does she or he believe is the most important principle or idea behind Jewish ethics? If they have a formal prooftext or a saying from the Jewish tradition to back up and support their idea, that would be great. Otherwise, if they can just tell you what they believe to be a Jewish value, that is fine.
- b) What connections does your adult see between Jewish ethical practice and the holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?

**Derech Eretz statement for assessments:**

I pledge that I have upheld and will uphold all JBHA policies on academic honesty for this assessment.

## Jewish Studies 10 Research paper

**Goals:** The goal of this JS 10 research project is to give you an opportunity to learn about a particular area of ethics through original Jewish sources. This also gives you a taste of the scholarly enterprise of doing original research in which you look closely at primary sources and secondary sources and then go on to develop your own conclusions. You will be graded as much on the process as on the final product. You are invited to research topics in medical ethics and in business ethics. Sample topics are given below.

### How to prepare your project:

1st: What topic interests you? \_\_\_\_\_

2nd: Read one or two *secondary* sources and take notes to learn about the topic

3rd: Photocopy and read four or five *primary* sources, taking notes on the overall perspective and legal implications of each source

4th: Take your primary and secondary sources and turn them into a final project in any of these formats:

Mock interview with an expert

Musical ballad, rock opera

Lecture/presentation enhanced by PPT, Keynote or Prezi

Science affairs news show

Case study for debate in which you represent two or more sides

Mock trial in which someone is brought to a Jewish court of law for violating the sanctity of life

Case study represented in a medical doctor's personal journal

Formal paper (not very creative, but tried and true...)

### Due dates:

A. Topic due: \_\_\_\_\_ at the beginning of class. Write one paragraph explaining why you are choosing your topic by noting what interests you about it and by predicting what you think you will learn about the issue and about Jewish perspectives on that particular ethical issue.

Primary sources due: \_\_\_\_\_ at the beginning of class. By this date, photocopy a minimum of five primary sources and submit them stapled together with your name on a cover sheet. A primary source includes passages from the Tanakh, Talmud, Mishnah, Maimonides, Shulhan Arukh, responsa and commentaries. Identify the source and put your name on the photocopies when you turn them in!

Detailed outline with introductory and concluding paragraphs due: \_\_\_\_\_ at the beginning of class. The outline should include details such as the sources you quote and the arguments you plan to make. Be sure to state what you believe Judaism has to say about your topic.

Final project due \_\_\_\_\_ at the beginning of class.

Every student will be assigned a ten minute spot to present their findings.

### Rubric:

10% Meeting deadlines

10% Mechanics (formatting, typographical errors, smooth software use)

40% Creativity - did you go the extra mile to show your creative side?

Intellectual drive - did you ask and answer tough questions in your project?

40% Use of primary and secondary sources - did your sources prove your arguments effectively?

### Topics:

Brain death controversies

Health care proxies

Stem cell research

End of life choices

Medical informed consent

Cloning

Abortion

In-Vitro fertilization

Using Nazi medical data

Surrogate mothers

Transplants

Organ donation

Birth control

Universal health care

Tattoos and piercings

Cosmetic surgery

Human experimentation

Animal experimentation

Smoking

Ethics in leadership

Charging interest

Marketplace ethics

Pricing practices in different markets