

**Save this syllabus!**

**You will need the information, topics and journal assignments until the end of course.**

**Course hosted by:** Temple Emanu-El  
6299 Capri Drive  
San Diego, CA 92120

**Time:** **Wednesdays, 7-9 PM**      **PLEASE COME ON TIME!**

**Instructors:** Rabbi Devorah Marcus      [rabbi@teesd.org](mailto:rabbi@teesd.org)  
Rabbi Benj Fried      [benfried@teesd.org](mailto:benfried@teesd.org)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Class Topic</b>
1. Jan 23	<p><b>BEGINNINGS – THE JEWISH CALENDAR - SHABBAT I</b> Orientation The Jewish sense of time and the role of Shabbat The concept of holiness in Judaism <i>Parashat haShavuah</i> (the weekly Torah portion) Home blessings <b>Reading:</b> <i>SOS</i> 79-85; 124-36; <i>LJL</i> 26-60; 141-49; <i>TEN</i>, 3-8; 37-46 <b>Journal:</b> Write a personal statement about where you are in your religious life now.</p>
2. Jan 30	<p><b>ROSH HASHANAH</b> Creation, Sin, Repentance (<i>teshuvah</i>) Jewish New Year and creation of the world Different concepts of sin and salvation in Judaism and Christianity <b>Reading:</b> <i>SOS</i> 137- 44; <i>LJL</i> 152-63; <i>TEN</i>, 47-56 <b>Journal:</b> In looking over the past year, what are aspects of your life you would like to change? What are the obstacles? How can Judaism help you achieve your goals?</p>
3. Feb 6	<p><b>YOM KIPPUR</b> Forgiveness and communal responsibility for transgressions <i>Yizkor</i> (memorial for the dead) <b>Reading:</b> <i>SOS</i> 144-52; TANAKH: Jonah <b>Journal:</b> What does it take to really let go of a hurt and forgive someone? Do you need to forgive yourself? Are there people from whom you need to ask forgiveness? How can Judaism help you work toward making changes in your life?</p>

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4. Feb 13      **SHABBAT II: Prayer**  
 Prayer as experienced particularly during Shabbat  
 Synagogue worship and home blessings; the prayers in the service  
**Reading:** SOS 99-109; LJL 49-70; TEN, 85-92; *A Day Apart or Gates of Shabbat* (peruse)  
**Journal:** How might you observe Shabbat in a meaningful way? Think of two things you might want to do.
5. Feb 20      **LIFECYCLE I: Birth, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Confirmation, Lifelong Learning**  
 God's covenant with the Jewish people.  
 Entering into the covenant at birth: berit milah and baby naming  
 The concept of *mitzvot* - obligations, commandments or commitments?  
 The role of Torah in Jewish life (Jewish education/Lifelong learning)  
**Reading:** SOS 53-56; 85-87; LJL 211-33; TEN, 65-74;  
*Check out the essays in the Jewish Study Bible* (optional)  
**Journal:** A child born to Jewish parents enters the covenant with a ceremony of welcome. What kinds of welcome do you want or need to begin/continue your journey in Judaism?
6. Feb 27      **HISTORY I: From the Bible to the Roman Empire; the Role of Jerusalem**  
**Reading:** SOS 10-14; 185-220; LJL 98-99;  
 Interactive timeline <http://www.odveda.com/en/>  
**Journal:** Discuss three ideas/facts from this week's reading that you found most interesting/surprising/disturbing.
7. Mar 6        **SUKKOT and SIMCHAT TORAH**  
 Permanence and fragility  
 Simchat Torah and the centrality of Torah in Jewish life  
*Ushpizin* (Guests) - Notable Jews from Abraham to Wiesel  
 Ecclesiastes/Kohelet  
**Reading:** SOS 15-36; 172-75; LJL 71-81; 164-70; TEN, 57-63; TANAKH: Ecclesiastes  
*Check out the essays in the Jewish Study Bible* (optional)  
**Journal:** What does it mean to say that the Torah is sacred? In what way does our Jewish identity as the People of the Book affect the way we act in the world?
8. Mar 13      **CHANUKAH, PURIM and Anti-Judaism in the Ancient World**  
 Jewish identity and assimilation  
 Hellenism and its role in the Chanukah story  
 The December Dilemma  
**Reading:** SOS 175-78; LJL 171-77  
 Reversals, Subversion and Celebration  
 Antisemitism through the lens of Purim  
**Reading:** SOS 178-81; LJL 182-85
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*Journal: What is the message of Chanukah for you and how can you communicate it in a non-Jewish world?*

9. Mar 20      **Purim Celebration and Megillah Reading**
10. Mar 27      **HISTORY II: Jewish Communities under Different Rulers**  
Expulsion from Spain to the Holocaust  
*Reading: SOS 233-51; 252-86; 358-79*  
*Journal: What values do you glean from studying the Holocaust?*
11. Apr 3        **HISTORY III: Israel and Zionism, Yom Ha-Atzma'ut (Israel Independence Day)**  
*Reading: SOS 133-35; 182; 380-406; LJL 201-4*  
*Journal: What does Israel mean to you? How would you like to live or visit there?*
12. Apr 10      **JEWISH THEOLOGY: Different Views of God**  
The role of faith in Judaism  
The Messiah (Moshiach)  
*Reading: SOS 37-52; 116-23; TEN, 9-17; 29-35; Sonsino. Finding God (entire book)*  
*Journal: Which idea of God resonates most with you? Why? How does it compare with the view of God with which you grew up?*
- Apr 13        **Saturday - 9:30 AM SHABBATON (Course Requirement)**  
**LIFE CYCLE II: Marriage, Family, Jewish Home**  
The Jewish Wedding Ceremony/Commitment Ceremonies  
Establishing a Jewish home and Kashrut  
*Reading: SOS 89-98; LJL 234-48; 82-92*  
*Journal: Kiddushin is the Hebrew term for wedding. What makes a relationship "sacred?" In what ways can you enhance the holiness of your relationship?*
13. Apr 17      **PASSOVER and Model Seder**  
**Please bring your Haggadah and seder supplies!**  
Exodus – Redemption – Memory  
*Reading: SOS 153-84; LJL 186-200*  
*Journal: What is Pesach about? How do you understand liberation? Why do Jews emphasize the Seder ritual?*

**EXAM REVIEW: EXAM QUESTIONS WILL BE EMAILED BEFORE THIS CLASS FOR STUDENTS TO COMPLETE AT HOME. The completed answers should be returned to the instructor at the last class session of the course, unless you make an alternative arrangement.**

14. Apr 24      **SHAVUOT- Revelation and Modern Jewish Denominations**  
Revelation and The Ten Commandments  
The Reform Platforms of 1885 and 1999  
Jewish Denominations

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**Reading:** SOS 170-72; 336-57; LJL 205-8; 99-104; TANAKH: *The Book of Ruth*; Principles of Reform Judaism from 1885 (Pittsburgh Platform) and 1999 (Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism) at <http://ccarnet.org/documentsandpositions/platforms>

**Journal:** How do you respond to the 1999 principles? Which of the 1999 principles resonate most with you?

15. May 1

**CONVERSION (GERUT)**

**Reading:** SOS 87-89; LJL 249-54

**Journal:** What does it mean to be part of a (religious) community? What seem to be the important reasons for converting to Judaism? What Hebrew name might you choose, and why?

16. May 8

**LIFE CYCLE III: Death, Mourning and Afterlife, Ethical Wills**

**Reading:** SOS 93-6; 110-16; LJL 255-67; TEN, 75-84

**Journal:** Think about writing an ethical will for the next generation. What values do you want to pass on?

17. May 15

**PEOPLEHOOD**

**Reading:** SOS 3-9; 53-75; 133-35; 407-27; 434-39; LJL 93-99; TEN, 19-27

[https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story/transcript?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/transcript?language=en)

**Journal:** Take some time to reflect: Is there a “single story” of Judaism that we tend to embrace? Did you have your own “single story” about Judaism? What was it? How have your assumptions been challenged during the last few months?

**FINAL EXAMS DUE!**

18. May 22 Lag B'Omer (at Mission Beach)

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**Notices to all Students of URJ Introduction to Judaism**

An official **Certificate of Completion** will be issued by the URJ Introduction to Judaism program to every student (upon request) who completes all course requirements. This certificate is worth having and saving. A Bet Din for conversion generally requires the certificate.

**Course Requirements:**

- 1) A Saturday morning **Shabbaton** will take place on Saturday, **April 13, 2019** (appr. 9:30 AM–2:30 PM) Other Intro course students may participate. Attendance at this Shabbaton or another one is a course requirement. Many students say that it is the best part of the course.
- 2) Attendance at three Shabbat services (preferably at different synagogues) is also required. Please write up a paragraph about your experience for your instructor for each service attended.
- 3) Attendance at all 18 class sessions: To make up a missed class at another course location, check the URJ website at <https://www.reformjudaism.org/IntroCA> and follow the link to the syllabus at the class location you wish to attend. Contact the instructor to confirm. Please make sure you sign in on the attendance sheet and note your home location to get proper credit. Students have three years from their original registration date to complete all their course work.

**Required Books**

- Diamant, Anita. [\*Living a Jewish Life\*](#) HarperCollins, (rev. ed.) 2007. \$16.99  
Green, Arthur. [\*Judaism's 10 Best Ideas\*](#). Jewish Lights, 2014. \$9.95  
Silberman, Shoshana. [\*A Family Haqqdah II\*](#). Kar-Ben, 2010. \$4.95  
Sonsino, Rifat and Syme, Daniel. [\*Finding God: Selected Responses\*](#). Behrman/URJ Press, 2002.  
Wynen, Stephen. [\*Settings of Silver\*](#). Paulist Press, 2000. \$29.95

A Jewish Bible (Tanakh) (JPS English translation) will be used in the class.

[\*The Jewish Study Bible\*](#), Oxford University Press, 2014. \$45.00

We also recommend you buy a guide for observing Shabbat.

Zion/Fields-Meyer. [\*A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home\*](#). Shalom Hartman Institute, 2004. \$24.95  
or Mark Shapiro. [\*Gates of Shabbat\*](#). CCAR Press, (rev. ed.) 2016. \$18.95

Books are available (new, used or e-books) online at [Amazon](#)

Please make sure you buy the most recent edition of the books.

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**Optional**

Diamant, Anita. [\*Choosing a Jewish Life\*](#). Schocken, (rev. ed.) 2016. \$14.95 - Highly recommended for participants interested in conversion.

Scheindlin, Raymond. [\*A Short History of the Jewish People\*](#). Oxford University Press, 1998. \$17.95 - Recommended for participants interested in academic history on the subject.

Syme, Daniel. [\*The Jewish Home: A Guide for Jewish Living\*](#). Behrman House, 2017. \$16.95 - Recommended for participants looking for a clear and comprehensive introduction to Jewish holidays and life-cycle events.

Lieberman/Person eds. [\*Honoring Tradition, Embracing Modernity\*](#). CCAR Press, 2017. \$32 - A reader recommended for participants interested in Reform sources about Judaism's wisdom, practices, customs and beliefs.

Waskow, Arthur. [\*Seasons of Joy\*](#). Jewish Lights, 2012. \$18.95 - Recommended for participants interested in exploring both the basics and the deeper meaning of the Jewish holidays.

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