

Living Judaism 5779 (2018-2019)

Syllabus

I am a Jew because...by Edmund Fleg

I am a Jew because

Judaism demands no abdication of the mind.

I am a Jew because

Judaism asks every possible sacrifice of my life.

I am a Jew because

Wherever there are tears and suffering the Jew weeps.

I am a Jew because

Whenever the cry of despair is heard the Jew hopes.

I am a Jew because

The message of Judaism is the oldest and the newest.

I am a Jew because

The promise of Judaism is a universal promise.

I am a Jew because

For the Jew, the world is not finished; human beings
will complete it. I am a Jew because

For the Jew, humanity is not finished; we are still creating
humanity.

I am a Jew because

Judaism places human dignity above all things, even Judaism
itself.

I am a Jew because

Judaism places human dignity within the oneness of God.

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B'ruchim haba'im! Welcome to a year of Living Judaism. As a community and as individuals we are setting out on a journey of discovery that will involve two of the greatest characteristics of Judaism, joy and wrestling. During this journey we will: explore the depth and richness of the Jewish way of life; open our minds, hearts, bodies, and spirits to the traditions that have been passed down; and honor

that tradition with our hard questions and creative responses to it. Please let me know if you must miss a class.

Expectations:

Texts:

- *Emet v'Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism (EE)* (copy given in class)
- Martin S. Cohen, Editor, *The Observant Life (OL)*
- Michael Strassfeld, *A Book of Life (BL)*
- Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy (JL)*
- Michael Strassfeld, *The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary (JH)*
- United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism website: <http://www.uscj.org>

Actions:

- Visit at least two synagogues.
- Visit at least one other Jewish agency: Jewish Family Services, JCC (*Jewish Community Center*), a Jewish day school, the Kline-Galland or Summit home, the mikveh. You will be asked to attend a specific event at one of these agencies.
- Wear a kippah and tzitzit (*a tallit katan – undergarment with fringes on the corners*) for a week and reflect on your experiences.
- Select a book from the bibliography, read it, and present a 5-10 minute report on it to the class. If there is a particular book you would like to read and report on that is not on the list, please let me know.
- Keep a journal about your experience of practicing Judaism. (See the beginner’s checklist.)
- Attend a Kabbalat Shabbat and a Havdalah service at Congregation Beth Shalom. (See below.)
- During the year we will schedule opportunities for experiential learning and community building, such as a Kabbalat Shabbat experience followed by a Shabbat dinner, a Havdalah experience followed by a discussion, a film and discussion on the Holocaust, a challah-baking class, hamantaschen baking, and more.

Year Schedule: (There are High Holiday prep classes for both Living Judaism and the congregation at large. Living Judaism Classes start formally 10/9). Unless otherwise noted, all Living Judaism classes meet in room 6 downstairs at the synagogue. Instructor available in classroom for questions and conversation after each class; class session from 8:05 to 9:15pm. Other synagogue classes locations TBA. Items not shaded are class events.

Date	Day	Class or Event
8/28	Tue	Rosh Hashanah: Start your year right <i>READ:</i> JL sections 293 & 294, pages 622 – 625 “New Year/Rosh Hashanah” and “Tashlikh” BL Pages 260 – 273 “High Holidays: Rosh Ha-shanah and Yom Kippur”
9/1	Sat	Leil Selichot: Prayers for forgiveness in preparation for the High Holidays
9/4	Tue	Yom Kippur: The Day and Forgiveness in Judaism

Date	Day	Class or Event
		<i>READ:</i> JL section 296, pages 626 – 629 “Yom Kippur”
9/9	Sun	Erev Rosh Hashana
9/10	Mon	Rosh Hashanah 5778: The Jewish New Year
9/11	Tue	Rosh Hashana II
9/12	Wed	Tzom Gedaliah: Fast of Gedaliah, commemorates the assassination of the last Jewish governor of Judah.
9/18	Tue	Erev Yom Kippur (Kol Nidre)
9/19	Wed	Yom Kippur: Day of Atonement
9/23	Sun	Erev Sukkot
9/24 – 9/30	Mon - Sun	Sukkot: Feast of Tabernacles or booths. First two days are Yom Tov (holiday with work restriction).
9/30	Sun	Sukkot VII (Hoshana Raba)
9/25	Tue 8 PM	Sukkot: Living on the journey – Class in Sukkah, dress warmly <i>READ:</i> JL Sections 297,298, 299, pages 629-634 “Sukkot”, “Shemini Atzeret” “Simchat Torah” <i>BL:</i> Pages 274-283 “Sukkot”
10/1	Mon	Shmini Atzeret: Eighth Day of Assembly
10/2	Tue	Simchat Torah: Day of Celebrating the Torah
10/9	Tue	The Jewish Calendar <i>READ:</i> BL Pages 229 – 230 “The Jewish Calendar” JL: Section 292 “Listing of the Jewish Holidays in Context of Solar/Lunar Year”
10/16	Tue	What is Judaism? Who is a Jew? Unity and Diversity in Judaism <i>READ:</i> EE 45-46 “The Ideal Conservative Jew” <i>PRACTICE:</i> Morning blessings: Who has made me in Your image, Who has made me Yisrael, Who has made me free.
10/20	Sat	Learners Minyan: 10:30 AM, at the shul led by Robert Hovden: Overview and P’sukei D’Zimra
10/23	Tue	The Synagogue: Origin, Architecture, Gestures, Objects, Prayer <i>READ:</i> JL Sections 333 – 347, pages 705-735 “Temple/Synagogue”, “Minyan”, “Mekhitza”, “Rabbinic Ordination”, “Common Terms”, “Siddur et al.”, “Torah Scroll”, “Torah Portion”, “Aliyah”, “Priestly Blessing”, “Tzitzit”, “Tefillin”, “Kippah”, “Some Famous Prayers” <i>PRACTICE:</i> Aliyah blessings
10/30	Tue	Navigating the Jewish Community, Local to National to Global; Israel, from People to State; Conversion <i>READ:</i> BL 467-74 “Israel: Toward a Torah of Zion” JL 650 “Israeli Independence” EE 27-36 whole section on “The Jewish People”
11/6	Tue	Hanukkah and Purim (and other minor festivals: Rosh Chodesh, Tu B’Shevat) <i>READ:</i> BL 284-297 “Hanukkah”, “Tu Bishvat” & “Purim” JL Sections 64-66, 300-302, pages 111-16, 634-35, 637-38 “Antiochus”

Date	Day	Class or Event
		"Maccabees" "Hannah" "Hanukka". "Tu B'Shvat" & "Purim" JH 161-198 "Hanukkah: Increasing the Light" <i>PRACTICE</i> : Hanukkah blessings
11/10	Sat	Learner's Minyan : 10:30, at shul led by Robert Hovden: Tallit & Tzitzit.
11/13	Tue	Guest Lecture
11/20	Tue	Guest Lecture
11/22	Thu	Thanksgiving
11/27	Tue	Guest Lecture
12/3	Mon	Chanukah : The Jewish festival of rededication, also known as the Festival of Lights.
12/4	Tue	Jewish Home: Mikdash Ma'at <i>READ</i> : BL 3-21, 94-102 "Dawning" and "The End of the Day" JL Section 297, pages 588-591 "Hospitality" EE 39-40 "The Jewish Home" <i>PRACTICE</i> : Morning Blessings
12/11	Tue	Shabbat: First among Festivals <i>READ</i> : BL 103-34 "Shabbat: A Day for Walking Softly Through the World" For further reading: Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man; Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer, A Day Apart <i>PRACTICE</i> : Shabbat blessings Book Review
12/15	Sat	Learner's Minyan : 10:30 at shul led by Robert Hovden: The Shema.
12/18	Tue	Asara B'Tevet : 10 th of Tevet, Fast commemorating the siege of Jerusalem.
12/18	Tue	Vocabulary of Jewish Living Handout
12/25	Tue	No Class – Winter Break
1/1	Tue	No Class – Winter Break
1/1	Mon	New Year's Day
1/8	Tue	Introduction to the Three Paths of Torah, Avodah, and G'milut Hasidim <i>READ</i> : BL 206-23 "Gemilut Hesed: The Path of Loving-kindness" EE 36-39 ("Social Justice; On Women") <i>PRACTICE</i> : Aliyah blessings
1/12	Sat	Learner's Minyan : 10:30, at shul led by Robert Hovden: Amidah for Shacharit and Musaf.
1/15	Tue	Jewish Prayer <i>READ</i> : BL 176-205 "Avodah: The Path of Prayer" JL 731-36 "Some Famous Prayers, Sh'ma Yisrael" Introduction to the Sim Shalom siddur EE 40-43 ("Tefillah: Prayer") Book Review
1/19 & 1/20	Sat Eve &	Limmud Seattle Register at limmudseattle.org

Date	Day	Class or Event
	Sun	
1/21	Mon	Tu BiShvat: New Year for Trees.
1/22	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Childhood and Teenage Years <i>READ:</i> BL 304-23 & 337-352 “Genesis/Bereishit: Beginnings and Birth” & “Genesis/Bereishit: Parents and Children” and “Exodus/Shemot: Bar and Bat Mitzvah” Book Review
1/29	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Conversion, Marriage and Divorce <i>READ:</i> BL 324-36 , 357-95; 403-21 “Genesis/Bereshit: Conversion” “Leviticus/Va-Yikra: Relationships & Sexuality”, “Leviticus/Va-Yikra: Marriage” and “Numbers/Be-midbar: Living in the Desert Starting with the section marked “Divorce until “Hakhnasat Orhim”
2/5	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Illness: Visiting the Sick, Hospitality <i>READ:</i> BL 396-403, 415-422 “Numbers/Be-midbar: Living in the Desert (But not into the section marked “Divorce”) and picking up with “Hakhnasat Orhim” through the rest of the chapter. Book Review
2/12	Tue	Jewish Life Cycle: Mourning, Afterlife <i>READ:</i> BL 440-66 “Deuteronomy/Devarim: Death” EE, 24-27“Eschatology: Our Vision of the Future”) For further reading: Ron Wolfson, A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort; Jack Riemer, Jewish Reflections on Death; Leon Wieseltier, Kaddish Book Review
2/16	Sat	Learner’s Minyan , 10:30, at shul led by Robert Hovden: The Kedushah for Shacharit and Musaf.
2/19	Tue	God, Humankind, and the Spiritual Practice of Blessing <i>READ:</i> JL Section 348, pages 736-38 “Blessing/B’racha” EE 17-19 “God” <i>PRACTICE:</i> Various blessings Book Review
2/26	Tue	Kashrut: Dietary Laws and Practices <i>READ:</i> BL 66-93 “Eating and Food” JL Section 332, pages 699-702 “Kosher/Kashrut” For further reading: Rachel Barenblat, “Rethinking Kashrut: An Interview with Rabbi Morris Allen” (http://www.zeek.net/711kashrut/); Samuel H. Dresner and Seymour Siegel, Jewish Dietary Laws and Practices; Elizabeth Ehrlich, Miriam’s Kitchen, Kosher for the Clueless but Curious Book Review
3/5	Tue	Mitzvot and Middot as a Life of “Normal Mysticism” <i>READ:</i> JL Section 255, pages 545-47 “Commandment/Mitzvah” BL 22-65 “Speech” and “Work” ; read one of the entries in the JL Jewish Ethics section (pp. 548-595) that is

Date	Day	Class or Event
		<p>meaningful to your life and be prepared to speak to it in class EE 19-23 "Halakah" <i>Book Review</i></p>
3/9	Sat	<p>Learner's Minyan, 10:30, at shul led by Robert Hovden: The Torah Service</p>
3/12	Tue	<p>Jewish History Standing on One Foot <i>READ:</i> JL 115-254 (browse any of the sections in Parts 2, 3, and 4 according to your interest) For further reading: Raymond P. Scheindlin, <i>A Short History of the Jewish People</i> Eli Barnavi and Miriam Eliav-Feldon, <i>Historical Atlas of the Jewish People: From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present</i>. New York: Schocken Books, 1994; <i>A History of the Jewish People</i>, Haim H. Ben-Sasson (Editor) Harvard University Press, 1985 <i>Book Review</i></p>
3/19	Tue	<p>Passover Torah Study <i>READ:</i> Exodus, Chapters 6-15; BL pages 231-243 "Pesah/Passover" JH 5-45 "Pesah: Feasting for Freedom" <i>Book Review</i></p>
3/20	Wed	<p>Ta'anit Esther: Fast of Esther Followed by Eruv Purim</p>
3/20	Wed	<p>Erev Purim</p>
3/21	Thu	<p>Purim: Purim is one of the most joyous and fun holidays on the Jewish calendar Purim</p>
3/22	Fri	<p>Shushan Purim: Purim celebrated in Jerusalem and walled cities</p>
3/26	Tue	<p>Passover Haggadah <i>PRACTICE:</i> Pesach blessings and songs <i>Book Review</i></p>
4/2	Tue	<p>Guest Lecture</p>
4/9	Tue	<p>Omer and Shavuot <i>READ:</i> BL: 244-255 "The Omer" and "Shavuot" JL: Section 311, pages 653-655," Counting the Omer and Shavuot"</p>
4/13	Sat	<p>Learner's Minyan, 10:30, at shul led by Robert Hovden: Ashrei</p>
4/16	Tue	<p>Open Class</p>
4/19	Fri	<p>Ta'anit Bechorot: Fast of the First Born.</p>
4/20 – 4/27		<p>Pesach: Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. First two days and last two days are Yom Tov.</p>
4/23	Tue	<p>No Class (Pesach)</p>
4/30	Tue	<p>Introduction to Jewish Texts I <i>READ:</i> BL 139-175 "Torah" JL 149-62, 206-11, 528-39, 643-44 "Oral Law", "Babylonian Talmud", "Halakha"; "Kabbalah", "Code of Jewish Law"; "Guide to Perplexed", "Response Literature"; "Mishneh" "Torah", "Zohar"; "Haggada"</p>

Date	Day	Class or Event
		EE 43-45 "Talmud Torah" For further reading: Back to the Sources (ed. Barry W. Holtz) <i>PRACTICE</i> : Blessing for studying Torah Book Review
5/2	Thu	Yom HaShoah : Holocaust Memorial Day.
5/7	Tue	Introduction to Jewish Texts II
5/8	Wed	Yom HaZikaron : Israeli Memorial Day.
5/9	Thu	Yom HaAtzma'ut : Israeli Independence Day.
5/14	Tue	Snow day makeup
5/18	Sat	Learner's Minyan , 10:30, at shul led by Robert Hovden: Ein Keloheinu & Aleinu.
5/21	Tue	Living Judaism SIYUM , 7:00 - 8:30 pm
5/23	Thu	Lag B'Omer : 33rd day of counting the Omer
6/2	Sun	Yom Yerushalayim : Jerusalem Day
6/8	Sat	Erev Shavuot
6/9	Sun	Shavuot : Festival of Weeks, commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai
6/10	Mon	Shavuot II
6/15	Sat	Learner's Minyan , 10:30, at shul led by Robert Hovden: Kaddish & Adon Olam.
7/1	Sun	Tzom Tammuz : Fast of Tammuz commemorating breaching of the walls of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar on the 17 th of Tammuz.
8/10	Sat	Erev Tish'a B'Av
8/11	Sun	Tish'a B'Av : The Ninth of Av, fast commemorating the destruction of the two Temples
8/16	Fri	Tu B'Av Jewish holiday of love, similar to Valentine's Day

The following class experiences will be scheduled throughout the year:

- Kabbalat Shabbat Services at shul followed by Shabbat dinner
- Weekday morning minyan
- Hanukkah/Havdalah: December Dilemma
- Baking, Taking, and Blessing Challah
- Making Hamantaschen for Purim
- Kashering for Everyday and Pesach

Bibliography:

Nonfiction

- Eli Barnavi and Miriam Eliav-Feldon, *Historical Atlas of the Jewish People: From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present*
- Rachel Adler, *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics* (out of print)

- Martin Buber, *The Way of Man*
- Harvey Cox, *Common Prayers: Faith, Family and a Christian's Journey through the Jewish Year*
- David J. Wolpe, *Healer of Shattered Hearts* (focus on relationship to God in contemporary life)
- Blu Greenberg, *How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household*
- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its Meaning for Modern Man*
- Isaac Klein, *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*
- Harold Kushner, *To Life*
- Marcia Prager, *The Path of Blessing: Experiencing the Energy and Abundance of the Divine*
- Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life is With People: The Culture of the Shtetl*
- Herman Wouk, *This Is My God*

Novels and memoirs

- Aharon Appelfeld, *The Conversion*
- Lawrence Kushner, *Kabbalah, A Love Story*
- Chaim Potok, *Davita's Harp, The Chosen, or The Gift of Asher Lev*
- Jonathon Rosen, *Joy Comes in the Morning*
- Milton Steinberg, *As a Driven Leaf*
- Elizabeth Ehrlich, *Miriam's Kitchen* (memoir)

Conversion

- Conversion to Judaism Resource Center: <http://www.convert.org/>
- Catherine Hall Myrowitz, *Finding a Home for the Soul: Interviews with Converts to Judaism* (Jason Aronson Inc., 1995).
- Maurice Lamm, *On Becoming a Jew* (Jonathon David Publishers)

Cookbooks

One of the most delightful ways to learn and live Judaism is by becoming familiar with a great Jewish cookbook, such as:

- Rabbi Robert Steinberg's *The Sephardic Kitchen*
- Claudia Roden's, *The Book of Jewish Food*
- Joan Nathan's *Jewish Cooking in America* (history of recipes and how cooking changed after Jews came to America).

A Beginner's Checklist of Jewish Practice:

Below is a list of basic Jewish practice (*mitzvot*, commandments, and *minhagim*, customs) with which you will become familiar with over the coming year. These practices form the basis of an observant Jew's life in the home, the synagogue, and the work place. Please remember that this is a minimal list and does not comprise the whole fabric of Jewish life.

Please keep track of the times when you experience these rituals and occasions in a journal, noting your impressions, insights, and questions.

I. Common Halachic Practices

By the end of the year participants should be familiar with and know how to practice the following:

- Aliyah to the Torah
- Wearing tallit and tefillin
- Shabbat observance, including Shabbat table rituals
- Knowledge of Shabbat rules and prohibitions
- Shabbat-ending Havdalah service: *Attend at least one havdalah service at CBS or with a mentor*
- Chanting the Birkat Hamazon (grace after meals)
- Kashering and basic kashrut practice
- Use of the mikveh

II. Shabbat and the weekdays

We ask participants to attend the Shabbat services at the synagogue. Shabbat is the core of synagogue life. Regular attendance will help you to learn the centrality of Shabbat in Jewish life. Involvement in a morning minyan will also expose you to the prayer traditions of Jews practiced around the world.

III. Festivals and Fast Days Services

The services listed below have been chosen by the Rabbi for their importance and distinctiveness. They will involve freeing up these days or services from work obligations. This is one of the first and more important aspects of taking Jewish religious life seriously.

An observant Conservative Jew does more than what is listed below, specifically observing (not working and setting aside these days for feasting and celebration) two days of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, the first day of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, first and seventh days of Passover and the first day of Shavuot. (We also have congregants who observe the second festival days of Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Passover, and Shavuot).

Participants are encouraged to incorporate Sabbath and Festival observance into their lives. Your instructor will discuss the outlines of such observance over the course of the year. Please make sure you have a Jewish calendar so you can know when the holidays fall this year.

	Service	Date
1	First Day Rosh Hashanah Morning Services	Sep. 10
2	Kol Nidre Services/Yom Kippur	Sep. 18
3	Yom Kippur Morning Services	Sep. 19
4	Neilah Closing Services for Yom Kippur	Sep. 19
5	First Day Sukkot Services	Sep. 24
6	Evening Simchat Torah Services	Oct. 1
7	First night of Chanukkah (at home)	Dec. 2
8	Shabbat of Chanukkah	Dec. 8

	Service	Date
9	Reading of Megillat Esther on Purim	Mar. 20
10	First Day Passover Services	Apr. 21
11	Lail Tikun: All Night Shavuot Study Session	Jun. 8
12	Evening Tisha b'Av Services	Aug. 11

IV. Home Ritual of the festivals

Below is a list of home rituals connected to the festivals that you should experience during the year. These are events that you will experience with your congregational mentors.

- A ritual meal in the sukkah
- The ritual lighting of the Hanukkah menorah
- Bedikat Hametz ritual on the eve of Passover
- The Passover seder
- A Yom Tov Festival meal besides Sukkot and the Passover Seder

V. Life Cycle

Below is a list of life-cycle rituals that we hope you will experience during your year of studies:

- A ritual circumcision ceremony for a boy and a covenanting ceremony for a girl, either done in the synagogue or a home
- A Jewish wedding ceremony
- A Jewish funeral and going to a Shiva House for a Shiva minyan
- A Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony on a Shabbat morning