COURSE SYLLABUS

RELI 3310: INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM
Spring 2015 - University of Texas at Tyler
Instructor: Rabbi Neal Katz

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Available to meet by appointment

Course Info available at: Intro2Judaism.com

Course Description and Objectives: This class will focus on Jewish literature and Jewish thought, comprising a general introduction to Biblical, rabbinic, philosophic and literary Jewish texts from its ancient beginning to the present with emphasis on hermeneutics (interpretation). The objective is to introduce students to the basic vocabulary of Judaism by studying texts, concepts, geography, and ritual objects.

Required Texts:

1. Basic Judaism by Milton Steinberg
2. Jewish Literacy by Joseph Telushkin
3. Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures by JPS (do not need to buy – can use Hebrew Bible or Old Testament)
4. In addition, the instructor may provide handouts that elaborate on one or more of the major themes at given points in the semester.

METHODS OF EVALUATION:

- Midterm paper (8-10 pages) - 20 pts
- Class Attendance/Participation - 20 pts
- Worship Service Attendance & Review (2-3 pages) - 15 pts
- Movie Review (2-4 pages) - 15 pts
- Final Paper (8-10 Pages) - 30 pts
COURSE OUTLINE
Spring Term 2015
(The topics below will be covered over a two-day period each week)

Week 1 (January 13, 15) - Fundamentals, Early History, and Biblical Texts
A. Who are the Jews? What is Judaism?
B. Overview of Jewish History
C. Focus on Biblical History
D. Intro to Basic Jewish Texts, arrangements of those texts and historical developments of key works

Week 2 (January 20, 22) - Biblical History and Second Temple Judaism
A. Destruction of the First Temple and Building of Second Temple
B. The Development of Diaspora Judaism
C. Historical and Political Forces in the Second Temple Period
D. Denominationalism/Sects
E. Destruction and the Jewish Response

Week 3 (January 27, 29) - Rabbinic Judaism
A. Development/Emergence of Rabbinic Judaism
B. Key Figures
C. Key Texts

Week 4 (February 3, 5) - Concept of Messiah and Rabbinic texts
A. Jewish concept of Messiah
B. Christian Concept of Messiah
C. Historical Divergence of communities
D. Rabbinic Text Study

Week 5 (February 10, 12) - Under Islam & Christianity
A. Golden Age of Spanish Jewry
B. Maimonides
C. Crusades
D. Inquisition

Week 6 (February 17, 19) - Jewish Calendar & Holidays
A. Calendar System
B. Holiday Cycle
C. Shabbat

Week 7 (February 24, 26) - Jewish Beliefs
A. 613 Commandments / 7 Noahide Laws
B. Tzedekah / Charity
C. Bio-ethical Issues
Week 8 (March 3, 5) - **Jewish Denominations**
** MID-TERM PAPERS DUE by March 5 in class**
A. Reform, Conservative, Orthodox
B. Reconstructionist
C. Humanism

Week 9 (March 10, 12) - **NO CLASS ON THIS WEEK - SPRING BREAK**

Week 10 (March 17, 19) - **Jewish Life Cycle and Observances**
A. Circumcision, Birth, Bar Mitzvah, Marriage, Divorce, Death
B. Conversion
C. Kosher

Week 11 (March 24, 26) - **Israel / Zionism**
** MOVIE REVIEW DUE by March 26 in class**
A. History of Zionism
B. Basle, Herzl, Strains of Zionism
C. Modern Israel Geography and Politics

Week 12 (March 31, April 2) - **American Judaism**
A. History of American Jewish life
B. Key figures in American Jewish history
C. American Jewish political power
D. American Jewish organizational structures

Week 13 (April 7, 9) - **Jewish Worship**
A. Torah
B. Sanctuary / Architecture
C. Prayers

Week 14 (April 14, 16) - **Holocaust / Antisemitism**
A. History of Antisemitism
B. Antisemitic terminology
C. Holocaust Studies

Week 15 (April 21, 23) – **Modern Jewish History**
A. Demographics
B. Interfaith Relations & Diversity
C. Modern Jewish Struggles

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Week 16 (April 28, 30) - **FINALS**
** FINAL PAPERS & TEMPLE SERVICE REVIEW DUE BY APRIL 30th @ 5pm**
SIMPLIFIED CLASS CALENDAR
This calendar will be placed on
Intro2Judaism.com

| January 13 | February 3 | March 3 |
| January 15 | February 5 | March 5 |
| January 20 | February 10 | MID-TERMS DUE |
| January 22 | February 12 | March 10 |
| January 27 | February 17 | NO CLASS |
| January 29 | February 19 | March 12 |
|           | February 24 | NO CLASS |
|           | February 26 | March 17 |
|           |               | March 19 |
|           |               | March 24 |
|           |               | March 26 |
|           |               | MOVIE REVIEW DUE |
|           |               | March 31 |
|           |               |           |
|           |               | April 2  |
|           |               | April 7  |
|           |               | April 8  |
|           |               | April 14 |
|           |               | April 16 |
|           |               | April 21 |
|           |               | April 23 |
|           |               | April 28 |
|           |               | NO CLASS |
|           |               | April 30 |
|           |               | FINAL PAPERS & |
|           |               | TEMPLE SERVICE |
|           |               | REVIEW DUE |