

Autumn 2011 Classes

Biblical Hebrew for Beginners

Thursday mornings 8:30-10am beginning October 20

This class is for both people who have no background as well as for those who have taken one or more classes. The first half of the class (8:30-9:15) will be aimed at those with no prior experience, while the second half (9:15-10:00) will be aimed at those who have a little background. Both groups are invited to stay for the entire class. Please purchase *The First Hebrew Primer*, 3rd Edition: www.amazon.com/dp/0939144158. You may wish to also purchase the associated answer key, as well as the Brown, Driver, Briggs dictionary.

Zohar Reading Group

Friday mornings, 10-11:00am, resuming October 21st

The Zohar is the primary text of Jewish mysticism, written in the 12th century. We are slowly winding our way through it, as we learn these deep teachings about the nature of G!d and the world. Although this class began last semester, we are still in the Introduction and the book in non-linear, so it is easy to jump in. Please purchase *The Zohar, Pritzker Edition, Vol. 1*, by Daniel Matt: www.amazon.com/dp/0804747474. A good intro for beginners is Art Green's *A Guide to the Zohar*: www.amazon.com/dp/0804749086.

Calling All Atheists and Theists: Can Judaism Exist Without G!D?

Monday evenings 6-7:30pm on November 14 & 21

Only a third to half of American Jews today believe in an almighty deity. Can there be Judaism without belief in God? *Moment Magazine* asked 14 thinkers—from philosophers to politicians to poets—to weigh in on this ever-

present question. In this two session class, we will explore the question and their responses. Come make your voice heard on this important topic. The column we will be discussing may be found here: www.momentmag.com/moment/issues/2011/10/symposium.html.

Vanity of Vanities: An Exploration of the Book of Ecclesiastes

Wednesday evenings 6-7pm, 5 sessions
October 19-November 16

The Book of Ecclesiastes begins “Vanity of vanity, says Kohelet, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.” Many people view Kohelet as pessimistic and downbeat, but when the Hebrew is properly understood, the book is infused with a spirit of joy and optimism. We will be using two books which contain the translation and commentaries of Rabbi Rami Shapiro: www.amazon.com/dp/1594732876 and www.amazon.com/dp/B000H2N8VE.

Weekly Torah Study

Most Saturday mornings 9:30-11am

Our weekly Torah study explores the weekly portion from the Hebrew Bible with the aid of ancient and modern commentators. There is most always a lively and interesting discussion. No prior experience is needed to join in. Coffee, bagels, and other goodies are served.

Interfaith Forum

First Wednesdays 11:30am-12:30pm Oct-May

Each month our panelists, Fath Leo Proxell, Reverend Jody McDevitt, Dr. Ruhul Amin, Rabbi Ed Stafman, and occasional guest panelists explain how their respective faith traditions view a particular issue. Following brief presentations, there is an opportunity for questions, answers and discussions.

Winter 2011-2012 Classes

The Music of Leonard Cohen & Matisyahu

Wednesday evenings 6-7pm, 2 sessions, Dec 7 & 14

Spiritual master Leonard Cohen's lyrics, as well as the reggae of Matisyahu, are deeply rooted in Jewish texts. Come explore his sources so we might better understand the teachings of their music.

The Thought of Emmanuel Levinas

Wednesday evenings 6-7pm, 5 sessions
from January 18-February 22

Post-holocaust Jewish philosopher Emmanuel Levinas derives a basis for ethics from the experience of face to face encounter with another, a place in which the other person's proximity and distance are both strongly felt. At the same time, the revelation of the face makes ethical demands on us. Levinas' strong ethical message has made him one of the most studied philosophers of our time. The book we will use is *Nine Talmudic Readings*: www.amazon.com/dp/0253208769.

Coming This Spring

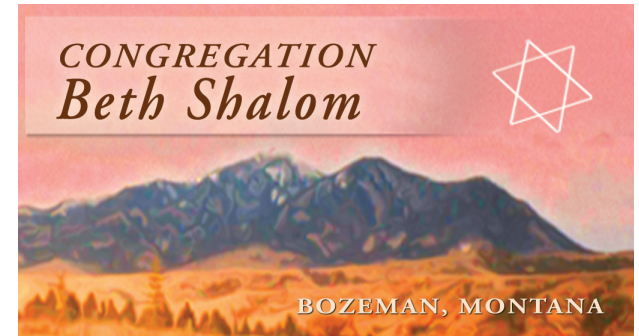
Course to be offered in the spring will be either:

The Ten Commandments: A close look at how the 10 commandments have been understood by Jews

or

Who Wrote the Bible: How the Bible came to be.

Introduction to Jewish Mysticism



AUTUMN / WINTER ADULT EDUCATION

"Surely, the teaching which I give you today is not too baffling for you, nor is it beyond reach. You do not have to travel to the heavens nor cross the seas to get it. Rather, it is very close to you, on your lips and in your heart, and you can do it."

— Deuteronomy 30:11-14

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All classes are open to the public, and are geared towards a discussion style rather than lectures.

Classes are taught by Rabbi Ed Stafman.

Rabbi Ed's academic background includes a B.S. from State University of New York at Stony Brook (1975), a J.D. from Florida State University College of Law (1978), a M.A. in Religion of Western Antiquity from Florida State University (2005), A.B.D. (all but dissertation for a Ph.D) from Florida State University, and Rabbinic ordination from the ALEPH Rabbinic Program, following 8 years of study.