

The New Jewish Canon

Syllabus for Mini-Course #1: The State of Jewish Ideas

Before each session, read as many of these selections from the textbook as possible. Some have been uploaded for your convenience – just click on the links here – but it is highly recommended that you order the “The New Jewish Canon” to have access to all the material. The class will consist of several mini courses through the year, focusing on different topics, including innovation and change (sociological, theological, gender and sexuality), key events in Israel and their implications, and thematic readings on intermarriage, feminism and the Holocaust. This first mini course gives an overview of the vast range of topics covered in the book, reflecting the diverse and significant conversations that have been taking place in the Jewish world over the past generation.

Session 1: Book Introduction

Reading Assignment

- Yehuda Kurtzer and Claire Sufrin, *Introduction: The State of Jewish Ideas: Towards a New Jewish Canon*, pp. xvii–xxvii <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/64eb4963-b9d1-4d9d-b9fb-3ea801d04366.pdf>

Session 2: Jewish Politics and the Public Square

Reading Assignments

- Michael Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution* (1985) - <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/509b1e7f-7e93-443d-b52f-f3a579b9c6c3.pdf>
COMMENTARY BY WILLIAM GALSTON pp. 3–9
- George Steiner, *Our Homeland, The Text* (1985) Judith Butler, *Remarks to Brooklyn College on BDS* (2013) COMMENTARY BY JULIE COOPER pp. 10–16
- Jonathan Woocher, *Sacred Survival: The Civil Religion of American Jews* (1986)
COMMENTARY BY SYLVIA BARACK FISHMAN pp. 17–23
- Peter Beinart, *The Failure of the American Jewish Establishment* (2010)
<https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/1ea0b91e-4232-4966-a3b0-fac99acba873.pdf>
COMMENTARY BY SARA Yael HIRSCHHORN pp. 108–112
- Daniel Gordis, *When Balance Becomes Betrayal* (2012) Sharon Brous, *Lowering the Bar* (2012) <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/bfd6e256-8fda-4faf-af75-0e7bb62427da.pdf> COMMENTARY BY YEHUDA KURTZER pp. 113–117

Session 3: History, Memory, and Narrative

Reading Assignments

- David Hartman, *Auschwitz or Sinai?* (1982).
<https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/623d68c4-150b-4523-8fe4-6076a2dd200a.pdf>
COMMENTARY BY RACHEL SABATH BEIT-HALACHMI pp. 125–129

- Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory* (1982) COMMENTARY BY ALEXANDER KAYE pp. 130–134
- Irving (Yitz) Greenberg, *The Third Great Cycle of Jewish History* (1987) <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/f64ffab4-3a4c-4d1a-8309-c98f8e214cae.pdf> COMMENTARY BY JOSHUA FEIGELSON pp. 176–180
- Haym Soloveitchik, *Rupture and Reconstruction* (1994) COMMENTARY BY YEHUDA KURTZER pp. 189–193
- Ruth Wisse, *How Not to Remember and How Not to Forget* (2008) COMMENTARY BY DARA HORN pp. 215–220

Session 4: Religion and Religiosity

Reading Assignments

- Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Halakhic Man* (1983) <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/07a09a45-5c25-4b56-a504-72214c22e1a2.pdf> COMMENTARY BY SHLOMO ZUCKIER pp. 229–233
- David Hartman, *A Living Covenant: The Innovative Spirit in Traditional Judaism* (1985) COMMENTARY BY DAVID ELLENSON pp. 245–251
- Rachel Adler, *In Your Blood, Live: Re-visions of a Theological Purity* (1993) COMMENTARY BY GAIL LABOVITZ pp. 260–265
- Abraham Joshua Heschel, Susannah Heschel (ed.), *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity* (1996) <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/c1b982ea-eeed-4f28-99cb-9dfc323d0ede.pdf> COMMENTARY BY WILLIAM PLEVAN pp. 277–282
- Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg, *Genesis: The Beginning of Desire* (1995) pp. 271–276 COMMENTARY BY SHIRA HECHT-KOLLER

Session 5 Identities and Communities

Reading Assignments

- Menachem Mendel Schneerson, *Letter to the Jewish Community of Teaneck* (1981) COMMENTARY BY JONATHAN SARNA pp. 321–325
- Letty Cottin Pogrebin, *Deborah, Golda, and Me: Being Female and Jewish in America* (1991) <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/670b3ca5-3ca5-4fd0-a5b0-dd0e3a0b13c5.pdf> COMMENTARY BY ARIELLE LEVITES pp. 357–362
- Yaakov Levado, *Gayness and God: Wrestlings of an Orthodox Rabbi* (1993) COMMENTARY BY ZEV FARBER pp. 381–386
- Ruth Calderon, *Inaugural Knesset Speech, The Heritage of All Israel* (2013) <https://files.constantcontact.com/59fef7db001/a34b1ef4-49c3-4093-9dfc-32707ed85a86.pdf> COMMENTARY BY YOSSI KLEIN HALEVI pp. 427–431
- Rick Jacobs, *The Genesis of Our Future* (2013) COMMENTARY BY DAN FRIEDMAN pp. 432–436