

Congregation Emanu-El Introduction to Judaism
The Madeleine Haas Russell Institute of Jewish Learning
2023-2024 Course Syllabus

- Tuesdays 7:00 – 9:00 pm; 2 Shabbat Dinner experiences.
- Jewish partners of students are strongly encouraged to attend and warmly welcomed—we promise you did not learn all of this when you studied for your bnei mitzvah!
- Determined by the individual educators, some classes will be in person, others online.
- Required books:
 - Tapper, Aaron H., *Judaisms: A Twenty-First-Century Introduction to Jews and Jewish Identities*. UC Press, Oakland
 - Dosick, Wayne D., *Living Judaism: The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition, and Practice*. HarperCollins, New York
 - Timoner, Rachel., *Breath of Life, God as Spirit in Judaism*. Paraclete Press, Brewster

Fall Trimester

October 24 What does Judaism mean and what does it mean to be a Jew? - Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan

Judaisms, a Twenty-First-Century Introduction to Jews and Jewish Identities by Aaron J. Hahn Tapper. Introduction, pages 1-11

October 31 We Were All at Sinai: The Torah, Tanakh, Revelation and Truth

Judaisms, 28-38 (stop at “interpreting the Torah”)

November 7 Interpreting the Tradition: Talmud, Codes, Commentaries & Rabbinic Judaism

Judaisms, 38-43 (start with “interpreting the Torah”)

November 14 The Jewish Calendar; Festival & Holiday Review

Living Judaism by Rabbi Wayne D, pgs. 119-157

OFF NOVEMBER 21 FOR THANKSGIVING WEEK

November 28 Theologies: Thinking God Jewishly

Breath of Life, by Rabbi Rachel Timoner. Read entire book, 145 pages. Read at least section 1, (chapters 1-3 for this session, but try to read entire book),

December 5 Introduction to Prayer and Siddur

Living Judaism, pgs. 73-129; 201-223

December 12 (?) Temples, Maccabees, Destructions & Reactions

Living Judaism, pgs. 151-54; 357-374

Shabbat Experience I

December 1 *Learners Minyan and Shabbat Dinner – Required*

Class & dinner at 6:00 – 8:30 PM. Please do your best to attend both the service and dinner for a full experiential opportunity. Partners/Family welcome.

December 7-14: Participate in one of our Emanu-El Chanukah Events

WINTER BREAK December 19 – January 8

Winter Trimester

January 9 Halacha: Mitzvot, Blessings and Being Commanded

Judaisms, 73-92

January 16 Halacha Case Study: Kashrut and The Ethics of Jewish Eating

Living Judaism, pgs. 256-268, Judaisms, 93

January 23 Reform Responsa & Contemporary Applications of Halacha

Reform Responsa is modern Reform responses to Jewish questions. For reading this week, go to <https://www.ccarnet.org/rabbinic-voice/reform-responsa/> and select one rabbinic response to read on a topic of interest to you. Come to class prepared to talk about the one you choose.

January 30 American Jewish Religious Movements

Judaisms, pgs. 145-158

February 6 Tikkun Olam: Social Justice, Activism and Acceptance - Tu B'Shvat

Living Judaism, pgs. 30-53

February 13 Global Judaism: Sephardim, Ashkenazim, Mizrachim and other World Jewries

Judaisms, 113-138

February 20 History of Judaism in 2 Hours

Judaisms, 12-26

February 27 The Goldberg Rush: The Story of the Jews of San Francisco

Judaisms, 186-189, 209-212

SPRING FESTIVITIES:

March 22-25 – Congregational Purim Festivities. Check website for details.

March 1-31 Spring Special: NO Introduction to Judaism courses on Tuesday nights but we encourage you to participate in Tauber SPARK: Ignite your Jewish Learning Program – Details to follow. March 12, 19, 26

Spring Trimester

April 2 Birth, Bar & Bat Mitzvah, Marriage

Living Judaism, pgs. 285-300

April 9 Passover: Ritual and Meaning

Living Judaism, pgs. 118; 162-173

April 16 Mystics and Chasids: Kabbalah & Chasidut - Lag B'Omer

Judaisms, 95-112

PASSOVER – April 22 – 30: Check website for Congregational Events

Shabbat Experience II

May 3 *Learners Minyan Shabbat Dinner – Required*

Class & dinner at 6:00 – 8:30 PM. Please do your best to attend both the service and dinner for a full experiential opportunity. Partners/Family welcome.

May 7 Shoah - Historical & Contemporary Anti-Semitism - Yom HaShoah

Living Judaism, pgs. 181-194; Judaisms, 168-183

May 14 Zionism and the State of Israel - Yom HaZikaron

Judaisms, 190-207, 212-216

May 21 End of Life and Beyond

Living Judaism, pgs. 301-322

May 28 Summer Observances, High Holy Days and Beyond

Living Judaism, pgs. 130-196

Addition Recommended Reading:

- Central Conference of American Rabbis., *On the Doorposts of Your House: Prayers and Ceremonies for the Jewish Home*, CCAR Press, New York
- Syme, Daniel B., *The Jewish Home*, URJ Press, New York
- Wylen, M., S. *Setting of Silver: An Introduction to Judaism*. Second Edition. Paulist Press: New York, Mahwah, and N.J.
- Levy, Richard, *A Vision of Holiness: The Future of Reform Judaism* URJ Press, New York