

Term Information

Effective Term Spring 2016
[Previous Value](#) [Summer 2012](#)

Course Change Information

What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)

GE status, Cultures and Ideas category

What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?

Philosophy 3111, Introduction to Jewish Philosophy, already fits the format for this GE category. The course deals with traditional and contemporary Jewish themes and ideas, aiding the student's capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgement. The course, as it is taught now, furthers the expected learning outcomes.

What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?

(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?

The course can count as a philosophy elective for our majors. We hope that, with GE status, more of our majors will elect this course. We also hope that the course will continue to attract students interested in Jewish Studies and Religious Studies generally. Courses like this often make for an interesting interaction among the students with various backgrounds.

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	Philosophy
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	Philosophy - D0575
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	3111
Course Title	Introduction to Jewish Philosophy
Transcript Abbreviation	Intro Jewsh Philos
Course Description	A general introduction to major figures and trends in medieval, modern, and contemporary Jewish philosophy; emphasis on Philo, Saadia, Maimonides, Spinoza, Mendelssohn, and Buber.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 7 Week, 4 Week (May Session), 12 Week (May + Summer)
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	No
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never

Campus of Offering Columbus, Newark

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites

Exclusions Not open to students with credit for 321 and JewshSt 3111.

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings Cross-listed in JewshSt.

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 38.0101
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:
Culture and Ideas
The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Previous Value

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Students will encounter some key ideas in traditional and contemporary Jewish thought, in order to develop their own thinking on key philosophical and religious themes.
- Students will also evaluate how key Jewish ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

Previous Value

Content Topic List

- Some key Jewish thinkers from different periods: Philo Judaeus, Moses Maimonides, Joseph Soloveitchik
- Connections to other philosophical themes, notably Plato and Aristotle
- The nature of creation, the connection to Plato
- The place of Commandments and scientific law
- The nature of God
- God's relationship to the world, Providence
- The Sabbath: universal and particular
- Creation
- The nature of prayer and prophecy
- The predicament of the religious personality
- The struggle for a relationship with God

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST
3111 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Heyssel, Garrett Robert
06/05/2015

Previous Value

- *Figures in Jewish philosophy ranging from the medieval era to the present*
- *Selected topics in Jewish philosophy*
- *Metaphysical puzzles in Jewish philosophy*
- *Ethical theory in Jewish philosophy*
- *The existence of God*
- *The nature of God*

Attachments

- Sample syllabus 3111.docx
(Syllabus. Owner: O'Keeffe, Susan B)
- GE_Proposal Jewish Philosophy.docx
(GEC Course Assessment Plan. Owner: O'Keeffe, Susan B)

Comments

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	O'Keeffe, Susan B	05/28/2015 08:36 AM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Roth, Abraham Sesshu	05/28/2015 08:50 AM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heyssel, Garrett Robert	06/05/2015 07:07 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Nolen, Dawn Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Hanlin, Deborah Kay Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hogle, Danielle Nicole	06/05/2015 07:07 PM	ASCCAO Approval

PHILOS 3111: INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

Instructor: Stewart Shapiro
Office: 250 E University Hall
Hours: TBA
Email: shapiro.4@osu.edu

Course Description:

This course some of the main themes in both traditional and contemporary Jewish thought. Some of these are among the most meaningful and searching issues that confront any religion and, indeed, any member of a particular group of people. Other themes are unique to Judaism. What (if anything) can be known about the nature of God? What is the relationship between God and creation? What is the relationship between God and the people of Israel? What is it to be “chosen”? Chosen for what? What is behind the moral and religious commandments, especially those restricted to the people of Israel? What is the relationship between the people of Israel and the rest of humanity? Is it possible to have a relationship between God and an individual human? What is the nature and role of prophecy? How can one be a loyal, devout Jew and also a citizen of humanity at large? Students will confront these questions through the works of various Jewish philosophers and rabbis, and will discuss and evaluate the underlying themes.

Required texts and course materials:

- Selections from *The works of Philo Judaeus*, notably *On the creation of the world*, *On the allegories of the sacred laws*, and *On the unchangeableness of God* (posted on Carmen)
- Moses Maimonides, *The guide for the perplexed* [required; available in campus bookstores]
- Joseph Soloveitchik, *The lonely man of faith* and *Halachik man* [required; available in campus bookstores]
- Various other readings and course materials available on Carmen

Assignments and Grading:

- Six or seven short essays (2-4 pages each) on specific topics 40% of final grade
- Two or three group discussion exercises 10% of final grade
- One substantial term paper 20% of final grade
- Take home all essay final exam 20% of final grade
- Intangibles: participation, etc. 10% of final grade

Notes: Students are expected to attend class, and come prepared to discuss the material that day (or, at the least, to have questions on how to understand it). The short essays will be on specific topics, given in class. The student will choose a topic for his or her term paper. Within three weeks of when it is due, each student should consult with the instructor to clear a topic. Each student is encouraged to submit a draft first, for evaluation.

Weekly Topical Outline:

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Week 1 | Introduction to philosophy; introduction to Judaism
Reading: selections from <i>The Encyclopedia Judaica</i> |
| Week 2 | Philo: A Jewish philosopher in Antiquity
Reading: some background material on Plato
<i>On the creation of the world</i> |
| Week 3 | Philo continued: the nature of creation, the connection to Plato |
| Week 4 | Philo continued: the place of Commandments and scientific law
Reading: <i>On the allegories of the scared laws</i> |
| Week 5 | Philo continued: the nature of God
Reading: <i>On the unchangeableness of God</i> |
| Week 6 | Maimonides: A rabbi and philosopher in medieval times
Reading: some background material on Aristotle and on Maimonides legal works
selections from <i>A guide for the perplexed</i> |
| Week 7 | Maimonides continued: the nature of God
Reading: selections from <i>A guide for the perplexed</i> |
| Week 8 | Maimonides continued: God's relationship to the world, Providence
Reading: selections from <i>A guide for the perplexed</i> |
| Week 9 | Maimonides continued: The Sabbath: universal and particular
Reading: selections from <i>A guide for the perplexed</i> |
| Week 10 | Maimonides continued: on creation
Reading: selections from <i>A guide for the perplexed</i> |
| Week 11 | Maimonides continued: the nature of prayer and prophecy
Reading: selections from <i>A guide for the perplexed</i> |
| Week 12 | Soloveitchik: Rabbi and philosopher in our time
Reading: <i>The lonely man of faith</i> |

Week 13 **Soloveitchik continued:** the predicament of the religious personality
Reading: *The lonely man of faith*

Week 14 **Soloveitchik continued:** struggling for a relationship with God
Reading: *Halachik man*

GE Category: Cultures and Ideas

Goals: Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgement; and interpretation and evaluation

Expected Learning Outcomes:

1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture and expression.
2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.

Philos 3111 aims to achieve the first these learning outcomes by teaching students strategies for analyzing, interpreting, and critiquing philosophical and religious texts, as well as giving them multiple opportunities (in class discussion as well as in writing assignments) to practice these analytic skills. The course aims to achieve the second learning outcome by encouraging students to reflect about the ways in which the philosophical and religious values of the authors we are encountering might shape their own views on the same and similar questions. Further, the lectures will contain the instructor's reflections about the connection between cultural and personal values on the one hand, and more universal values on the other.

Policy about Academic Misconduct:

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

Disability Services:

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.

GE–Cultures and Ideas–Proposal
PHIL 3111
‘Introduction to Jewish Philosophy’

GE Goals:

Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgement; and interpretation and evaluation

Expected Learning Outcomes:

- 1. Students analyze and interpret major forms of human thought, culture and expression.**
- 2. Students evaluate how ideas influence the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior.**

1 GE RATIONALE

1.1 How do the course objectives address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

The primary objectives of the course are to provide students with basic analytic tools and to help them employ these tools in exploring complex philosophical questions that arise in the practice and in the Rabbinic and philosophical literature of traditional and contemporary Judaism. Since these basic tools include systematic thinking, critical reading, and analytical writing, they coincide with the first GE expected learning outcome in the Cultures and Ideas category. The course places emphasis on close readings of difficult texts concerning both underlying philosophical themes and commandments concerning behavior. We will work on the identification of arguments and implicit assumptions in a text, as well as careful textual analysis and interpretation. The second GE expected learning outcome for Cultures and Ideas is similarly central to the course objectives: through class discussion, the assigned readings, and the writing assignments, students are expected to understand and assess a number of perspectives, articulated or implicit in Jewish thought and practice, concerning the meaning of life, the value of human beings, and their relationship to nature and to God. Since attitudes on these matters have a deeply personal as well as a social aspect, the course objectives align well with the second expected learning outcome.

1.2 How do the readings assigned address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

Students in the course are expected to explore the course topics by reading, analyzing, and critiquing a variety of different texts, from different historical periods. Some of these works are philosophical, some are normative (or Rabbinic), and others a combination of the two. The sample syllabus assigns works by Philo Judaeus, a neo-Platonic philosopher in antiquity, who works to reconcile, as much as possible, Jewish thought with a Platonic metaphysics and an account of the place of humans in the cosmos. The syllabus then turns to the major philosophical work of the medieval rabbi, Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*. That work adopts a broadly Aristotelian perspective, in order to make sense of creation, the role of humans, a host of other fascinating topics. The third major item on the sample syllabus is a broadly philosophical work by Joseph Soloveitchik, one of the most important rabbis in the twentieth century. It gives a powerful analysis of religion, in the contemporary society.

Encountering such a wide range of texts written in such a wide range of styles and historical periods will enable students not only to develop or hone skills in textual analysis, interpretation, and criticism, but also to acquire a nuanced understanding of the course topics. The assigned readings invite reflections about personal and social attitudes toward the meaning of life and the role and importance of people, from different cultures. In these ways, the course readings address both GE expected learning outcomes.

1.3 How do the topics address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

The course topics reflect the range of philosophical positions and issues that underlie the practice and theory of Judaism, over the centuries. They include the nature of creation, the nature of God, the role of humans as partners in creation, the sanctity of human life, God's relationships with nature, with the nation of Israel, and with humanity at large, the nature and role of prophecy, and the nature of time. These, of course, are issues and topics that people in different cultures and historical periods have taken on. The traditional Jewish perspectives will provide important food for thought for students from all cultures and backgrounds. Students will encounter several different answers to the question what can render a life valuable, or what the value of human existence might be. There is a close connection to the second GE expected learning outcome. Likewise, because these topics are quite complex and require students to grapple with very profound philosophical questions, exploring these topics involves a high level of critical thinking, careful reading, and clear writing.

1.4 How do the written assignments address the GE category expected learning outcomes?

Through the writing assignments, students add their own perspectives and reflections to the conversation about the various topics addressed in the readings. The feedback they receive on these assignments—from the instructor and peers—will enable them to refine their analytic writing skills. Producing good philosophical prose requires writers to choose their words extremely carefully, weigh the strength of their arguments judiciously, and structure their presentation meticulously, addressed to a general, intelligent audience, not necessarily one that shares one's background culture and worldview. It also requires a nuanced grasp of the subject matter. The writing assignments are designed to build these skills, in accordance with the first GE expected learning outcome. Insofar as these assignments also require careful reflection about the character of human beliefs, the perception

of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior meaning or value of life—constant topics in the Jewish literature---they advance the second expected learning outcome.

1.5 How does the course aim to sharpen students' response, judgment, and evaluation skills?

The course will teach students some basic techniques from informal logic, such as identifying valid and fallacious argument forms, reconstructing the argument contained in a philosophical text, and supplying implicit premises. These techniques will improve students' ability to respond to and evaluate philosophical and other argumentative texts, as well as to refine, express, and defend their own views. On the literary side, these techniques can also help defend a particular interpretation of a text. Furthermore, the course aims to teach students how to engage in close readings of important passages, which is a crucial skill for studying and evaluating texts of any genre.

2 GE ASSESSMENT PLAN

The success of Philosophy 3111 in achieving the two expected learning outcomes of the Cultures and Ideas area will be assessed in several interrelated ways: (i) direct assessment through qualitative evaluation of student writing, and their participation in class and various discussion exercises; (ii) indirect assessment through student questionnaires; and (iii) comparative assessment of student achievement across different years.

a) Expected Level of Student Achievement

The expected level of student achievement with respect to **the first GE expected learning outcome for Cultures and Ideas** is the following: if the course is successful, a large percentage of the students should show significant improvement in their analytic writing skills (that is, in their abilities to analyze, interpret, and critique literary texts), measured in the ways described below.

The expected level of student achievement with respect to **the second GE expected learning outcome for Cultures and Ideas** is for every student to engage in at least some reflection about the connection between their own values and views and those articulated in the readings on the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior and, indeed, the meaning of religious and secular life. This will be measured in the ways described below, as well as through class participation and discussions exercises.

If the course succeeds in its objectives, the vast majority of students should receive at least a B on their final papers, which requires that they are able to interpret and evaluate a difficult text and to critically and express their analysis of the text clearly. It also requires that they show evidence of having thought about the ways in which different personal and cultural values may have shaped the assigned texts.

b) Direct Measures of Student Success

The various short writing assignments and discussion exercises will serve as direct measures of student success with respect to the **first expected learning outcome** since it is their purpose to test the

students' critical reading, thinking, and writing skills. The relatively large number of these assignments will also reveal whether there has been improvement over the course of the semester. The short writing assignments are also designed to prepare students for the final paper, which in turn will serve as additional evidence of student success in achieving this expected learning outcome. More specifically, the instructor will pay particular attention to whether individual students have become (a) more careful readers of the assigned texts, as evidenced by the way they engage with these texts in the writing assignments, (b) more systematic and critical thinkers, based on the arguments they present in the assignments, and (c) clearer and more careful writers. The discussion exercises will also serve as indirect measures of student success, since it will get them to exchange ideas with each other and present either a unified view or a respectful presentation of opposing views. The various writing and discussion exercises are also meant to test how carefully the students have read the assigned texts and how well they are able to identify the most crucial features of these texts.

Similarly, the writing assignments will serve as direct assessment of the extent to which the **second expected learning outcome** was achieved: in the assignments, students will be asked to reflect on the ways in which the cultural and personal backgrounds of the authors they have read might be reflected in these authors' views on the character of human beliefs, the perception of reality, and the norms which guide human behavior. Students will also be asked to think about the way their own personal and cultural background might be shaping their attitudes toward the course topic. In order to receive at least a B on these assignments, students must engage in this kind of reflection; therefore, success on the assignments is direct evidence that the student has achieved the second expected learning outcome.

c) Indirect Measures of Student Success

In addition to these direct measures, the instructor will also employ indirect measures. As well as asking students to comment on their learning process with respect to **both GE expected learning outcomes** in the official SEIs, the instructor will conduct an anonymous in-class survey. The survey will contain questions specifically about the **two GE expected learning outcomes**, asking students to assess their progress toward these goals.

d) Follow-Up/Feedback Process

Finally, each time the course is offered, the instructor will compose and submit to the Department's Teaching Evaluation and Assessment Committee a short report summarizing overall student performance discussion exercises and writing assignments. The report will also integrate student feedback from the survey described above. These reports will be grouped by term and saved on the shared departmental drive, so that teaching effectiveness in a particular semester can be evaluated by comparison to previous years. On the basis of these comparisons, the relative emphases of different elements of the course can be adjusted in order to help more students achieve the expected learning outcomes.

3 CURRICULUM MAP

PHIL 3111 will not be required for the major, but it can be taken as an elective course as illustrated by the following curriculum map:

Each Major must include:

1. PHIL 3000: Gateway Seminar (3 credits)
2. History of Philosophy: Any Three of the following (9 credits)
 - PHIL 3210: History of Ancient Philosophy
 - PHIL 3220: History of Medieval Philosophy
 - PHIL 3230: History of 17th Century Philosophy
 - PHIL 3240: History of 18th Century Philosophy
 - PHIL 3250: History of 19th Century Philosophy
 - PHIL 3261: Fundamental Concepts of Existentialism
3. Philosophical Topics (9 credits)
Required of all majors: PHIL 3300: Moral Philosophy (3 credits)
And two of the following (6 credits):
 - PHIL 3530: Philosophy of Logic
 - PHIL 3600: Introduction to Philosophy of Language
 - PHIL 3650: Philosophy of Science
 - PHIL 3680: Sex and Death: Introduction to the Philosophy of Biology
 - PHIL 3700: Introduction to Metaphysics
 - PHIL 3750: Introduction to Theory of Knowledge
 - PHIL 3800: Introduction to Philosophy of Mind
 - PHIL 3810: Philosophy of Action
 - PHIL 3820: Philosophy of Perception
4. Upper Level Coursework: Any Two PHIL 5xxx courses (6 credits)
5. Elective: Any one further Philosophy course at the 2xxx, 3xxx [**such as PHIL 3111: Introduction to Jewish Philosophy**], 4xxx, or 5xxx level (3 credits)