

## Term Information

Effective Term Autumn 2016  
*Previous Value* Autumn 2015

## Course Change Information

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

renumbering from 2210H to 3210H

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

[from Comparative Studies:] In the revision of our major, we structured our curriculum to create meaningful pathways through it. Students should advance through an organized procession of introductory courses (2XXX), topical or theorizing courses that provide frameworks for the study of particular types of objects or practices (3XXX), and a set of research-oriented classes that provide the opportunity to exercise and refine their abilities to identify complex cultural issues and develop interdisciplinary comparative approaches to those issues (4XXX).

As evidenced by the syllabus, this course fits into the "topical or theorizing" level of our curriculum. It should, therefore, be renumbered 3210H

### 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)?

No program requirements will be added or moved.

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? Yes

Please identify the pending request and explain its relationship to the proposed changes(s) for this course (e.g. cross listed courses, new or revised program)

RS 2210H renumbered to RS 3210H and JS 2210H renumbered to JS 3210H & equivalent non-H number changes

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

## General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	Hebrew
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	Near Eastern Languages/Culture - D0554
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	3210H
<i>Previous Value</i>	<i>2210H</i>
Course Title	The Jewish Mystical Tradition
Transcript Abbreviation	Jewish Mystical Trad
Course Description	The history of Jewish mysticism from antiquity to the present, with emphasis on its implications for the comparative study of religious experience.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

## Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 12 Week (May + Summer)
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	No

**COURSE CHANGE REQUEST**  
3210H - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Vankeerbergen, Bernadette  
Chantal  
02/18/2016

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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

## Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites	Prereq: Honors standing, and English 1110 (110).
Exclusions	Not open to students with credit for 2210 (376), 3210, 2210H (376H), CompStd 2210 (376), 2210H (376H), JewshSt 2210, 3210, 2210H, 3210H, RelStds 2210, 3210, 2210H, or 3210H.
<a href="#">Previous Value</a>	Not open to students with credit for 2210 (376), 376H, CompStd 2210 (376), 2210H (376H), JewshSt 2210, 2210H, or RelStds 2210 (376) or 2210H.

## Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings	Cross-listed in RelStds and JewshSt.
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## Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code	38.0201
Subsidy Level	Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank	Sophomore, Junior, Senior

## Requirement/Elective Designation

General Education course:  
Culture and Ideas; Global Studies (International Issues successors)

## Course Details

### Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes

- Have an understanding of the most important stages in the history of Jewish mysticism, their main ideas, and how historical forces have shaped them;
- Learn about central themes in classical Judaism such as creation, revelation and redemption, Torah, and ritual and how they relate to Jewish mysticism;
- Have explored a wide range of phenomena in the history of from religions, spanning from antiquity to the modern period;
- Have met an astounding variety of philosophers, poets, visionaries, legislators and eccentrics from these periods
- Know how to interpret the mysterious symbolism, imagery, and world-views of Jewish mystical texts
- Be familiar with key issues in the cross-cultural study of mysticism and religious experience
- And you will learn how to express your understanding through well-argued essays and analyses.
- *n/a*

[Previous Value](#)

**Content Topic List**

- Defining Mysticism
- The Roots of Jewish Mysticism
- Ancient Jewish Mysticism
- Jewish Magic
- Medieval Jewish Philosophy
- The Zohar
- Lurianic Kabbalah
- Hasidism
- Modern Jewish Mysticism

**Attachments**

- 3210H syllabus proposal from CS 2.3.16.doc: 2.3.16 CS syllabus  
*(Syllabus. Owner: Acome, Justin)*

**Comments**

- - all content of revision form provided by Comparative Studies  
- attached syllabus forwarded 2/3/16 by CS *(by Acome, Justin on 02/17/2016 01:29 PM)*
- - Justin: you will need to change the number on the actual form. If that is not done, OUR will not be able to process any change.  
-For this Honors version, the Honors panel will need to see the H version of the syllabus. They will not be able to act on this request if only the non-H syllabus is uploaded. I know you used the old CS 2210 syllabus (that I provided to you) and adapted the number but in this case you can't use this syllabus for the H version (since it is really not meant for an H course). *(by Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal on 01/20/2016 04:27 PM)*

**Workflow Information**

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Acome, Justin	01/05/2016 04:45 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	van Bladel, Kevin Thomas	01/05/2016 04:51 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heyssel, Garrett Robert	01/05/2016 05:53 PM	College Approval
Revision Requested	Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal	01/20/2016 04:27 PM	ASCCAO Approval
Submitted	Acome, Justin	02/17/2016 01:30 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	van Bladel, Kevin Thomas	02/17/2016 01:59 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heyssel, Garrett Robert	02/17/2016 05:29 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Nolen, Dawn Vankeerbergen, Bernadette Chantal Hanlin, Deborah Kay Jenkins, Mary Ellen Bigler Hogle, Danielle Nicole	02/17/2016 05:29 PM	ASCCAO Approval

**Hebrew 3210H, Religious Studies 3210H, and Jewish Studies 3210H**  
**THE JEWISH MYSTICAL TRADITION**  
**Professor Michael D. Swartz**

Office: Hagerty Hall 321  
1775 College Road  
292-9967 or 292-9255  
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Office Hours:  
T 1:00-2:00  
Th 4:00-5:00  
and by appointment

Jewish mysticism has been a constant yet controversial undercurrent in Jewish history, ranging from antiquity to the present day. Its adherents have pursued striking visions of God enthroned on a huge chariot; sought to penetrate the mysteries of the divine personality, perceiving both male and female in the One God; followed a bi-polar false messiah; worshipped God through joyful song and dance; and imbued classical Judaism with meaning and life its originators could never have imagined. The Jewish Mystical Tradition is a look into this way of interpreting Judaism and how it has affected Jewish history.

Jewish mystical texts also provide a rare look into the personal religious experience of individual Jews. Using William James's classic *Varieties of Religious Experience* and current comparative essays on mysticism as our guide, we will probe the human dimensions of these forms of religious expression. We will also learn how to read a mystical text, and to interpret the rich symbolism of the Kabbalah and other systems of Jewish mystical religion.

The Jewish Mystical Tradition is also a course in the comparative study of religion and culture. In exploring Jewish mysticism, we will address questions essential to the cross-cultural study of religion: Are all mystical experiences essentially the same? How can we tell the rational from the irrational? Can we reconstruct a person's individual experience from a written text? Is spirituality a force for stability or anarchy in society?

**I. Goals of the Course**

By the end of this course you should:

- A. Have an understanding of the most important stages in the history of Jewish mysticism, their main ideas, and how historical forces have shaped them;
- B. Learn about central themes in classical Judaism such as creation, revelation and redemption, Torah, and ritual and how they relate to Jewish mysticism;
- C. Have explored a wide range of phenomena in the history of from religions, spanning from antiquity to the modern period;
- D. Have met an astounding variety of philosophers, poets, visionaries, legislators and eccentrics from these periods;
- E. Know how to interpret the mysterious symbolism, imagery, and world-views of Jewish mystical texts;
- F. Be familiar with key issues in the cross-cultural study of mysticism and religious experience;
- G. And you will learn how to express your understanding through well-argued essays and analyses.

## II. Texts

All textbooks (except for translations of the Hebrew Bible, which are available in the reference section of the Main Library) are available at Student Book Exchange (SBX) and are also on reserve. Because most of our classes will include in-class readings of Jewish mystical texts in translation, **it is essential that you bring the reading to the class session for which it is assigned.**

### A. Required texts:

All required texts are available at the Student Book Exchange (SBX) on High St. and are on reserve at Thompson Library (they are listed under Hebrew 3210H). Bible translations are available at many bookstores, in the reference sections of the OSU libraries, and in the Middle Eastern and Jewish Studies reference area in the Great Reading Room at Thompson Library.

1. Blumenthal, David. *Understanding Jewish Mysticism* vols. I and II. Bring the appropriate volume of Blumenthal to the class session for which it is assigned.
2. James, William. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. (Page numbers are listed here according to the Penguin edition, which is available at SBX. Other editions have different numbering).
3. Matt, Daniel (ed.) *Zohar, the Book of Enlightenment*; bring to class for units E and F.
4. Scholem, Gershom, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*.
5. Greenspahn, Fredrick E. (editor), *Jewish Mysticism and Kabbalah: New Insights and Scholarship*. A survey of the most up-to-date scholarship on Jewish mysticism; allows us to see how the study of Jewish mysticism has changed since Scholem.
6. Bible. Any reliable translation. Recommended translations: *Tanakh: The Jewish Publication Society Translation of the Holy Scriptures*; *The New Revised Standard Bible* and the *Revised Standard Bible* (also contained in the *Oxford English Bible*); *Revised English Bible*. The following translations are **not** acceptable for this course: *The Good News Bible*; *New International Version*; the King James Version (also called the Authorized Version); Translations published by Artscroll Press; and paraphrases such as *The Book* and the *Reader's Digest Condensed Bible*. Please consult with me if you have any questions.

### B. Other required readings:

7. Additional required readings, consisting of articles and translations of primary texts, will be available on CARMEN for downloading:

<https://carmen.osu.edu/>

The course is listed under Hebrew 3210H in CARMEN.

These readings are marked with an asterisk (\*) in the syllabus. **Please print out each of these readings and bring it to class on the day it is assigned.**

8. At least one article from *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (second edition, edited by Lindsay Jones) will be assigned. This article is available online. To read the article, follow these instructions:
  - Go online to OSCAR (the OSU online library catalog) and do a title search for **Encyclopedia of Religion**,

- Click on the link for “**Encyclopedia of Religion (online)**”
- When you arrive at the encyclopedia of religion entry click on the “**connect to web site**” link. (If you are off campus you may have to sign in using your OSU ID.)
- This will get you to the Encyclopedia e-book site. Click on the **eTable of Contents** and go to the appropriate volume to find the article.

Alternatively, the article is available in the print edition of the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, which is available in the reference stacks of Thompson Library. The call number is: **BL31 .E46 2005**. You may photocopy the article in the library. Please contact me if you have any difficulty finding the article.

#### C. Recommended readings and resources:

A good, reliable introduction to Judaism can be found in Jacob Neusner, *The Way of Torah: An Introduction to Judaism* (on reserve at Thompson Library). This book presents the structure of Jewish religion and history. You may also look at the article “Judaism: An Overview,” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Second Edition, which is available online (see instructions above).

### III. Course Requirements

A. **Timely preparation of readings and participation in class discussion** are essential requirements of this course. Class sessions will usually include in-class discussions of the subject matter and assigned texts. Your willingness to learn and to participate can make a significant difference in your grade. 20%.

B. **Four short (10-15 minute) quizzes**, in which you will be asked to identify important concepts and persons briefly. Each quiz will be held **at the beginning of class**. **No allowances will be made for taking it afterward**. 20%.

C. **One in-class presentation in which you will analyze Jewish mystical text (in translation)**. The presentations will take place in mid-November. Possible texts for this paper will be discussed in class. **The text and a bibliography must be approved by me by November 3**. By that time, you should prepare a sheet containing the text and a preliminary bibliography. This sheet is to be signed by me and stapled to your final paper. *Any paper which has not been approved by me in this way will receive a failing grade.*

In this presentation, you are to take a text from the literature of Jewish mysticism, give a short account of its historical background, and analyze its symbolism and use of language, and its relevance to issues in the study of religion that we have been discussing in class. Along with the presentation, the student is to submit a 3-page, typed summary. This summary must be typed or word-processed and *stapled*. You may do outside reading in preparation for this essay; however you must consult with me about a bibliography. You are **required** to meet with me at office hours or another arranged time to discuss your selection and how to approach the assignment. 20%.

D. **A midterm exam** to be held in class on **Thursday October 22**, and a **final exam**, to be

held on **Friday Dec 11, 4:00pm in our regular classroom.** 20% each.

E. To gain an deeper understanding of Judaism and the study of religion and how it is studied in the University, students will be required to attend a **lecture** at the University relevant to Jewish Studies and religious studies and to write a **one-page report** on that lecture. Events that will fulfill this requirement are listed at the end of the syllabus. More will be announced as information becomes available. The report is due a week after the lecture and will count as much as one quiz.

#### IV. PLEASE NOTE:

A. **University policy regarding academic misconduct such as cheating and plagiarism will be strictly enforced.** It is imperative that you understand what constitutes plagiarism and academic misconduct. Please review the University's rules and definitions at:

[http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource\\_csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/resource_csc.asp)

B. This course is designed so that much of our learning will take place in the classroom. Therefore, **your attendance at classes will be critical to your success in the course.** You are responsible for information and assignments given in class, whether you were present or not. Late papers and exams will not be accepted.

C. Therefore, please **do not schedule any travel or appointments for the dates and times of the midterm and final exams.** They cannot be rescheduled.

D. So that we can all engage directly with the texts and class discussions, **all personal electronic devices must be turned off in the classroom.** This includes laptops, cell phones and smart phones, tablet computers, e-book readers, iPod/MP3 players, and PDAs.

E. Please check your OSU email account regularly or be sure that you have forwarded your OSU email to your personal account. You may receive important announcements about the course and the class schedule through that account.

F. Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at (614) 292-3307, or visit 150 Pomerene Hall, to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

G. This course fulfills a GE requirement in the categories of Cultures and Ideas and Diversity: Global Studies by developing students' capacities for interpreting writings from the Jewish mystical tradition and modern studies of religious experience and understanding their role in the cultures of the Mediterranean, Europe, and North America. The University's criteria for fulfilling these requirements are as follows:

##### **Cultures and Ideas:**

Goals: Students evaluate significant cultural phenomena and ideas in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; 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.

##### **Diversity**

Goals: Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens.

Expected Learning Outcomes (Global Studies):

1. Students understand some of the political, economic, cultural, physical, social, and philosophical aspects of one or more of the world's nations, peoples and cultures outside the U.S.
2. Students recognize the role of national and international diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values as global citizens.

For more information see:

<http://asccas.osu.edu/curriculum/ge-goals-and-learning-outcomes>

## V. Class Schedule

In this schedule, individual class sessions are represented by Arabic numerals (1, 2, etc.). This schedule is subject to change; you will of course be notified in advance. Updates to the syllabus will also be posted on Carmen. As discussion of the class material is an important element in this course, you should write down any questions about words, facts, or issues that arise in your reading and raise them in class.

### A. Introduction

1. What is Mysticism?
  - Recommended: Blumenthal I, Foreword (pp.xv-xviii),
2. Mysticism and Religion
  - James, pp. 1-77
3. Defining Mysticism
  - James, pp. 379-429

### B. Mysticism and Judaism

1. Understanding Judaism
  - "Judaism: An Overview," in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*
  - Greenspahn, Preface
    - (see instructions above)

**FIRST QUIZ:** on the concept of mysticism
2. Mysticism and Culture
  - Scholem, Ch. 1
  - Greenspahn, Introduction (Lachter)
2. The Roots of Jewish Mysticism
  - Bible, Genesis chapters 1-3, Exodus 19-20
  - Bring Bibles to class.
  - Assignment: Make a list of questions raised by your reading of Genesis 1-3

### C. Mysticism and Rabbinic Judaism



1. Pardes: The Secret Garden

- Blumenthal I, ch. 5
- Scholem, Ch. 2

2. The Riders to the Chariot

- Greenspahn, ch. 1
- \*Ma'aseh Merkavah
- Bring Blumenthal vol. I to class.

3. Jewish Magic

- \*Swartz, "Scribal Magic and Its Rhetoric"

**9/24: SECOND QUIZ: On Judaism and Merkavah Mysticism**

D. Mysticism and Philosophy

1. The Philosophical Problem

- James, "Philosophy" (430-457)

2. Moses Maimonides

- \*Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*
- Blumenthal II ch. 2 (pp. 5-23)

THE KABBALAH:

D. The Zohar

- It is recommended that you bring Bibles to class for the following four sessions.

1. Moses de Leon and the Zohar

- Zohar, Introduction
- Zohar, 43-45 and notes (pp. 204-207)

**SECOND QUIZ: On Magic and Philosophy**

2. How does the Zohar Mean?

- Scholem, Ch. 5
- Zohar, 49-53 and notes

3. The Sex of God and Other Mysteries

- Scholem, ch. 6
- Zohar, 54-56, 153-162 and notes

4. How to Read the Zohar

- Greenspahn ch. 2 (Fishbane)
- Blumenthal I, 113-125

## MIDTERM EXAM

### E. Lurianic Kabbalah

#### 1. History, Theodicy, and Cosmology

- Major Trends, ch. 7
- \*Scholem, *The Messianic Idea in Judaism*, 1-48

#### 2. Ritual and Redemption

- Blumenthal I, ch. 10
- Greenspahn, ch. 4 (Fine)

### H. Shabbatai Zvi

#### 1. The Rise and Fall of a Messiah

- Major Trends, ch. 8
- Greenspahn, ch. 5 (Goldish)

### I. Hasidism

#### 1. The Birth and Life of Hasidism

- Online reading: *Encyclopedia of Religion*, volume 6, “Hasidism: An Overview”  
(See instructions above.)
- Blumenthal, II, 87-97

**11/5: THIRD QUIZ:** on Luria and Shabbatai Zvi

#### 2. The Kabbalah Transformed

- Major Trends, ch. 9
- Greenspahn, ch. 6 (Magid)
- In-class presentations

#### 3. Cleaving to God

- Blumenthal II, chs. 8-9
- In-class presentations

### J. Mysticism and Modern Judaism

#### 1. Mysticism and Gender

- \*Umansky, “(Re)imaging the Divine” and Gottlieb, “Speaking into the Silence”
- Greenspahn, ch. 9 (Tirosh-Samuelsan)
- In-class presentations

**11/17: FOURTH QUIZ:** on Hasidism

#### 2. Why Does Madonna Study Kabbalah?

- \**Kabbalah and the Spiritual Quest: The Kabbalah Centre in America* (excerpts)
- Greenspahn, Chapter 8 (Myers) and “Epilogue” (Giller)

## K. Conclusions

### 1. Rethinking Mysticism

- \*Katz, “Language, Epistemology, and Mysticism”
- \*Huss “Jewish Mysticism in the University: Academic Study or Theological Practice?;” and Magid and Huss, “Is Kabbalah Mysticism? Continuing the Debate”

For these articles, see the following links:

<http://www.zeeq.net/712academy/>

<http://www.zeeq.net/803huss/>

(Be sure to click on all pages of the articles)

### 1. What is Jewish Mysticism?

- James, Lectures XIX and XX

## **FINAL EXAM**