**Basic Judaism**

**Course Outline**

| Week | Course Content |
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| 1  Jan. 11 | Introduction to Judaism  Expectations  **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Rosh Hashanah & Yamim Noraim (High Holidays)**  High Holidays music and prayers  Jewish Calendar, Elul  Hebrew *– Alef bet, Lessons 1-3* |
| 2  Jan. 18 | **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Yom Kippur**  Movements in Judaism - Comparison of Ideologies  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 10-12 |
| 3  Jan. 25 | **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Tu B’Shvat**  Biblical Texts and History  Prayer, Jewish meditation, Kavanah  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 13-15 |
| 4  Feb. 1 | **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret & Simhat Torah**  Introduction to Jewish worship and services  A first look at Basic Jewish Books: Torah, Tanakh, Mishna, Talmud, Midrash, Siddur  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 16-18 |
| 5  Feb. 8 | G-d: Covenant with Avraham, at Sinai, 13 Characteristics  Deep dive into the Siddur  Blessings  **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Purim**  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 19-21 |
| 6  Feb. 15  Presidents  Day | **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Passover, Haggadah, Seder**  How to Prepare for Passover  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 22-24 |
| 7  Feb. 22 | Kashrut (Jewish Dietary Laws) – Why? How?  **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Counting of the Omer**  K’riat Shema (The readings of the Shema), Themes and Theology, Mitzvot (Commandments)  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 25-27 |
| 8  Mar. 1 | Israel: History and Meaning to Contemporary Jews  **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Yom Hazikaron, Yom HaAtzma’ut**  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 28-30 |
| 9  Mar. 8 | Shabbat - Its Meaning and Centrality in Judaism  Observing & Remembering - Two Dimensions of Shabbat  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 31-33 |
| 10  Mar. 15 | How to Make Shabbat at Home  Mysticism and Kabbalah  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 34-37 |
| 11  Mar. 22 | Songs and Chants of the Synagogue:Trope, Nusah, MiSinai Tunes, Cantorial Music  **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Chanukah**  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 38-41 |
| 12  Mar. 29 | Jewish Home and Family Life: Part I  Birth Naming, Millah, Pidyon HaBen, and choosing your Jewish name  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 42-45 |
| 13  Apr. 5 | Anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and its impact on the Jewish psyche  **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Yom HaShoah (April 8 this year)**  Tzedakah and Gemilut Hassidim; Shalom Bayit  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 46-49 |
| 14  Apr. 12 | Jewish Home and Family Life: Part II  Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Marriage Divorce, Death  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 50-53 |
| 15  Apr. 19 | Biblical Texts and History  Yiddish songs, expressions, stories, foods, humor  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 54-57 |
| 16  Apr. 26 | **The Jewish Holiday Cycle: Shavuot**  The Book of Ruth  Affiliating with a new religion and community  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 58-62 |
| 17  May 3 | Conversion Practicalities & Unanswered Questions  An Open Forum  Preparing for the Conversion Ceremony  Selecting Hebrew Names  Scheduling  Hebrew *Reishit Binah*, pp. 63-66 |
| 18  May 10 | Brit Milah (men), Mikveh, Bet Din, Conversion Ceremony  **No Class – May 17 is Shavuot, Day 1 – service attendance** |
| 19  May 24 | Optional additional class:  Bar/Bat Mitzvah  Welcoming Ceremony |

**Cost considerations for you:**

* Whichever Jewish books you will want to own for your library
* Mikvah (ritual bath) fee
* Brit Milah or Hatafat Dam Brit (for men)
* Tallit, Kippot, Tefillin
* Mezuzot, other Judaica
* Candlesticks, Shabbat candles
* Menorah
* Wine, wine cup
* Havdalah candle and spices

**Bibliography**

We will provide all reading and study materials from the following texts. You may want to buy some of these for your own personal Jewish library:

* *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice,* by Rabbi Isaac Klein. Conservative Jewish practice*.*
* *A Historical Atlas of the Jewish People: From the Time of the Patriarchs to the Present*.. Barnavi, Eli, ed. 1992. New York: Schocken Books
* *Artscroll Siddur* (Orthodox prayer book).
* *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts*, edited by Barry W. Holtz, Simon & Schuster, 1986.
* *Book of Jewish Belief -* by Louis Jacobs
* *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*. Biale, David , ed. New York: Schocken Books.
* *Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service* - by Reuven Hammer
* *Introduction to Judaism: A Sourcebook. New York: UAHC Press.* Einstein, Stephen J, and Lydia Kukoff, eds. 1999.
* *Jewish Literacy,* by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin. Morrow
* *Jewish Living, by Mark Washofsky. Contemporary Reform Practice. URJ Press.*
* *Judaism: Revelation and Traditions.* Fishbane, Michael. 1988. San Francisco: HarperCollins.
* *Kol Haneshama: Shabbat v’Hagim* (Reconstructionist prayer book)
* *Living a Jewish Life: Jewish Traditions, Customs and Values for Today's Families -* by Anita Diamant, Howard Cooper
* *Mishkan Tefilah* (Reform prayer book).
* *My Prayer: Volume 2, Shabbat Prayers.* By Nissan Mindel
* *Permission to Believe: Four Rational Approaches to G-d’s Existence.* Lawrence Kelemen. Targum/Feldheim
* *Reishit Binah – Hebrew Crash Course.* National Jewish Outreach Program.
* *Sacred Fragments: Recovering Theology for the Modern Jew.* Gillman, Neil. 1990. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society
* *Shalom Aleichem - Learn to Read the Hebrew Prayer Book -* by Noah Golinkin *The Jewish Holidays* - by Michael Strassfeld
* *Siddur Sim Shalom* (Conservative prayer book).
* *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, Jewish Publication Society of America, 1st Special edition, 1985.
* *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry: International Jewish Folk Traditions*, by Steven M. Lowenstein, Oxford University Press, 2002
* *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*, by Rabbi Irving Greenberg, Simon & Schuster
* *The Life of Judaism*, edited by Harvey E. Goldberg, University of California Press, 2001
* *The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia:* : From Abraham to Zabar's and Everything in Between. Butnick, Liebovitz, Oppenheimer.
* *The Sabbath*, by Abraham Joshua Heschel, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.
* *The Siddur Companion.* Rabbi Paul H. Vishny. Devora Publishing, New York.
* *To Be a Jew, by Rabbi Hayyim Halevy Donin.*
* *To Pray as a Jew, by Rabbi Hayyim Halevy Donin.*

**Useful Websites**

Congregation Sons of Abraham <https://lacrosse.synagogue.org> Local La Crosse Jewish community information on events, services, holidays and lifecycle events

Sefaria.org [www.sefaria.org](http://www.sefaria.org) An all-inclusive interactive database of Jewish literature, including Torah, Tanach, Talmud, liturgy, philosophy and Kabbalah

My Jewish Learning <http://myjewishlearning.com> Database of Jewish practices, holidays and life cycle events

Interactive Jewish Calendar <http://www.hebcal.com/hebcal/>

Jewish History Resource Center Amazing interactive database <http://www.dinur.org//1.html>

Jewish Language Research Website <http://www.jewish-languages.org/> Dictionaries and lexicons covering 22 worldwide Jewish languages

Jewish Music Web Center <http://www.jmwc.org/>

Chabad Lubavitch [www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org) Most comprehensive Jewish database, from the perspective of a Chassidic Orthodox organization

Reform Judaism [www.urj.org](http://www.urj.org) Comprehensive database from a progressive Reform Movement perspective, with a focus on universal inclusion, racial and social justice, and making Torah more accessible.

Jewish Encyclopedia [www.jewishencyclopedia.com](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com) The unedited full text of the 1906 encyclopedia.

Judaism 101 <http://jewfaq.org/> An online encyclopedia of Judaism, covering Jewish beliefs, people, places, things, language, scripture, holidays, practices and customs, from the Orthodox viewpoint.

929.org The Whole Tanach! Description: https://929.org.il/pages/aboutEN.html

Today’s chapter; <https://929.org.il/lang/en/today> Invites you to read the Tanach, one chapter at a day, every day, in Hebrew or in English, from beginning to end. It is in both writing and audio clips.