PROGRAM 2015 - 2016  ●  ACADEMIC YEAR 5776

Fall Session: Woodbury Jewish Center, 200 South Woods Road, Woodbury, 496-9100
Opening Lecture: Monday October 12, 2015 at 9 PM. No classes scheduled that day.
Classes run October 19 through December 7, 7:45 to 8:45 PM preceding each lecture.

Refresments following lectures donated by ShopRite of Plainview

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Winter Session
The Irrepressible Gadfly: A Philip Roth Retrospective
by Rabbi Bruce Ginburg

Manetto Hill Jewish Center, 244 Manetto Hill Road, Plainview, 935-5454
Programs at 8 PM Mondays, January 4, 11, 18 and 25

No additional charge for those registered for the Fall Session.
If not registered for the Fall Session: Each lecture $5, or $15 for all four.

Philip Roth is one of America’s most highly acclaimed and controversial writers. His signature wit, irreverence, literary style, and provocative critique of American Jewish identity will be the focus of this series.

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October 12 — Nancy Traeger
Jewish Traditions in Art and Marc Chagall
Nancy Traeger developed Art in the City, a private art tour program and leads small group visits to galleries, museums, auction previews and artist studios. Mrs. Traeger is a Museum Educator at the Long Island Jewish Museum and has previously served as docent-coordinator and docent trainer. She has presented art lectures at libraries, temples and at Hasidahaus and Brandeis University Women’s events. Mrs. Traeger holds an extensive knowledge of Jewish art and history.

November 2 — Rabbi Dr. Edward Reichman
Jewish Medical Ethics Updates
Reichman is a doctoral candidate in the Division of Education and Bioethics at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, and he teaches Jewish medical ethics to medical students at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York. He is the Editor-in-Chief of the Rabbinical Council of America’s newsletter, Gadol, which features thought-provoking commentary on Jewish medical ethics issues.

November 9 — Professor Joseph Benavot
How 50,000 Bulgarian Jews Survived the Holocaust
Dr. Benavot holds a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Pennsylvania, where he teaches Hebrew. He has translated fiction, poetry and drama, including several plays which were staged to wide acclaim in Bulgaria.

November 16 — Professor Benjamin Nelson
Arthur Miller: Through a Jewish Lens
Arthur Miller is Professor Emeritus of English and Comparative Literature at Fairleigh Dickinson University, from which he received the Distinguished Faculty Award for Teaching. He has taught a vast array of courses, including American Jewish Literature, Israeli Literature, Literature of the Holocaust, and Ethnographic Writing. Professor Nelson is the author of critical biographies of two leading American dramatists: Tennessee Williams: The Man & His Work and Arthur Miller: Portrait of a Playwright. He has also published a number of articles on Miller, including a chapter in his forthcoming book on Hollywood’s treatment of the Holocaust. Prof. Nelson has spoken extensively in the tri-state area and was extremely well received as our Winter Session speaker in 2004, 2008 and 2015. Prof. Nelson received his BA and MFA from Columbia University.

November 23 — James Coll
Religion and the Constitution
James Coll holds a BA in History from Hofstra University and an MA in History from Hunter College with a minor in Political Science. He is an adjunct professor of American and Constitutional History at Nassau Community College and Hofstra University. Coll is the founder of ChangeNY1s, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting non-partisan civic education and political reform in our state. He is also an NYPD detective and lives in Seaford.

November 30 — Rabbi David Kalb
It’s a Plane—No, It’s a Kreplach: The Story of Jews and Comics
Rabbi David Kalb is the Rabbi of Balti Ohr Torah, a new organization that reaches out to Jews who are disconnected from Judaism and the Jewish community. Balti Ohr Torah is particularly focused on reaching out to inter- dating and intermarried couples. Rabbi Kalb is an associate faculty member of the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, and is also a Senior Rabbinic Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute. He has taught at the Academy for Jewish Religion, Tuco College and Newcomb College. Rabbi Kalb approaches scholarship as a vibrant reflection of Jewish life, believing that Judaism is a holistic experience that operates in the real world, not just in the synagogue.

December 7 — Lois Morton
An Evening of Song
Lois Morton is a performing songwriter who has delighted audiences throughout the New York metropolitan area for the last few years with her band, Michael and the Mixtape. The Rabbi’s Song is the story of the Rabbi and Isaac ElCHAN’s Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University and writes and lectures internationally in the field of Jewish medical ethics. He has been a member of the New York City Human Rights Public Pol- icy, the New York Organ Donor Network, the Halaic honor Society, the Rabbinical Council of America. He is the Program Director at the Student Medical Ethics Society of Yeshiva University and has his inception. His research is devoted to the interface of medical history and Jewish law.

December 14 — Rabbi Dr. Michael Weinblatt
The Irrepressible Gadfly: A Philip Roth Retrospective
Instructor: Rabbi Jonathan Hecht, Ph.D., Temple Chaveirim

December 21 — Rabbi Dr. Michael Weinblatt
The Path of Blessing
Instructor: Devorah Cohen-Keynan, Rabbi Steven Conn, Plainview Jewish Center

Winter Session
The Impressive Gadfly: A Philip Roth Retrospective
January 4, 11, 18, 25 — Rabbi Bruce Ginsburg
Rabbi Bruce Ginsburg is the spiritual leader of Congregation Sons of Israel in Woodmere. He has served as President of the Long Island Board of Rabbis and as national President of the Union for Traditional Judaism. A life-long lover of narrative fiction, he holds a Doctorate in Hebrew Literature from the Jewish Theological Seminary. As the Rabbi of the Kehilath Emet Synagogue, he served for 29 years as the spiritual leader of the congregation. Rabbi Ginsburg has been a faculty member of the Steinhardt School of Music at New York University and is currently the head of the Department of Humanities at St. John’s University. He is the author of numerous articles and short stories and is also the author of the novel, “The Path of Blessing.”

Course #1: Movies and Midrash II: Bible Stories on Film Beyond the Ten Commandments
Instructor: Rabbi Steven Conn, Plainview Jewish Center

With the release of Noa and Exodus: Gods and Kings, film critics dubbed 2014 “The Year of the Bible.” Despite their grand budgets and special effects, these films continue a long tradition of portraying Bible stories on screen. In this course, we will continue our exploration of the Bible on film, turning our attention to classic films such as Samson and Delilah and David and Bathsheba, as well as newer films such as Exodus: Gods and Kings. By comparing scenes from the movies to the original Bible stories, we will examine how closely these films adhere to their source material. We will also explore how the movies draw on classic Jewish commentaries to fill out their plot-lines. And, finally, we will examine the idea that the films themselves are commentaries (midrashim), and consider what these films add to our understanding of the Bible, and what contemporary questions they attempt to address.

Course #2: Sephardic Jewish History
Instructor: Rabbi Jonathan Hecht, Ph.D., Temple Chaveirim

Sephardic Jews originated in Spain and from there spread throughout the world. It contributed to all branches of Jewish culture. They are known for their poetry, kabbalah, biblical, talmudic, rabbinic, halakhic studies, poetry and Christian - Jewish polemics. This course will trace the settlement of Jews in Spain from their earliest period to the Medieval “Golden Age,” the decline of Spanish Jewry, the expulsion of Jews in 1492, and the development of the Sephardic diaspora. Interested in Jewish History? Interested in the development of Jewish culture? Wonder to find out what Sephardic Judaism is all about? Then join us!

Course #3: Hot Topics in Contemporary Jewish Life (canceled)
Instructor: Rabbi Benjamin Herman, Jericho Jewish Center

Conservative Judaism has much to say about how become “hot topics.” Join us in exploring traditional sources and rabbinic responsa on some of these topics, including same-sex marriage, patrilineal descent and interfaith marraige. There will be time to share personal stories related to these topics, but the focus of the course will be on examining Jewish sources.

Course #4: Songs of Naomi Shemer
Instructor: Rabbi Michael Katz, Temple Beth Torah of Westbury

Using the classic hits of Israel’s most popular songwriter, we’ll examine the history of the modern Jewish state, the beauty and the features of the land of Israel, the Hebrew language, as well as the art in the poetry and music. Each class will listen to a song, and study it as if it were a classic Jewish text.

Course #5: What Do I Matter? Looking for the Answers within and beyond the Torah
Instructor: Rabbi Rafi Rani, Midway Jewish Center

This course will follow an examination of text and discussion on that basis, focusing on what knowledge is necessary, only an openness to recognizing the many sources where the word of God resides and a willingness to integrate those words into our lives.

Course #6: Judaism Today
Instructor: Rabbi Neil Schuman, Manetto Hill Jewish Center

Judaism today is more diverse than ever. Within the orthodox sects, we have Classical Chasidism, Chabad, Yeshiva/Black Hat Judaism, Modern Schachnitz-Orthodox, Outside of orthodoxy, we have the Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reform denominations as well as the non-orthodox. What’s the difference between all these forms? What are their benefits and what do they espouse? In this series we will discuss the history and origins of each group. We will research the founders and the modern leaders and the modern leaders of each denomination. This course will not only be informative, but also may help you understand your Jewish beliefs and find your niche as well.

Course #7: Blessings! Brachot! Brachas! (canceled)
Instructor: Rabbi Jay Weinstein and Rabbi Jenn Weinstein, Congregation Simchat HaLev

In this course, participants will experience a deeper spiritual understanding of the power of blessings. Based on the seminal work Blessings: A Spiritual Sourcebook, Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi and Marcia Prager’s book The Path of Blessing, and Jewish re- nown thought, Rabbi Jay and Rabbi Jenn will share with participants their understanding of the power of blessings. Together, we will unpack the ancient Hebrew words which some of us have prayed without understanding, by role, because our parents did, or because it is the siddur (prayer book). We will discover the intention and weight of words and formu- las. There are many blessings and prayers on the journey of life. Learn how to bless others and how to hear blessings in a new way.

Course #8: Conversational Hebrew
Instructor: Rabbi Michael Weinstein, Chabad of Nassau County

Hebrew Academy of Nassau County

Requirements are a familiarity with very basic Hebrew vocabulary, an ability to read Hebrew, and a desire to for- mulate and express ideas in this beautiful language.