

JTH 5321: Jewish Political Thought**Fall 2015**

Thursday: 4:10-6:50

Prof. Alan Mittleman

Kripke 604

Office Hours: Thursday, 10:00-11:30 and by appointment

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This course focuses on the conceptual dimensions of the Jewish political tradition. We will consider such questions as: To what extent does Judaism have a political tradition? What constitutes the tradition? How do Jewish sources address such perennial political issues as authority, legitimacy, types of government, consent, power and justice? How does the Jewish political tradition compare with other traditions such as those of Greece, Christianity, and modern traditions such as liberalism? What is the relationship between the State of Israel and the historic Jewish political tradition? Students will be exposed to both the secondary literature on the Jewish political tradition and primary texts.

The course will be run as a seminar. Everyone is expected to have read the material assigned for each session thoroughly and to participate in the discussion of the essays and primary sources. From time to time students may be asked to lead the discussion on the primary texts or scholarly essays. Grading will be based on three papers of 5-7 pages, all of which will be critical responses to the reading.

Course Goals: The goals of the course are to increase our knowledge of Jewish political thought, to learn to discern that thought, to read it in light of political theory and to think about Western political theory in light of Jewish perspectives. These goals will be met by close reading, intensive seminar discussion, and papers which show a serious critical engagement with a selection of the material.

Disability Policy: The JTS policy on disabilities may be found at www.jtsa.edu/About_JTS/Administration/Policies/Students_with_Disabilities.xml

Academic Integrity Statement: Students in this class are expected to maintain academic integrity and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in this class. JTS Student Disciplinary Procedures can be found at http://www.jtsa.edu/About_JTS/Administration/Policies/Student_Disciplinary_Procedures.xml. JTS students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity and to uphold its ideals.

A Note about Laptops: Nothing is more annoying to a teacher than students using their laptops for non-academic purposes in class. Please limit your use to note taking or occasionally looking things up. Other uses border on rudeness and disrupt the academic atmosphere we are trying to create in the classroom. *Ha-maskil yavin.*

Required texts:

Daniel J. Elazar, *Kinship and Consent: The Jewish Political Tradition and its Contemporary Uses* (Transaction Publishers, 1997)

Michael Walzer, *In God's Shadow* (Yale, 2012) = IGS

Michael Walzer et al, editors, *The Jewish Political Tradition, Volume I: Authority* (Yale, 2000) = JPT

(These books are on reserve in the Library; the two books by Michael Walzer and the book by Daniel J. Elazar are also available for purchase at *Book Culture*. Other materials are on reserve or on Blackboard.)

Recommended reading:

Alan Mittleman, *The Scepter Shall Not Depart From Judah: Perspectives on the Persistence of the Political in Judaism* (Lexington Books, 2000)

(This book is on reserve in the Library.)

Reading Assignments:

Week 1	9/10	<i>Is there a Jewish Political Tradition? Three Views:</i> Elazar, Introduction to <i>Kinship and Consent</i> (pp xv-xxxvii); Walzer, Introduction to JPT (pp xxi-xxxii); Biale, Introduction to <i>Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History</i> (e-reading)
		Supplemental: Mittleman, <i>The Scepter Shall not Depart from Judah</i> , chapter 1
Week 2	9/17	<i>Covenant as the basis of the Jewish Political Tradition?</i> Elazar, chapter 1; Walzer, IGS, chapters 1-2; Walzer, JPT, chapter 1 (pp 3-27).
		Supplemental: Mittleman, chapter 2
Week 3	9/24	<i>Covenant and consent in rabbinic thought</i>

Elazar, chapter 3; Walzer, JPT, chapter 1 (pp 27-46);

Supplemental: Mittleman, chapter 3

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| Week 4 | 10/1 | <p><i>Covenant and contract</i>: Locke, <i>Second Treatise of Government</i> (Chapter VII, sections 87-89; Chapter VIII, sections 95-99) (Available online at: http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtreat.htm); Oz Salzberger, <i>The Political Thought of John Locke</i> (e-reading)</p> <p>First Writing Assignment due</p> |
| Week 5 | 10/8 | <p><i>Who should rule?</i>
Elazar, chapters 2, 7;
Plato, <i>Republic</i> (472c-480; 487e-489e) (e-reading);
Melamed, <i>Philosopher-King</i>, Chapter 5 (e-reading)</p> <p>Supplemental: Mittleman, chapter 4;</p> |
| Week 6 | 10/15 | <p><i>Claims to power</i>:
<i>keter malchut</i>: Walzer, JPT, chapter 3; IGS, chapter 4
<i>keter kehunah</i>: Walzer, JPT, chapter 4; IGS, chapter 8
<i>keter torah</i>: Walzer, JPT, chapters 5 – 6; IGS, chapter 5-6</p> |
| Week 7 | 10/22 | <p><i>Individual and community</i>
Elazar, chapter 11; Walzer, JPT, chapter 7</p> <p>Supplemental: Mittleman, chapter 6</p> |
| Week 8 | 10/29 | <p><i>Jewish self-government: the kehillah</i>
Elazar, chapter 10; Walzer, JPT, chapter 8; IGS, chapter 12; Schorsch, "On the History of the Political Judgment of the Jew" (e-reading)</p> <p>Supplemental: Mittleman, chapter 7</p> <p>Second Writing Assignment due</p> |
| Week 9 | 11/5 | <p><i>Judaism and the Modern State</i>
Walzer, JPT, chapter 9
Wisse, <i>Jews and Power</i>, pp. 32-38; 64-77; 79-96 (e-reading)</p> |

Week 10	11/12	<i>Judaism and the Israeli Public Realm</i> Walzer, JPT, chapter 10 Koppel: Religion and State in Israel, and responses by Levin and Gavison (e-reading)
Week 11	11/19	Gavison-Medan Covenant (download at: http://www.gavison-medan.org.il/english/)
Week 12	11/26	Thanksgiving; no class
Week 13	12/3	<i>The Jewish Political Tradition and the West—Liberty:</i> Jacobs, Return to the Sources (e-reading) Oz-Salzberger, "The Jewish Roots of Western Freedom" (e-reading) <i>The Jewish Political Tradition and the West—Equality:</i> Nelson, <i>The Hebrew Republic</i> , Chapter II (e-reading)
Week 14	12/10	<i>The Jewish Political Tradition and the West—America:</i> McWilliams, "The Bible in the American Political Tradition" (e-reading) and Novak, <i>On Two Wings</i> (e-reading) Third Writing Assignment due