



Rabbinical School
RB-RAB-301B: Core Text – Rabbinics: Nashim Ugevarim
Micha'el Rosenberg
4 graduate credits
אביב תשע"ט (Spring 2019)
T/R 11:30am-1:00pm

Contact Information:

Phone: 617-559-8804

Email: mrosenberg@hebrewcollege.edu

Course Description: This course is a תוספות boot camp. We will study passages from the second half of the fifth chapter of בבלי כתובות, but our focus will be on the learning of תוספות.

The chapter deals primarily with household relations and obligations of husbands to wives, and wives to husbands. In particular, we will focus on three sets of questions:

- 1) What are the specific ways in which these passages assume heteronormative and generally patriarchal marital relations?
- 2) What would it look like to rewrite these passages removing those heteronormative assumptions? Is such a reading possible or desirable?
- 3) How, if at all, can such a reading of these texts challenge our own assumptions (or areas to which we have given insufficient thought) in productive ways?

Learning Objectives:

- 1) To increase our facility and speed in reading, translating, and understanding the text of the Talmud.
- 2) To increase our ability to draw out underlying concerns/religious impulses in the Talmudic text and analyze the ways in which Talmudic language illuminates and/or obscures those underlying concerns/religious impulses.
- 3) To develop our ability in reading תוספות and reduce feelings of intimidation when encountering long medieval commentaries.
- 4) To understand better historical conceptions of marriage and the obligations it imposes.
- 5) To develop our own thinking about what purposes marriage might serve, and how that might construct obligations for different partners.

Required Texts:

Massekhes Kesubos. We will be studying the fifth פרק of כתובות. **Please purchase either the blue or red Friedman edition (“מהדורת פריעדמאן”) (Oz Vehadar).** Israel Book Store has copies of these in stock; they are 20 dollars for the blue ones, 45 for the red ones, and there is an HC student discount. Having everyone use the same edition will save us time in class as we learn to use the various tools on the page as well as in the back of the gemara; I’ve therefore chosen an edition that combines a reasonable price with a nice, clear printing.

Assessment:

- 1) *Class participation/preparation* (25%). Attendance is required; if you know that you must miss a class, please notify me in advance. When you miss class, you are expected find out what you missed from your hevruta and/or me **and to submit, within a week of the missed class, one page** (or more, if you choose) summarizing your understanding of what was discussed that day.

You will be regularly called on, and your ability to read and explain the text will be a primary component of this grade. Please be aware that many people can read fluently without understanding what they are reading, while others may stutter and sound unprepared despite complete comprehension. You will be graded based on your comprehension and ability to explain, not your charismatic (or uncharismatic) reading style. If you are concerned that your reading is inaccurately conveying your preparation, please seek me out to talk about it.

- 2) *Short assignments* (25%). Throughout the semester, I will assign brief assignments to be completed outside of **חברותא** time. These will generally be outlines of passages from **תוספות**; sometimes (especially earlier in the semester), they will be of passages that we have already studied together to ensure that you have understood. Later in the semester, they will be of passages from **תוספות** that you have not previously seen; these latter will of course require more time on your part to complete.
- 3) *Midterm review* (25%). **חזרה** is essential to learning *gemara*, and in lieu of a midterm exam, you will be responsible for a review assignment, which will involve answering questions about content, translating passages, displaying understanding of technical terms, etc. I will grade this review on a high pass, pass, fail system, and anyone who fails will need to redo it in order to pass the course. I will post it on Thursday 7 March, and **it will be due, in hard copy, at the beginning of class on Thursday 14 March**.
- 4) Final examination (25%). (Details subject to change): The final examination will consist of two parts. For the first part, you will have a choice of either translating **two** previously seen passages from **תוספות**, or writing an essay that both **translates** and then discusses **one** previously seen passage from **תוספות** (selected by me). The second part of the exam will ask you to translate one previously unseen passage from **תוספות**.

Course Accommodations for Disabilities:

Hebrew College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in programs. Accordingly, if a student has a documented disability, and as a result, needs a reasonable accommodation to attend, participate or complete course requirements, then he or she should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. For further information, see the Student Handbook at http://hebrewcollege.edu/sites/default/files/student_handbook.pdf.

If you require course accommodations because of a documented disability or an emergency medical condition, please email your instructor as soon as possible. We are happy to work with you on any issues you have to ensure that you can participate fully in the class and complete the course requirements. Please do not wait until the assignments are due for a retroactive accommodation but discuss the situation with your instructor before you experience difficulty.

Benchmarks:

By the end of this semester, you should:

- 1) Be able to learn a *sugya* for basic understanding with greater ease and speed.
- 2) Be able to prepare many or most comments of the **תוספות** and not feel intimidated by longer passages in **תוספות**.
- 3) Be familiar with the most significant named authorities in **תוספות** (e.g. Rabbeinu Tam, Ri, Rashbam) and be able to say something both about their biography (when and where they lived; their relationship to each

other) and their literary/legal approach.

- 4) Be able to speak more thoughtfully about classical Rabbinic conceptions of the household and how these relate to your own.