



NEWS & VIEWS

January 30, 2020 | 4 Shevat 5780



Hebrew College Courses Tackle Today's Tough Questions

What is the difference between “antijudaism” and “antisemitism”? Is the “Jewish vote” fact or fiction? Should we own stocks in companies whose activities don’t match our Jewish values? This semester, Hebrew College students and community learners will be tackling these and other pressing questions – delving into Jewish text and tradition to search for meaningful answers.

“We have a number of wonderful learning opportunities for our students and the community that we hope will help address what people are thinking about,” said [Rabbinical School](#) Dean Rabbi Dan Judson (above), who studies the historical intersection of Judaism and economics. “These classes are a way of trying to respond to real questions that the Jewish community is grappling with and understanding that Jewish tradition has something to teach us about these important issues.”

Among courses being offered are:

- “Living in a Tainted World” with Devora Steinmetz ([Hebrew College Rabbinical School](#) course)

with Dr. Jacob Meskin ([Hebrew College Me'ah Select](#) course)

- “Leadership on the Line: Critical Conversations with Religious Activists & Organizers” with Rabbi Or Rose ([Hebrew College Miller Center for Interreligious Leadership & Learning](#) course)
- “And, if elected... Jews in American Political Life” with Norm Finkelstein ([Hebrew College Prozdor](#) course)

“Our [community learning programs](#) programs include classes that speak to critical contemporary issues that are on all of our minds. What can we learn from Jewish history and Jewish tradition about topics that are relevant to today’s world, like Israel, economic justice, anti-semitism, and interreligious connections,” said Sara Brown, acting director of Hebrew College Adult and Community Learning. “And our [Open Circle Jewish Learning](#) social action program combines learning with activism and work in the community so our students can make a difference in the world around them.”



Opening students' hearts and minds to our "world house"

On the Tuesday following Martin Luther King Jr. Day, rabbinical and cantorial students in their preparatory year (*Mekorot*) at Hebrew College gathered on campus for a special three-day seminar entitled “From Diversity to Pluralism,” taught by Hebrew College [President Rabbi Sharon Cohen Anisfeld](#) and Rabbi Or Rose, Director of the [Miller Center for Interreligious Learning & Leadership](#).

A few miles away, first-year students (*Shanah Aleph*) met at Boston University’s historic Marsh Chapel with Rev. Soren Hessler, Director of Graduate Academic Services at Drew University, who previously worked at the Miller Center, for a seminar entitled “Introduction to Christianity: Histories, Doctrines, and Practice.”

Back at Hebrew College, second-year students (*Shanah Bet*) spent the week in an introductory course on Islam for Jewish leaders led by Imam Taymullah Abdur-Rahman (above, second to left), a chaplain with the Massachusetts Department of Correction and former imam at Harvard University and Northeastern University.

“Coming immediately after MLK Day, these seminars feel like a fitting way to honor Dr. King’s legacy as a justice seeker and bridge-builder,” said Rabbi Rose. “Dr. King spoke of the need to understand the interconnection and interdependence of humankind, living in what he described as a ‘world-house.’ As emerging Jewish leaders, our students will be called upon to navigate complex questions of universality and particularity within the many rooms of our shared world-house.”

[Read more](#)

SIGHTS & SOUNDS



Winter Seminar 2020: *What Do We Owe Each Other?*

This week, Hebrew College students wrestled with what role Jewish leaders should play in creating a “just economy.” The discussion was part of the week-long Hebrew College Winter 2020 Seminar: [“What Do We Owe Each Other: Jewish Conversations on Equality and the Challenges of a Just Society,”](#) which included examining the Jewish perspective on social justice topics from socially-responsible investing, taxes and inheritance, and tainted money, to reparations for African Americans, and the gig economy.



Winter seminar kicked off on Monday with a text study on the topic of “Reparations for African Americans,” with Rabbi Micha’el Rosenberg, Associate Professor of Rabbinics at Hebrew College.



Len Fishman (right), Director of the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston and Rabbi Sara Paasche-Orlow (left), Director of Spiritual Care at HebrewSenior Life, spoke on “Tainted Money: Jewish Philanthropy in a Troubled Time.”



Leah Penniman, co-founder, co-director, and program manager of Soul Fire Farm, led a discussion on "Ownership, Access, and the Question of Belonging: Towards a Just Land Ethic in America." Soul Fire Farm seeks to end racism and injustice in the food system and reclaim the inherent right to belong to the earth and to have agency in the food system as Black and Brown people.



Rabbinical student SAM Luckey joined a packed room for the lecture by Soul Fire Farm's Leah Penniman.



Rabbi Shoshana Meira Friedman, Chuck Collins, and Molly Schulman (l-r) discussed "Income Inequality and the Problem of Inheritance."

70 FACES OF TORAH

Posts from this [Hebrew College-hosted blog](#) are published weekly in [Patheos](#).

Classification of Plantlife

Parashat Bo (Exodus 10:1-13:16)

By Rabbi Gray Myrseth, Rab`17

Director of Youth Programs, [Kehilla Community Synagogue](#)



*You shall take a bunch of hyssop
and dip it in the blood that is in the basin
and extend it to the lintel and the doorposts
and not one of you shall go out from the entrance of your house until morning.* (Exodus 12:22)

When a fence bows before a storm,
animals run loose, hooved feet catching
in the gap.

Downriver all the uncleared tables;
That sound is either wailing or it's wind.
We paint the doorframe red
to keep away the angels.

Hyssop leaves are bound together for a brush.
Hyssop leaves can be preserved by drying.

*Remember this day—you and your children
and your children's children—every generation's
hand is on the brush. You tell us to remember
when You brought us out. You with Your might,
You with Your terrible grace. While we stand
still trembling in the grip of our captivity*

You tell us to remember
all that's yet to come.

Hyssop is a wild shrub of uncertain identity.
Hyssop is a mistranslation that grows best in partial sun.

If I call this a love poem
will it lead us into knowing?
Or out into the break
of waves and days

[View on our blog](#)

COMMUNITY
LEARNING



By Michelle Black

Participant, [Hebrew College Parenting Through a Jewish Lens](#)



I was introduced to [Hebrew College's Parenting Through a Jewish Lens \(PTJL\) program](#) when my four kids were still in pre-school. I dropped my kids off and took advantage of the time I had to myself to dive into Jewish texts, examine my Jewish values as they applied to parenting, and build a community of friends, parents, and peers struggling with the same stages of life I found myself in. I hadn't been in a classroom environment since college, and it had been even longer since I had dedicated time to Jewish education. I loved it and was immediately hooked. When our class ended, our daily routines took us each in our separate ways.

Almost five years later, I now had four children all attending [The Rashi School](#). In addition to receiving a strong secular education, my children were learning stories from the Torah, acting upon their Jewish values, and creating a strong sense of community for themselves. I was so happy about the education they were receiving and, to be honest, was eager to find a similar adult learning community for me. At the same time, being involved with CJP, I had heard about [Open Circle Jewish Learning](#) program being formed in partnership with Hebrew College, so I reached out to see if we could create a new Parenting Through a Jewish Lens class for parents with elementary school aged kids.

Hebrew College offers [community learning](#) programs for all ages, stages and backgrounds, and [graduate leadership programs](#) in rabbinical, cantorial, education, and Jewish studies, all within a pluralistic environment of open inquiry, depth, creativity, and compassion.

[Read more](#)

[View our Spring Courses](#)

EVENTS

April 29, 2020

Save the Date for our Spring Event!

Leadership, Learning, and Love

An evening of music, conversation, and celebration

6:30 pm at Temple Israel, Boston

More details coming soon!

Taking it "Seriously": Doubt, Trust and Halakhah with Rabbi Avivia Richman

In partnership with [Hadar](#).

February 11 | 6:30 - 8:30 pm
Hadar, 10 Phillips Place, Cambridge, MA
[Learn more & register](#)

Azamra: Alternative Shabbat Community Minyan

Join Rabbi Lev Friedman, Rab`18, for a morning service in the Hebrew College Beit Midrash, followed by a pot-luck vegetarian kiddush luncheon. Supported by the [Hebrew College Innovation Lab](#).

February 22 | 10 am - 12 pm
Hebrew College Beit Midrash
[Learn more](#)

February Yom Iyyun: Teen Mental Health

The Rabbinical School of Hebrew College will be holding a Yom Iyyun on Teen Mental Health thanks to generous support from The Ruderman Family Foundation.

February 26 | 9 am - 3:30 pm
Hebrew College
[Learn more](#)

Seeing Torah Gallery Opening

"Seeing Torah" is a visual diary documenting artist Anita Rabinoff-Goldman's study and artistic response to each of the 54 portions of the Torah over the cycle of a single Jewish year. Refreshments will be served.

March 24 | 6 pm
Hebrew College
[Learn more](#)

Re-envisioning Jewish Inclusion in 2020 and Beyond: How Interfaith Couples & Families Belong

A one-day program including panel discussion, text study, and presentations. Supported by the [Hebrew College Innovation Lab](#). Breakfast and lunch available for purchase.

March 26 | 8 am - 4 pm
Hebrew College
[Learn more](#)

