

RELIGION 24 / JEWISH STUDIES 63
JEWISH PHILOSOPHERS OF RELIGION
Professor Benor

Spring 2014

The course is conducted through close reading and discussion of works by Spinoza, Buber, and Levinas that translate insights from the Jewish experience to the idiom of modern European culture and, in so doing, make unique contributions to such subjects of modern religious thought as: God and infinity; religion, morality, and politics; autonomy and transcendence; and the role of Jewish intellectuals in the modern era.

Requirements:

Three 5 page essays: Students must suggest and get approval for an essay topic on each of the main authors.

Attendance is mandatory.

Readings:

Stephen Toulmin. *Cosmopolis*

Baruch Spinoza. *Theological-Political Treatise* [TPT]

Rachel Elior. *The Paradoxical Ascent to God*

Martin Buber. *I and Thou* [Walter Kaufmann's translation]

Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethic, and Infinity*.

_____. "God and Philosophy" (from *God Who Comes to Mind*—handout).

Supporting articles will be distributed as needed.

Schedule:

Wk 1	Background	Religion and Modernity	Toulmin. <i>Cosmopolis</i>
Wk 2	Spinoza	Philosophy and salvation—the immanence of God	Deleuze. "Life of Spinoza" and "On the Difference Between the <i>Ethics</i> and a Morality" Stewart. "A Secret Philosophy of the Whole of Things"
Wk 3	Spinoza	Faith and the project of Biblical criticism	TPT: chapters 1-15
Wk 4	Spinoza	Religion; Religious pluralism and its limits	TPT: Preface, chapters 16-20
Wk 5	Hasidism	Divine immanence and transcendence	Benor. "Spinoza's Theory of Religion" Elior. <i>The Paradoxical Ascent to God</i>
Wk 6	Buber	<i>I/You</i> and <i>I/It</i> —alienation vs. relation	<i>I and Thou</i> . Part 1 Bergman. "Origin of <i>I and Thou</i> " 217-231
Wk 7	Buber	The "eternal" <i>You</i>	<i>I and Thou</i> . Part 3 Bergman. "Origin of <i>I and Thou</i> " 231-238
Wk 8	Levinas	How is transcendence possible?	<i>God and Infinity</i> . "God and Philosophy" §1-13 [55-67]
Wk 9	Levinas	The Face of the Other & the Present absence of God	"God and Philosophy" §14-19 [67-78]