Course Syllabus for WS-624, Fall 2014
Tuesdays from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. beginning September 2

Professor:  Yehezkel Landau, Associate Professor of Interfaith Relations
Office:  Budd Interfaith Building, 60 Lorraine Street, Room 3
Office hours:  Mondays, 2 to 4:30 p.m.; Thursdays, 9:30 a.m. to noon; or by appointment
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Course overview: This course will explore various aspects of Jewish spirituality and their interconnection: how mystical interpretations of the Hebrew Bible (in the Zohar) can enrich our understanding of Scripture; how the observance of commandments affects the heart and soul; theoretical and practical aspects of Kabbalah, including meditative exercises and dream journaling; and the implications of Jewish mysticism for tikkun olam, the mending of our broken world. How these insights might impact on Jewish-Christian-Muslim relations will also be addressed—are there affinities on the mystical level that can be tapped for greater interreligious understanding and cooperation?
(Note: to get the most out of this course, WS-623 or a similar introduction to Jewish spirituality is highly recommended).

Pedagogical methods: The course will be conducted as a seminar. Class sessions will feature presentations and guiding questions by the professor, students’ critical text summaries and talking points, facilitated discussions, and audio-visual resources including musical selections.

Methods of Assessment: Class participation (20%), in-class text summaries and talking points (30%), and quality of the course paper (50%). Depending on the number of students, each member of the class will be asked to introduce (at least) one session with a critical summary of that week’s readings. A course paper, approximating 15 double-spaced pages, is due by the last class, December 9. A one-page preview of the paper with preliminary bibliography should be submitted for feedback by November 11. (Note: the Seminary’s plagiarism policy will be strictly enforced; all written work must be original unless properly cited).
**Attendance:** Students are expected to be present and prepared for each class. If you know you will have to miss any class, please inform the professor in advance. Missing two class sessions will adversely affect the final course grade. Missing three or more sessions will result in automatic failure of the course.

**Course Schedule and Readings**

**Books recommended for purchase (all six are in paperback):**


*(Readings indicated should be read for that session; books listed in bold italics are recommended for purchase; other readings will be on reserve in the library or disseminated as PDF attachments)*

September 2: Kabbalah in Context: An Introduction to Jewish Spirituality  

September 9: An Overview of Kabbalah I  
September 16: An Overview of Kabbalah II

September 23: Hebrew Words of Blessing as a Gateway to the Divine

September 30: Introduction to The Zohar

October 7: Jewish Mystical Experiences

October 14: Experiencing the Divine Presence in Prayer

October 21: Jewish Meditation

October 28: Revelatory Dreams

November 4: Contemporary Women’s Perspectives

Readings: “Pass Not Away”: Yearning for a Seamless Life of Connection” by Nancy Flam; “Approaching the Thick Cloud: Working with Obstacles in Our Spiritual Growth” by Sheila Peltz Weinberg; “All This and Maybe’: The Doubting Servant” by Mimi Feigelson; and “Praying from the Depths” by Melila Hellner-Eshed, in *Jewish Mysticism and the Spiritual Life* edited by Lawrence Fine, Eitan Fishbane, and Or N. Rose (*on reserve*).

November 11: Kabbalistic Ethics I


**PREVIEW OF COURSE PAPER DUE**

November 18: Kabbalistic Ethics II—Contemporary Applications


NO CLASS NOVEMBER 25

December 2: A Kabbalistic Perspective on the Holy Land


December 9: Kabbalah and Self-Transformation

Reading: “The Path of the Tzaddik (Jewish Enlightenment)” in *God is a Verb: Kabbalah and the Practice of Mystical Judaism* by Rabbi David A. Cooper, New York: Riverhead Books, 1997, pp. 184-234 (*on reserve*).


**COURSE PAPER DUE**