RSOC.174: Modern Jewish Philosophy: Between Athens and Jerusalem

Fall, 2016 [Fulfills Core RTC 3 in Religious Studies]

Prof. Akiba Lerner <u>ALerner@SCU.edu</u>

Off Hrs: Tues, 3:55–4:55, Thur, 12:00–1:00 Off: Kenna, 300G

Course Description:

This course provides an overview of the major ideas, thinkers, and themes that have defined modern Jewish thought and history from the Enlightenment to our contemporary era. This course focuses on the themes of Athens verses Jerusalem, Redemptive Hope and the nature of Dialogue, Jewish-Christian Dialogue, Political Philosophy and Theology, Universalism and Particularism, Autonomy, Subjectivity, Modern Secularism, Nationalism, Mysticism, Post-Modernism, and Feminism within the context of Judaism's encounter with modernity as reflected on by Jewish intellectuals within the Western philosophical tradition. Modern Jewish philosophy can only be understood within the general context of modern philosophy. Consequently, this course will also focus on the role modern Jewish intellectuals have had in both shaping—and being shaped by—the larger philosophical debates of their time. In this course we explore how these intellectuals, through their struggles to redefine the essence of Judaism in relationship to both philosophy and the modern world, are united and divided by their visions of hope for achieving human liberation. We will also focus on the themes of communication and intersubjective relationships by exploring how modern Jewish thought might contribute to contemporary debates over the role of technology in enhancing and undermining dialogic encounters within society.

Prerequisites: Students must have completed both RTC.1 and 2 level courses in the Religious Studies Department. Intermediate level course (SCTR 20-99, TESP 20-99, or RSOC 20-99) or another course approved as fulfilling the intermediate level Core requirement in Religious Studies and completion of 88 quarter units. Unless these prerequisites are met a student cannot take this course and they will be removed from the roster by the registrars office.

[Some knowledge of philosophy is also recommended]

Assigned Texts:

- 1. Martin Buber, I and Thou [W. Kaufmann translation] [ISBN: 0-684-71725-5]
- 2. Akiba Lerner, Redemptive Hope: From the Age of Enlightenment to the Age of Obama (Fordham University Press, 2015) [Paperback, ISBN: 9780823267927]

Recommended Reading:

Norbert Samuelson, *An Introduction To Modern Jewish Philosophy* [State Univ of New York Pr (April 1989) □ ISBN-10: 0887069592 □ ISBN-13: 978-0887069598

Learning Goals and Objectives for level 3 Core Class: Religion, Theology & Culture 3

- Goals: Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning, Religious Reflection, Perspective
- Objectives: Students will...
- 3.1 Identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions. (Critical Thinking, Ethical Reasoning; Perspective)
- 3.2 Evaluate and apply insights from the study of religion to open-ended questions facing contemporary society. (Critical Thinking; Religious Reflection)

Course Requirements and Policies:

a. Class participation: [20% of final grade] This course is structured on a combination of lectures, seminar style class discussions, and student presentations. Class is mandatory and attendance will be noted. Missing 6 or more classes will automatically result in a reduction of the final grade [i.e. from A to A-]. Regardless of the circumstances, this class cannot be passed if a student misses 9 or more classes. Students are expected to demonstrate their understanding of the material and mastery of the ideas and terms provided through lecture and the readings by actively engaging in discussions, presenting on the material, asking questions, and participating in small group exercises and assignments. Class attendance is a necessary prerequisite for intellectual engagement, but is not sufficient for counting as class participation. [i.e. simply showing up to class will not help the student's grade, but not coming to class, however, will adversely impact the final grade]. Student's class participation grade will mostly depend on their ability to engage in thoughtful conversations on the course material and assignments, and on how they conduct themselves with reference to their peers and the professor. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings before coming to each class. Students are expected to bring the assigned materials having underlined key phrases and/or sentences to every class ready to discuss. Students are expected to cite the assigned texts during discussion. Students should not assume that lectures are solely devoted to summarizing the reading. Lectures are primarily devoted to

weaving together the assigned readings and general themes from this course. Class discussion only works if each student takes responsibility for having completed the reading, taking time to reflect on readings and comes to class ready to be called on and contribute. If a student misses the first day of class they will likely be cut from the class, and their position in the class may be given to another student.

Weekly Questions and Discussion: The professor will send out a list of questions and terms to guide students through the assigned readings and discussion of texts. Drawing on the questions provided, students will be randomly called on to answer questions regarding the assigned readings and lectures. Through the answers they provide to these questions, and through discussion of the texts and topics covered in this course, students will further develop critical thinking and ethical reasoning. Further details on class participation expectations will be elaborated upon during the first week of class.

b. Mid-Term: [20% of final Grade] For the mid-term students are required to draw on the lectures and material covered in order to answer a selection of questions. Students are encouraged to use the questions and terms sent out as a study guide for the mid-term. Further details will be elaborated upon in class.

c. Final Research Projects:

Final Paper: Through consultation with the professor over the course of the quarter students are required to draw on the topics and readings from this course in order to apply them to "open-ended questions facing contemporary society." Students are encouraged to draw on their backgrounds and identity commitments in order to construct a final paper topic that most engages their critical, ethical, and intellectual interests. In their final papers students will be required to "identify diverse perspectives and evaluate ethical positions on contemporary questions." For example, students are encouraged to engage in media analysis in which they choose a controversial topic covered in a respected contemporary media source as a way to bring the religious thinkers covered in this course into conversation with contemporary issues. For their final projects students are required to incorporate at least 6 different thinkers and separate texts assigned in the course. Consent from the professor is required for final paper projects by week 6. Students are encouraged to arrange a visit with the professor during office hours to discuss their final paper. Further details and guidelines will be elaborated upon in class. [Fulfills Core Objective: 3.1 and 3.2] [Final Paper=45% of total class grade]

Final Presentation: Students are expected to present and lead a short discussion on their final project to the class. In their presentations students will identify diverse perspectives, evaluate ethical positions, and critically reflect on religious and philosophical ideas in relationship to their own convictions. Guidelines and details discussed in class. [Presentation=15% of total class grade]

Deadline for Final Writing Projects: Friday, December 9th no later than 5pm. The final paper should be emailed to the professor via "word" document. A student cannot pass the class unless they have turned in their final essay on time. [Late papers will be reduced a full grade for every 24hr period not turned in. All grades are final and nonnegotiable unless for clerical error].

Format for writing assignments: Paper assignments should be double-spaced, 12 font text, 1 inch margins including a proper title page that states the students name, class number and title, section number, date, and the professor's name. Extra Credit: Essays: Students are allowed to write a 3-4 page extra credit essay on any one, or combination of questions I have sent out on readings in this class, provided that the topic is distinct from their final papers. A student must engage at least 4 separate thinkers assigned in this class. A student cannot write more than two extra credit essays. If you are interested in writing an extra credit essay you must get approval from the professor prior to writing the essay. Extra credit essays are worth 0.5% of the student's final grade. Extra credit essays are graded on a scale of 1-5, [5 being the highest]. Extra credit essays should not be viewed as a substitute for the main work assignments in this course. [Extra credit essays cannot be turned in before, or after the final paper—i.e. they are due the same day as the final essay]. All extra credit work must be turned in with the final paper.

Campus Events/Lectures: Students will also be given an opportunity to earn extra credit points by attending and reporting on select events/lectures during the quarter. In order to receive extra credit for talks or lectures approved by the professor, students are allowed to write a two page paper [following the standard format for all written work turned into the professor] in which they are required to both summarize the main points of the talk, and connect the content of the talk with at least three separate texts/thinkers from the assigned readings. [Essays on talks will be graded on a scale of 1-5. Each essay is worth 0.25 of final grade.]

Grading and Evaluation: Each assignment is an opportunity for the students to work and earn points towards their final grade. The professor will be as explicit as possible about the expectations and how to earn a superior grade on any given assignment, but simply completing the work to the letter of the assignment will

not guarantee a student a superior grade. Earning a superior grade depends on the student's ability to combine ideas and information from texts, lectures and, most importantly, critical thinking within their own work. The challenge, of course, is for students to translate ideas into conversations and writing that is intelligible to the professor. Excellence is the ultimate aspiration for all assignments, demonstrating competence will allow students to merely pass.

Grading Structure: A=100-95, A=94-90, B=89-87, B=86-83, B=82-80, C=79-77, C=76-73, C=72-70, D=69-60, F=below 60

Feedback on course assignments: Students will receive feedback on their work through a combination of written grades, comments, and conversations. Final grades are non-negotiable or changeable except in the case of clerical error. All additional requirements and expectations will be elaborated on in class.

Academic Integrity, Technology, Mindfulness, and Classroom Decorum: Students cannot engage electronic devices in class unless given permission from the professor! We will collectively create a safe and dynamic space in which each student will be expected to share his/her insights into the texts, ideas, and traditions covered, while retaining a respectful openness to the opinions and identity commitments of the other students in the class. It is important to demonstrate your respect for both the instructor and your fellow peers by reframing from using technological devices unless authorized by the professor. It is also important to develop greater concentration, appreciation, and awareness by engaging in a learning process that is not solely dependent on external technological stimulation. The classroom will be a sanctuary from the distractions and social alienation sometimes caused by an overuse of technological devices. Reducing technological distractions will also increase the possibility of students taking more responsibility for the learning process by allowing new ideas to become part of their consciousness. In order to foster this greater state of "mindfulness," students are additionally expected to demonstrate their "presence" during class by reframing from distracting activities such as texting, having un-authorized side conversations, side jokes (unless really funny and shared with the class), and/or engaging in other disruptive behavior like coming into the classroom late or packing up before the class has ended. Any disruptive behavior can affect the final class participation grade. All texting should take place outside the classroom. The classroom is a "sanctuary" for engaging ideas, texts, and creating discussion. If you are caught using any form of technology (i.e. computer, answering phones, texting, etc.) your final grade may be affected. Additionally, students should reframe from leaving in the middle of class, even for the bathroom, unless absolutely necessary.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism or academic dishonesty in any form (as described in the Student Conduct Code) will result in a failed grade for the project, and possibly for the course. All allegations of academic dishonesty will be reported to the department chair and Office of Student Life. For a full presentation of University policies concerning plagiarism, see: http://scu.edu/studentlife/resources/upload/Academic-Integrity-brochure-

2014.pdf
In order to avoid the sanctions applied to cases of academic dishonesty, please

make sure that you properly cite all sources that you utilize in your writing, including works that are directly quoted or paraphrased, as well as works used as a source of information. This includes both print and online sources. Your paper submissions must consist of your own writing, and any direct quotations or paraphrasing from other works must be properly cited.

A student caught plagiarizing cannot pass the course and their case will be turned over to proper academic authorities within the University. Additionally, all integrity and policy standards already laid out in the University bulletin apply. (For further see www.scu.edu/studentlife/resources/academicintegrity)

Office Hours and E-mails: I encourage all students to visit me during my office hours. E-mails should be thoughtful, concise, and begin with "Dear Prof. Lerner." Emails are fine for small matters of clarification, but for issues of greater length I would rather meet during office hours. Students should feel free to contact me to set up an alternative appointment if they have a serious conflict with my designated offices hours. When sending e-mail to the professor students should include the course number in the "subject" title section. [i.e. RSOC.174] Disability Accommodations:

If you have a disability for which accommodations may be required in this class, please contact Disabilities Resources, Benson 216, www.scu.edu/disabilities as soon as possible to discuss your needs and register for

accommodations with the University. If you have already arranged accommodations through Disabilities Resources, please discuss them with me during my office hours. Students who have medical needs related to

pregnancy or parenting may be eligible for accommodations.

While I am happy to assist you, I am unable to provide accommodations until I have received verification from Disabilities Resources. The Disabilities Resources office will work with students and faculty to arrange proctored exams for students whose accommodations include double time for exams and/or assisted technology. (Students with approved accommodations of time-and-a-half should talk with me as soon as possible). Disabilities Resources must be contacted in advance to schedule proctored examinations or to arrange other accommodations. The Disabilities Resources office would be grateful for advance notice of at least two weeks. For more information you may contact Disabilities Resources at 408-554-4109.

Title IX Syllabus Statement

Santa Clara University upholds a zero tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment and sexual misconduct. If you (or someone you know) have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence or stalking, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. For more information, please go to www.scu.edu/studentlife and click on the link for the University's Gender-Based Discrimination and Sexual Misconduct Policy or contact the University's EEO and Title IX Coordinator, Belinda Guthrie at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.comhttp://stage-www.scu.edu/hr/quick-links/ethics-point/

Reporting Practices

While I want you to feel comfortable coming to me with issues you may be struggling with or concerns you may be having, please be aware that there are some reporting requirements that are part of my job at Santa Clara University.

For example, if you inform me of an issue of harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, I will keep the information as private as I can, but I am required to bring it to the attention of the institution's EEO and Title IX Coordinator. If you inform me that you are struggling with an issue that may be resulting in, or caused by, traumatic or unusual stress, I will likely inform the campus Student Care Team (SCU CARE).

If you would like to reach out directly to the Student Care Team for assistance, you can contact them at www.scu.edu/osl/report. If you would like to talk to the Office of EEO and Title IX directly, they can be reached at 408-554-3043 or by email at bguthrie@scu.edu. Reports may be submitted online through www.scu.edu/osl/report or anonymously through Ethicspoint: www.ethicspoint.com. Additionally, you can report incidents or complaints to the Office of Student Life (OSL), Campus Safety Services, and local law enforcement. For confidential support, contact the Counseling and Psychological Services office (CAPS), the YWCA, or a member of the clergy (for example, a priest or minister).

Finally, please be aware that if, for some reason, our interaction involves a disruptive behavior, a concern about your safety or the safety of others, or potential violation of University policy, I will inform the Office of Student Life. The purpose of this is to keep OSL apprised of incidents of concern, and to ensure that students can receive or stay connected to the academic support and student wellness services they need.

Academic Integrity Pledge

Santa Clara University is implementing an Academic Integrity pledge designed to deepen the understanding of and commitment to honesty and academic integrity.

The Academic Integrity Pledge states: "I am committed to being a person of integrity. I pledge, as a member of the Santa Clara University community, to abide by and uphold the standards of academic integrity contained in the Student Conduct Code." I ask that you affirm this pledge and apply these principles to your work in this class.

Week I: Introduction To Modern Jewish Philosophy:

1. Class [9/20] The relationship between Jews, Judaism, and Jewish Philosophy

[Handouts: "What is Judaism"? historical and intellectual overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewish Thought]

[All assigned readings that are not assigned books can be found on Camino]

Recommended Readings:

"Modern Jewish Philosophy," Steven Schwarzschild [in 20th Century Jewish Religious Thought, Edited by A Cohen, P Mendes-Flohr, (JPS, 2009)]

Chapter, "The Jewish Tradition" by Alan F. Segal

[located in World Religions: Western Traditions, Second Edition, Edited by Willard Oxtoby—found on SCU's Camino]

Norbert Samuelson, An Introduction To Modern Jewish Philosophy [selections:

Chap. 7 Baruch Spinoza, Chap.8 Mendelssohn and Modern Jewish Thought]

Chap.1 "Faith and Reason," From Samuel Hugo Bergman's Faith And Reason: An Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought (1961)

Arnold Eisen, "Founding Theories of Modernity and the Critique of Jewish Practice" [located in *Rethinking Modern Judaism*]

Gillian Rose, "Introduction" and "Is there a Jewish Philosophy?"

[located in Judaism and Modernity]

Michael Wyschogrod, [Selections]

Chap.2 A CHOSEN NATION sections 1. Jewish Philosophy, 2. Marrano

Philosophers, 3. Jewish and Christian Philosophy

Chap. 5 ETHICS AND JEWISH EXISTENCE sections 1. Jewish Thought, 2.

Jewish Thought and the Jewish People, 3. A Carnal Election, 4. Historicity,

5. Biblical and Rabbinic Ethics, 6. The Ethical Secedes, 7. Jewish Disobedience, 8. The Law [located in *The Body of Faith: God in the People of Israel*]

Yeshayahu Leibowitz, "Redemption and the Dawn of Redemption"

[located in Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State]

2. Class [9/22] Review of Quotes from Handout and Class Discussion

Assigned Readings: Akiba Lerner, Redemptive Hope: From the Age of Enlightenment to the Age of Obama

[Selections: Introduction, chap.1 Redemptive Hope and the Cunning of History]

Week II The Redemptive Hope of Dialogic Encounter

3. Class [9/27] Assigned Readings: Martin Buber, I and Thou (1922) [First, Second Part]

Recommended: Norbert Samuelson, An Introduction To Modern Jewish Philosophy [selection: Chap.10 Martin Buber] "I and Thou," Maurice Friedman [in 20th Century Jewish Religious Thought, Edited by A Cohen, P Mendes-Flohr, (JPS, 2009)]

4. Class [9/29] Assigned Readings: Martin Buber, I and Thou (1922) [Third Part]

Akiba Lerner, Redemptive Hope [Selection: chap 2, Revival of Messianic Hope]

Recommended:

"The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism" [loc in *On Judaism*]
"The Foundation Stone," "Spinoza, Sabbatai Zvi, and the Baal-Shem," [located in *The Origin and Meaning of Hasidism*]
Buber, essays "Plato and Isaiah" [located in *On The Bible*, p.151-159]
Hermann Cohen, "The Social Ideal as Seen by Plato and by the Prophets" in *Reason and Hope* (New York: Norton, 1971), 66-77. [Reader]
Hermann Cohen, "The Messianic Idea" in *Reason and Hope* (New York: Norton, 1971), 122-127. [Reader]

Week III The Shoah: When Dialogue Fails

5. Class [10/4] Assigned Readings: "Holocaust," Emil Fackenheim, [in 20th Century Jewish Religious Thought, Edited by A Cohen, P Mendes-Flohr, (JPS, 2009)]

Part 7. THE HOLOCAUST, [read the entire section] chap.294 **Theodicy** [located in Rabbi J. Telushkin's Jewish Literacy,

Film: God on Trial (2008) [BBC/WGBH Boston—television play written by Frank Boyce, Directed by Andy de Emmony] [90 min] 6. Class [10/6] Assigned Readings: Emil Fackenheim, "The Commandment To Hope: A Response to Contemporary Jewish Experience," in The Future of Hope: Essays by Bloch, Fackenheim, Moltman, Metz, Capps. Edited by Walter Capps, 68-91

Recommended Reading:

"Theodicy," Byron Sherwin, [in 20th Century Jewish Religious Thought, Edited by A Cohen, P Mendes-Flohr, (JPS, 2009)]

Norbert Samuelson, An Introduction To Modern Jewish Philosophy

[selections: Chap.13 Emil Fackenheim and Contemporary Jewish Philosophy]

"Hope – After Auschwitz And Hiroshima?"

Panel Discussion: Emil Fackenheim, Johannes Metz, Jurgen Moltmann, Walter Capps [located in *The Future of Hope: Essays by Bloch, Fackenheim, Moltman, Metz, Capps.* Edited by Walter Capps, 92-101]

Emil Fackenheim, "Of Last Things: The Messianic Days And The World To Come," [located in What Is Judaism? An Interpretation For The Present Age]

Week IV Difficult Dialogues

7. Class [10/11] Assigned Readings: Joseph B. Soloveitchik, essay "Confrontation" [from Tradition: A Journal of Orthodox Thought, 1964, volume 6, #2]

Recommended: David Novak, Jewish-Christian Dialogue: A Jewish Justification (1989) "Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism," Hyam Maccoby [in 20th Century Jewish Religious Thought, Edited by A Cohen, P Mendes-Flohr, (JPS, 2009)]

8. Class [10/13] Assigned Reading: Heschel, [chap] "No Religion Is An Island" (1966) [located in No Religion Is an Island: Abraham Joshua Heschel and Interreligious Dialogue, editors Harold Kasimow and Byron Sherwin] [chap] "What Ecumenism Is" (1967) [located in Moral Grandeur And Spiritual Audacity, Essays edited by Susannah Heschel]

Recommended:

"Carl Stern's Interview with Dr. Heschel" [pp.395-412] in Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity (New York: Noonday Press, 1996). [Course Reader] "The Legacy of Abraham Joshua Heschel" by Robert Erlewine [essay located in Tikkun, Fall 2011] "Ecumenism," Geoffrey Wigoder [in 20th Century Jewish Religious Thought, Edited by A Cohen, P Mendes-Flohr, (JPS, 2009)] Heschel, God in Search of Man (New York: Noonday Press, 1991). Week V Review and Exam

- 9. Class [10/18] [Review and Seminar Discussion]
- 10. Class [10/20] Mid-Term: [details provided in class]

Week VI Freedom and Its Discontents

11. Class [10/25] Assigned Readings: Eric Fromm, "The Concept of God" [located in You Shall Be As Gods: A Radical Interpretation of the Old Testament and its Traditions (New York: Fawcett Premier, 1969), 17-62. [Camino]

Akiba Lerner, Redemptive Hope [Selection: chap 3, The God of Exodus and the School of Hope]

Recommended Reading: Eric Fromm, "The Prophetic Concept of Peace" [located in The Dogma of Christ: And Other Essays On Religion, Psychology and Culture] 12. Class [10/27] Assigned Reading: Leo Strauss, essay "Jerusalem and Athens" [1967] [located in Jewish Philosophy And The Crises of Modernity pg.377-405]

Recommended Reading:

Leo Strauss, essay "Progress or Return?" [1952]

[Reader: located in *Jewish Philosophy And The Crises of Modernity* pg.87-133] Peter Minowitz, "Crimes and Controversies: Nihilism from Machiavelli to Woody Allen" [located in Literature/Film Quarterly, vol.19, 1991 No.2]

Film: Crimes and Misdemeanors (1989) [107 min] Director, Woody Allen

Week VII Otherness and Dialogic Encounter

13. *Class* [11/1] [Seminar Discussion] [Final Paper Topic Approval]

14. Class [11/3] Assigned Readings: Emmanuel Levinas, essay "Revelation in the Jewish Tradition" [located in The Levinas Reader]

Recommended: Chap. "Jews versus Greeks" [located in Oliver Leaman's Jewish

Thought: An Introduction]

Levinas Totality and Infinity

Gershom Scholem, "Revelation and Tradition as Religious Categories in

Judaism" [located in The Messianic Idea in Judaism]

"From Eros to Maternity: Love, Death, and "the Feminine" in the Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas" by Claire Elise Katz [loc in Women And Gender in Jewish Philosophy edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuelson]

Film: Fiddler on the Roof, (1971) [181 min] Directed by Norman Jewison

Week VIII Feminism, Technology, and (Absent) Dialogues

15. Class [11/8] Assigned Readings: "Feminism," Susannah Heschel [in 20th Century Jewish Religious Thought, Edited by A Cohen, P Mendes-Flohr, (JPS, 2009)] Judith Plaskow, essay "Standing Again at Sinai: Jewish Memory from a Feminist Perspective" [located in Tikkun Magazine, Vo.1, Num.2]

Edith Wyschogrod, chapter, "Trends in Postmodern Jewish Philosophy: Contexts of a Conversation," [located in Reasoning After Revelation: Dialogues in Postmodern Jewish Philosophy, ed. Steven Kepnes, Peter Ochs, and Robert Gibbs, pg.123-136]

Recommended Reading: "Dependency and Vulnerability: Jewish and Feminist Existentialist Constructions of the Human" by Leora Batnitzky and "Theological Desire: Feminism, Philosophy, and Exegetical Jewish Thought" by Randi Rashkover, [both located in Women And Gender in Jewish Philosophy edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuelson]

16. Class [11/10] Assigned Readings: Sherry **Turkle**, Reclaiming Conversation: The Power of Talk in a Digital Age (Penguin Press, 2015) [Selections: TBA] **Week IX** Student **Presentations**

17. Session [11/15]

18. Session [11/17]

Week X Student Presentations/Final Reflections and Conclusion

19. Session [11/29]

20. Session [12/1]

Final Writing Projects Due: **Friday, December 9**th no later than **5pm** Email a copy via "word document" to the professor, <u>alerner@scu.edu</u>. Papers not turned in on time will be reduced a full grade every 24 hr period. A student cannot pass the class unless they submit a final paper. All grades are final and non-negotiable.

[Additional Course Resources located on Camino]