



INSTITUTE FOR CONVERSION AND OUTREACH EDUCATION

*A Program of the New Jersey Rabbinical Assembly
in partnership with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Mid- Atlantic District
www.introjudaismnj.com*

Fall 2016-Spring 2017 Schedule

Marlboro

Marlboro Jewish Center

Sunday Mornings beginning November 6
10am-12:30pm
Instructor Rabbi Akiba Lubow

Franklin Lakes

Temple Emanuel of North Jersey

Monday evenings beginning Oct. 31, 7-9:30pm
Instructor: Rabbi Joseph H. Prouser

Hoboken

United Synagogue of Hoboken

Wed. evenings beginning November 2
7-9:30pm
Instructor: Rabbi Robert Scheinberg

Schedule of dates for each class will be distributed at the first class at each site

**In case of inclement weather, call your class location during office hours
or watch for an e-mail update**

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WELCOME!

Students are interested in the courses of the Institute for Conversion and Outreach Education for a variety of reasons. For some, it is a step towards the process of conversion to Judaism; others are contemplating conversion. Still others are life-long Jews who take the class to fill gaps in their Jewish education, or to re-explore Jewish tradition as adults. Yet others are in relationships with Jews, though not Jewish themselves and with no plans to convert to Judaism, who are planning to participate in raising Jewish children. Whatever your motivation, we invite you to join our course.

TEACHERS AND CLASS SESSIONS:

Faculty members are drawn from members of the Rabbinical Assembly, and occasionally fourth or fifth year rabbinical students of the Jewish Theological Seminary. In addition to our primary instructors, during the course of the year a number of guest lecturers with special areas of expertise will visit the various sites. Hebrew teachers at the Institute are either native speakers of Hebrew or individuals fluent in the language.

Evening classes take place from 7-9:30pm, and Sunday morning sessions take place from 10am to 12:30pm. Most sessions begin with 45 minutes of Hebrew language instruction. A brief recess is followed by the primary Judaica topic of the evening.

TEXTS:

Purchase of the following seven course books is required. These books are readily available for on-line purchase at Amazon.com and bn.com (including in various e-book formats); used or discounted copies may be available at those sites or half.com, Ebay, or other sites. If you have difficulty finding these books, contact Ellen Nesson at 973-285-9772.

- Harold Kushner, *To Life! A Celebration of Jewish Being and Thinking*
- Michael Strassfeld, *The Jewish Holidays: A Guide and Commentary*
- Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy*, 2008 Edition
- *Siddur Sim Shalom: A Prayerbook for Shabbat, Festivals, and Weekdays* (1985 edition, or 1989 pocket edition)
- Bradley Shavit Artson, *It's a Mitzvah!*
- Martin S. Cohen and Michael Katz, *The Observant Life*
- *TaNakh*--The Jewish Publication Society's English translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (edition from 1985 or later)
- *Aleph Isn't Tough: An Introduction to Hebrew for Adults*

In addition to the above texts, each registrant receives (by email, in pdf format) a reading packet with various articles and materials drawn from a wide variety of sources. Each unit includes assigned readings in the books and packet, links to relevant web sites, questions for discussion, a list of terms/concepts to know, and a bibliography for further reading.

TOPICS:

- Session 1: Welcome & Introduction: *Three Dimensions of Jewish Identity: Behaving, Believing, Belonging*
- Session 2: *TaNakh -- The Hebrew Bible*
- Session 3: *Introduction to Rabbinic Judaism*
- Session 4: *Jewish Perspectives on God*
- Session 5: *Introduction to the Jewish Calendar*
- Session 6: *Judaism & Christianity: A Comparative Look; Hanukkah, "December Dilemma" issues*
- Session 7: *Halakhah: The Role of Law and Commandment in Judaism*
- Session 8: *The Holidays of Tishri & the Concept of Teshuva*
- Session 9: *Birth, Covenant & Jewish Parenting: From Infancy through Adolescence*
- Session 10: *Prayer in Judaism -- Communal & Individual*
- Session 11: *Shabbat -- A Palace in Time*
- Session 12: *Kashrut -- The Jewish Dietary Laws*
- Session 13: *Marriage, Divorce & Jewish Perspectives on Sexuality*
- Session 14: *The End of Life: Dying, Death, Mourning & Afterlife*
- Session 15: *Finding God through Joy: Purim*
- Session 16: *Contemporary Moral Issues: Jewish Perspectives on Bioethics*
- Session 17: *As If You Came Forth from Egypt: Passover*
- Session 18: *The Holocaust and Anti-Semitism*
- Session 19: *The Land of Israel & Ancient Judaism -- The Biblical and Rabbinic Background*
- Session 20: *Zionism and the Modern State of Israel*
- Session 21: *Women and Judaism*
- Session 22: *The Four Streams of Contemporary Judaism*
- Session 23: *Judaism in America -- Challenges of the Melting Pot*
- Session 24: *Shavu'ot: Jewish Perspectives on Conversion, Siyyum*

LATE ENROLLMENT IN THE COURSE

Once the course has begun, permission to enroll in the course will be at the discretion of the instructor and the administrator.

There will, however, be an opportunity for students to join the course at its midpoint, approximately February 1, 2017, subject to the following conditions:

- Students must pay their tuition in full, with the understanding that they will continue in one of the course locations in the fall of 2017 to make up the class sessions they have missed;
- The instructor will meet with the student to learn about the student's interest in Judaism and prior experience with Jewish study, to determine the student's readiness to enter the course mid-stream;
- As the Hebrew instruction component of the course is cumulative, students agree to arrange for Hebrew instruction in a different manner.

INFORMATION FOR THOSE CONSIDERING CONVERSION:

While The Institute for Conversion and Outreach fulfills the basic study component of the conversion process in Conservative Judaism, it does not by itself comprise all of the requirements of a conversion.

Additional requirements include (for men only) *brit milah* (ritual circumcision) or *hatafat dam brit* (symbolic equivalent to circumcision for men already circumcised), and (for both men and women) a declaration of commitment to the *mitzvot* (commandments) of Jewish tradition in the presence of a *beit din* (rabbinic court), and *tevillah* (immersion in a *mikveh*, ritual bath). (More information about the process of conversion to Judaism can be found at http://www.myjewishlearning.com/life/Life_Events/Conversion.shtml.)

Those pursuing the conversion process should have a “rabbinic sponsor” who guides them through the conversion process, including these additional requirements above. Instructors in the ICOE courses do not automatically serve as such sponsors. If you are looking for a rabbinic sponsor for conversion, the ICOE administrator, Ellen Nesson, can help to link you to a rabbi in your area.

Our program provides a comprehensive study of basic Judaism, but preparation for conversion, and the exact length of the process, varies from sponsor to sponsor and often takes longer than the length of the course.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance at each session is expected as it is vital to the integrity of the overall program. *Those who miss any class will be asked to make up the material through work to be assigned by the instructor. Except in highly extenuating circumstances as determined by the instructor, those who are absent more than four times will not receive "Certificates of Completion."*

We strongly encourage couples to take this course together. Some rabbinic sponsors may require the attendance of spouses or significant others of conversion candidates.

TUITION:

A tuition check for the full amount of \$ 595 for an individual, or \$695 for a couple, made payable to the NJRA (New Jersey Rabbinical Assembly), must accompany the registration form. Please write "ICOE" in the memo area of the check. Tuition covers the expense of all instruction and study materials. Extracurricular activities and events offered through the program may carry additional costs. Tuition is non-refundable once classes are in session.

Questions of a general nature and financial arrangements about the course can be directed to Ellen Nesson , Program Administrator at (973) 285-9772 or ellen.nesson@gmail.com. If questions pertain to a specific site, Ellen will refer you to the instructor at that site.

Please send completed registration forms and checks to:

The Institute for Conversion and Outreach Education (ICOE)
Ellen Nesson, Program Coordinator
11 Sunderland Drive
Morristown, New Jersey 07960

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If You've Ever Wondered. . .An Introductory Course in Judaism
2016 - 2017 REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____

Address _____

Home telephone _____ Business telephone _____

E-mail _____ The best way to contact me is: _____

Name of Spouse/Significant Other _____

Name and Address of Synagogue {if affiliated} _____

Name and Address of Sponsoring Rabbi {if applicable} _____

How did you find out about this class? (referral from rabbi; referral from friend or relative; newspaper article; newspaper advertisement (which newspaper?); internet (do you remember which search engine?)

I wish to register for the following site {please check one}:

____ **Marlboro (Begins Sun. Nov. 6)**

____ **Hoboken (Begins Wed. Nov. 2)**

____ **Franklin Lakes (Begins Mon. Oct. 31)**

Our courses serve a wide variety of individuals, including the needs of potential Jews by Choice and their spouses/significant others, non-Jews raising Jewish children, and born Jews who wish to learn more about their heritage. In order serve our diverse student population more effectively, it is helpful to know something about the background of those enrolled in the program. Please briefly describe your reason for taking the course, as well as prior experience with Jewish study (if any). Please attach another sheet of paper if you need additional space.

Please read information on reverse side and sign.

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I HAVE READ THE ABOVE INFORMATION AND ACCEPT THE TERMS OF ENROLLMENT

Signed _____ Date _____