



CONGREGATION BETH SHOLOM

INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM:
LEARNING FOR THE MIND, HEART, &
SOUL

INSTRUCTOR: AMANDA RUSSELL



Miller Introduction to
Judaism Program

OF AMERICAN JEWISH UNIVERSITY

Introduction to Judaism: Learning for the mind, heart, & soul

Looking to convert to Judaism?

Born Jewish and want to know more?

Sharing your life with a Jew and want to crack the code?

Jew-Curious?

Our engaging, university accredited class is offered over **eighteen** sessions, which you can **complete at your own pace** at Congregation Beth Sholom, San Francisco. Classes are **interactive** and full of opportunities for **questions**, discussions, and hands-on learning. Learn to **read Hebrew** as part of every class.

Tuition is \$344 for an individual, and \$533 for a couple. Some financial aid and payment options are available -**we are committed to never turning people away**. For more information, contact Amanda Russell arussell@bethsholomsf.org or call us at 415-221-8736.

COURSE OUTLINE

Class One:

Beginnings: From Creation to the Edge of the Wilderness

A sweeping introduction to the Torah-- its transformative ideas and vivid characters-- that starts in the Garden of Eden and ends at the edge of the Promised Land.

Class Two:

The World of the Bible

Tour through the first thousand years of Jewish history and meet the kings and warriors, poets and prophets who shaped the Jewish People from the beginning.

Class Three:

Heart of Many Rooms: Understanding Jewish Diversity

Explore the many ways of being Jewish and find where you fit in the Jewish story in this conversation about identity, pluralism, and the power of difference.

Class Four:

Holy Days: The Wheel of the Jewish Year

Hanukkah. Purim. Passover. It seems that it's always a Jewish holiday. Examine the Jewish year and discover the powerful and timeless themes encoded in our calendar.

Class Five:

Shabbat: Palace in Time

Shabbat is the greatest Jewish invention-- a weekly vacation from ordinary time, a chance to unplug from our distractions and reconnect with ourselves and each other.

Class Six:

When Do I Bow? And Other Questions About Jewish Prayer

Sort through the confusing choreography and customs of the synagogue service and gain the confidence to walk into any Jewish house of worship anywhere in the world.

Class Seven:

Passover: The Jewish Master Story

We were once slaves, so we know the importance of freedom for all people. Learn why Jews have been at the center of the struggle for human dignity and civil rights since our earliest beginnings.

Class Eight:

God: Encountering the Holy

Israel means "to wrestle with God." Join the holy wrestling match as we consider the many different routes that Jews take to connect with the Holy.

Class Nine:

Talmud: Argument for the Sake of Heaven

Our most important religious book (after the Bible) is made up of nearly 5000 arguments, of which only 50 are actually resolved! Do you need to know more about the Jewish People than that?

Class Ten:

Starting Over: The High Holy Days

Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are our annual opportunities to examine our lives and begin anew. Learn how the High Holy Days can help repair your relationships and return to the best in you.

Class Eleven:

Kashrut: The Original Soul Food

We sit down to eat multiple times a day-- what if each time could be an opportunity to affirm our deepest values and connect with our ancient ancestors? Kashrut teaches us to eat mindfully.

Class Twelve:

Philosophers, Poets, & Mystics: The Jewish Middle Ages

Meet the mystics who explored the world of Kabbalah, the Sultan's physician who taught that science and religion could be reconciled, and the French winemaker who revolutionized Jewish study forever.

Class Thirteen:

Marriage, Love & Kosher Sex

Does God belong in the bedroom? Learn what Judaism has to say about love and intimacy in this provocative, adults-only class.

Class Fourteen:

From Birth to B'nai Mitzvah: Raising a Mensch

Between bris and Bar and Bat Mitzvah, a lot goes into raising a Jewish child. Learn to bring up a little Einstein in this discussion of the joy's and oy's of Jewish parenting.

Class Fifteen:

A Time to Mourn: Traditions for Death, Grief, & Healing

Judaism teaches us to approach life's hardest moments with compassion and community. Explore the practices that help us navigate grief and heartache, and move from sadness to renewed life.

Class Sixteen:

Out of the Darkness: Stories from the Holocaust

Hear first-hand testimony from a survivor of the Holocaust and recommit to building a world where such horrors will someday be impossible.

Class Seventeen:

Israel: Dreaming of Deliverance

From the beaches of Tel Aviv, to Jerusalem's "Western Wall," and from the sands of the Negev Desert, to the snowy peaks and vineyards of the Golan, we'll explore the complicated and beautiful story of the Jewish State.

Class Eighteen:

The Jewish Mission to Heal the World

In our final class, we'll ask the question: "Does Judaism have an essential teaching?" as we explore key concepts like tzedakah (righteous giving) and tikkun olam (healing the world).