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סילבוס - תוכנית הוראה לקורס  
**Midrashic Literature: Biblical  
Foundations through the Amoraic Period**

**Dr. Shana Strauch-Schick | The Dept. of Talmud and Oral Law**  
09-967-01 | ספרות המדרש: מן המקרא ועד התקופה האמוראית

הרצאה (באנגלית)	סוג הקורס:
2	היקף נ"ז:
תשפ"ז	שנת לימודים:
א'	סמסטר:
רביעי, 18:30 (בזום)	יום ושעה:
בתאום	שעת קבלה:
shanaschick@gmail.com	מייל מרצה:
<a href="https://lemida.biu.ac.il">https://lemida.biu.ac.il</a>	קישור לאתר למדה:

### תקציר הקורס

This two-semester course surveys the history, forms, and interpretation of Midrash and Aggadah from their roots in inner-biblical exegesis through the great Amoraic collections and the narrative cycles of the Babylonian Talmud. A defining commitment of the course is breadth of genre: students read halakhic midrashim (Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, Sifra, Sifre Numbers, Sifre Deuteronomy), exegetical midrashim (Bereshit Rabbah), homiletical midrashim (Leviticus Rabbah), Targum as midrash, and talmudic aggadah in both the Yerushalmi and the Bavli.

Semester 1 moves from pre-rabbinic origins through the Tannaitic period and concludes with the earliest Amoraic collections: Bereshit Rabbah and Vayikra Rabbah .

Students are not expected to have prior background in Talmud or rabbinic literature, though such background will deepen engagement with the texts. Each class notes the weekly Torah portion falling during that week and brings brief primary-texts drawn from the weekly portion.

### מטרות/תוצרי הלמידה

#### ידע

1. Understand the major definitions of Midrash, as genre, rhetorical form, and hermeneutical system, and be able to distinguish between different types of midrashic literature.
2. Trace the origins of midrashic interpretation from inner-biblical exegesis through the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods, following a correct chronological sequence.
3. Read primary texts in the original Hebrew and Aramaic with English translation.
4. Engage critically with secondary scholarship on Midrash, Aggadah, and rabbinic literature.
5. Situate midrashic texts within their historical, social, and liturgical contexts

#### מיומנויות

1. Compare parallel traditions across corpora: exegetical vs. homiletical, Yerushalmi vs. Bavli, Tannaitic vs. Amoraic vs. medieval.
2. Identify and analyze the full range of midrashic genres studied across both semesters.



## תכנון מהלך השיעורים (כולל למידה פעילה):

הערכה תהליכית/מעצבת	קריאה/ צפיה נדרשת	למידה פעילה	נושא השיעור	מס' השיעור
	Shinan, World of the Aggadah, pp. 20–36; Kugel, 'Two Introductions to Midrash,' Prooftexts 3 (1983): 131–55; Hasan-Rokem, Web of Life; Le Déaut, 'Apropos a Definition of Midrash,' Interpretation 25.3 (1971): 259–82		Introduction: What Is Midrash? What Is Aggadah? ♦ <i>Bereshit (Gen 1:1–6:8)</i>	1
	Hirshman, 'Aggadic Midrash,' LS2, pp. 107–32; Lerner, 'Works of Aggadic Midrash,' LS2, pp. 138–99; Kahana, 'Halakhic Midrashim,' LS2, pp. 4–39		A Taxonomy of Midrashic Literature: Forms, Genres, and Typology ♦ <i>Noach (Gen 6:9–11:32)</i>	2
	Fishbane, Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel, ch. 1; Mandel, Origins of Midrash, pp. 87–144; Collins, 'Rewritten Bible in Early Judaism,' in Henze, Companion, pp. 103–29		Pre-Rabbinic Roots I: Inner-Biblical Exegesis and Second Temple Retellings ♦ <i>Lech Lecha (Gen 12:1–17:27)</i>	3
	Fraade, 'Looking for Legal Midrash at Qumran'; García Martínez, 'Interpretive Strategies in the Dead Sea Scrolls'; Kister, 'A Common Heritage,' STDJ 28		Pre-Rabbinic Roots II: Qumran, Philo, Josephus, and Shared Traditions ♦ <i>Vayera (Gen 18:1–22:24)</i>	4
	Shinan, World of the Aggadah, pp. 37–65; Hirshman, 'Aggadic Midrash,' LS2, pp. 107–21; Shoshan, 'Aggadah in the Mishnah' (handout)	Collaborative learning	Tannaitic Aggadah: Narrative and Ethics in the Mishnah ♦ <i>Chayei Sarah (Gen 23:1–25:18)</i>	5

	Harris, 'Midrash Halakha,' CHJ vol. 4, pp. 336–68; Hammer, Classic Midrash, pp. 13–50; Kahana, 'The Two Mekhiltot,' Tarbiz 55 (1985): 489–524		Midrash Halakha I: The Mekhilta Traditions ◆ <i>Toledot (Gen 25:19–28:9)</i>	6
	Kahana, 'Halakhic Midrashim,' LS2, pp. 39–106; Fraade, From Tradition to Commentary, ch. 1 (SUNY Press, 1991)	Collaborative learning	Midrash Halakha II: Sifra, Sifre Numbers, and Sifre Deuteronomy ◆ <i>Vayetzei (Gen 28:10–32:3)</i>	7
	Shinan, 'Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums,' Semeia 27 (1983): 51–69; Mack, Midrash ha-Aggadah, pp. 34–42		Synagogue, Targum, and Midrash: Scripture in Liturgical Context ◆ <i>Vayishlach (Gen 32:4–36:43)</i>	8
	Lerner, 'Works of Aggadic Midrash,' LS2, pp. 142–51; Moscovitz, 'Palestinian Talmud and Leviticus Rabbah' (handout); Kalmin, Jewish Babylonia, ch. 2	Collaborative learning	Amoraic Aggadah: The Yerushalmi and the Transition to Amoraic Collections ◆ <i>Vayeshev (Gen 37:1–40:23)</i>	9
	Heinemann, 'Profile of a Midrash,' JAAR 39 (1971): 141–50; Lieber, 'Stage Mothers,' in Genesis Rabbah in Text and Context		Amoraic Midrashic Collections: Written Text or Oral Performance? ◆ <i>Miketz (Gen 41:1–44:17)</i>	10
	Sokoloff, 'Major Manuscripts of Genesis Rabbah'; Levinson, 'Composition and Transmission,' in Genesis Rabbah in Text and Context; Boyarin, Intertextuality, pp. 39–92	Collaborative learning	Bereshit Rabbah I: The Exegetical Midrash ◆ <i>Vayigash (Gen 44:18–47:27)</i>	11
	Lieber; Boyarin, Intertextuality, pp. 39–92 (cont.)		Bereshit Rabbah II: Narrative, Character, and Intertextuality ◆ <i>Vayechi (Gen 47:28–50:26)</i>	12
	Stern, 'Vayikra Rabbah and My Life in Midrash,' Prooftexts 21 (2001): 23–38; Visotzky, 'Misnomers	Collaborative learning	Leviticus Rabbah: The Homiletical Midrash and the Petihah Form ◆ <i>Shemot (Exod 1:1–6:1)</i>	13

	Petihah and Homiletic Midrash,' JSQ 18.1 (2011): 19–31			
	Fisch, Written for Us (Brill, 2022), pp. 1–35 (revisit with fresh eyes)	Student presentations	Review and Synthesis: Mapping the Midrashic Landscape ✦ <i>Va'era</i> (Exod 6:2–9:35)	14

\*ייתכנו שינויים בסילבוס בהתאם לקצב ההתקדמות ואפקטיביות הלמידה

 **ציון סופי**

מסקל בציון הסופי	תיאור התוצר
50% מהציון הסופי	Final Assignment
50% מהציון הסופי	Take Home Essay

 **דרישות הקורס**

- **Regular Assignments** – assigned to the students as part of preparation for classes, such as: material to prepare with accompanying questions to answer, written responses to articles, presentations. These regular assignments are a way to ensure that students do the preparation and can participate in class discussions. These assignments constitute 50% of your final grade.
- **Attendance** –80% attendance is required. Students are expected to make up the work for any missed classes.

 **דרישות קדם**

אין.

## ביבליוגרפיה: תכנים לקריאה, צפיה והאזנה (רצוי עדכני)

### Required content for reference:

- Avigdor Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah* (MOD Books, 1990).
- James L. Kugel, 'Two Introductions to Midrash,' *Prooftexts* 3 (1983): 131–55.
- Galit Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature* (Stanford University Press, 2000)
- R. Le Déaut, 'Apropos a Definition of Midrash,' *Interpretation* 25.3 (1971): 259–82.
- Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1988), ch. 1.

- Paul D. Mandel, *The Origins of Midrash: From Teaching to Text* (Brill, 2017), pp. 87–144.
- John J. Collins, 'The Rewritten Bible in Early Judaism,' in *A Companion to Biblical Interpretation in Early Judaism*, ed. Henze (Eerdmans, 2012).
- Marc Hirshman, 'Aggadic Midrash,' in *The Literature of the Sages, Part 2* (LS2), pp. 107–32.
- Menahem Kahana, 'The Halakhic Midrashim,' LS2, pp. 4–106.
- Jay Harris, 'Midrash Halakha,' in *Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4, pp. 336–68.
- Reuven Hammer, *The Classic Midrash* (Paulist Press, 1995), pp. 13–50.
- Steven D. Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary* (SUNY Press, 1991), ch. 1.
- Beth Berkowitz, "The Limits of 'Their Laws': Ancient Rabbinic Controversies about Jewishness and Non-Jewishness," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99.1 (2009): 121–57
- Joseph Heinemann, 'Profile of a Midrash,' *JAAR* 39 (1971): 141–50.
- Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Indiana University Press, 1990).
- Laura Lieber, "Stage Mothers: Performing the Matriarchs in Genesis Rabbah and Yannai," in *Genesis Rabbah in Text and Context*, by Sarit Kattan Gribetz et al. (Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 155–74.
- Burton Visotzky, 'The Misnomers Petihah and Homiletic Midrash,' *JSQ* 18.1 (2011): 19–31.
- David Stern, 'Vayikra Rabbah and My Life in Midrash,' *Prooftexts* 21 (2001): 23–38.
- Yael Fisch, *Written for Us* (Brill, 2022), Introduction, pp. 1–35.

**Recommended content – enrichment reading:**

- Addison G. Wright, *The Literary Genre Midrash* (Alba House, 1967), pp. 1–40.
- Myron Lerner, 'The Works of Aggadic Midrash and the Esther Midrashim,' LS2, pp. 138–99.
- Avigdor Shinan, *The Embroidered Targum* (Magnes Press, 1992), ch. 1.
- Zeev Weiss, 'The Sepphoris Synagogue Mosaic,' *Biblical Archaeology Review* 26 (2000): 48–70.
- Azzan Yadin, *Scripture as Logos: Rabbi Ishmael and the Origins of Midrash* (Penn, 2004), pp. 1–34.
- Richard Kalmin, *Jewish Babylonia between Persia and Roman Palestine* (Oxford, 2006), ch. 2.
- Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah* (University of Chicago Press, 1986).