

סילבוס - תוכנית הוראה לקורס
**Midrashic Literature: Later Collections
and Talmudic Narrative**

The Dept. of Talmud and Oral Law | Dr. Shana Strauch-Schick

09-968-01 | ספרות המדרש: חיבורים מאוחרים ואגדת התלמוד

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

תקציר הקורס

This is the second semester of a two-semester course surveying the history, forms, and interpretation of Midrash and Aggadah. Semester 2 opens with the later Amoraic and post-Amoraic midrashic corpus — Pesikta de-Rav Kahana, Pesikta Rabbati, Tanchuma, the Megillot midrashim, midrash on the Writings (Psalms, Proverbs), and Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer, before turning to talmudic narrative. The semester concludes with aggadah in the Babylonian Talmud, specifically the story-cycles of Bavli Gittin 55b–58a, which contain some of the most dramatic and theologically complex narratives in all of rabbinic literature. Students will engage questions of gender, violence, theology, and historiography alongside close reading of the talmudic text.

Students are not expected to have prior background beyond Semester 1. Each session notes the current parashat ha-shavua and brings brief primary-texts drawn from the weekly portion. The Torah reading schedule follows the standard annual cycle.

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):

מס' השיעור	נושא השיעור	למידה פעילה	קריאה/ צפיה נדרשת	הערכה תהליכית/מעצבת
1	Pesikta de-Rav Kahana and Pesikta Rabbati: Midrash and the Liturgical Cycle ♦ <i>Vayakhel (Exod 35:1–38:20)</i>		Braude & Kapstein, <i>Pesikta de-Rab Kahana</i> (JPS, 1975), Introduction; Lerner, 'Works of Aggadic Midrash,' LS2, pp. 151–58	
2	Lamentations Rabbah and Esther Rabbah: Catastrophe and Comedy ♦ <i>Pekudei (Exod 38:21–40:38)</i>		Hasan-Rokem, <i>Tales of the Neighborhood</i> ; chapt. 2; Mintz, <i>Hurban</i> , ch. 2; Lerner, <i>Eichah Rabbah and Esther Rabbah</i> sections (handout); Stern, <i>Parables in Midrash</i> , ch. 3	
3	Midrash Tanchuma and the Yelammedenu Tradition ♦ <i>Vayikra (Lev 1:1–5:26)</i>	Collaborative learning	Bregman, <i>Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature</i> , Introduction & ch. 1 (Gorgias Press, 2003); Lerner, 'Works of Aggadic Midrash,' LS2, pp. 159–72	
4	Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer: Narrative Midrash and Pseudepigraphic Retelling ♦ <i>Shemini (Lev 9:1–11:47)</i>		Adelman, <i>Return of the Repressed</i> , Introduction & ch. 1 (Brill, 2009); Katz, 'Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer as a Midrashic Genre,' in <i>Midrash and Literature</i>	
5	Midrash on the Megillot: Song of Songs Rabbah and Ruth Rabbah ♦ <i>Tazria (Lev 12:1–13:59)</i>	Collaborative learning	Kimelman, 'Rabbi Yochanan and Origen on the Song of Songs,' HTR 73 (1980): 567–95; Alexander, <i>Targum of Canticles</i> , Introduction; Lerner, LS2, pp. 172–88	
6	Midrash Tehillim and Midrash Mishlei: Midrash on the Writings ♦ <i>Metzora (Lev 14:1–15:33)</i>		Visotzky, <i>Midrash on Proverbs</i> (Yale, 1992), Introduction; Braude, <i>Midrash on Psalms</i> (Yale, 1959),	

	Introduction; Lerner, LS2, pp. 188–99			
	Fine, Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World (Cambridge, 2005), ch. 4; Weiss, 'Sepphoris Synagogue Mosaic,' BAR 26 (2000): 48–70	Visual analysis workshop	Midrash in Visual Art: Dura Europos and Synagogue Mosaics ◆ <i>Acharei Mot (Lev 16:1–18:30)</i>	7
	Rubenstein, Talmudic Stories, pp. 1–33 (Johns Hopkins, 1999); Green, 'What's in a Name? The Problem of Rabbinic Biography,' in Approaches to Ancient Judaism I		Rabbinic Narratives: Methodology and the Problem of History ◆ <i>Kedoshim (Lev 19:1–20:27)</i>	8
	Wimpfheimer, Narrating the Law, pp. 31–62 (Penn, 2011); Kalmin, The Sage in Jewish Society of Late Antiquity, ch. 1 (Routledge, 1999)	Collaborative learning	Aggadah in the Bavli: Why Are Stories in the Talmud? ◆ <i>Emor (Lev 21:1–24:23)</i>	9
	Levine, 'R. Simeon b. Yohai and the Purification of Tiberias,' HUCA 49 (1978): 143–85; Rubenstein, Talmudic Stories, pp. 105–38	Parallel text analysis	Comparing Parallels: The Cave Story of R. Shimon bar Yochai ◆ <i>Behar (Lev 25:1–26:2)</i>	10
	Rubenstein, 'Story-Cycles of the Bavli: Part 1,' in Studies in Rabbinic Narratives, vol. 1; Tropper, 'Yohanan Ben Zakkai, Amicus Caesaris,' JSIJ 4 (2005): 133–49	Collaborative learning (small groups)	Story-Cycles in Bavli Gittin 55b–58a (I): The Destruction Narratives ◆ <i>Bechukotai (Lev 26:3–27:34)</i>	11
	Reeder, 'Wartime Rape, the Romans, and the First Jewish Revolt,' JSJ 48.3 (2017): 363–85; Watts Belser, 'Sex in the Shadow of Rome,' JFSR 30.1 (2014): 5–24; Fine, 'Why Was Titus Killed by a Gnat?'	Collaborative seminar	Story-Cycles in Bavli Gittin 55b–58a (II): Gender, Violence, and Theology ◆ <i>Bamidbar (Num 1:1–4:20)</i>	12

*ייתכנו שינויים בסילבוס בהתאם לקצב ההתקדמות ואפקטיביות הלמידה

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:

- William Braude and Israel Kapstein, trans., *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana* (JPS, 1975), Introduction, pp. xiii–lxx.
- Galit Hasan-Rokem, *Tales of the Neighborhood: Jewish Narrative Dialogues in Late Antiquity* (University of California Press, 2003), ch. 2
- Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (Columbia University Press, 1984), ch. 2. Marc Bregman,
- *The Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature* (Gorgias Press, 2003), Introduction and ch. 1.
- Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirqê De-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Brill, 2009), Introduction and ch. 1.
- Reuven Kimelman, 'Rabbi Yochanan and Origen on the Song of Songs,' *HTR* 73 (1980): 567–95.
- Philip Alexander, *The Targum of Canticles* (Liturgical Press, 2003), Introduction, pp. 3–41.

- Burton Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs* (Yale University Press, 1992), Introduction, pp. 1–22.
- William G. Braude, trans., *The Midrash on Psalms* (Yale University Press, 1959), Introduction (selections).
- Steven Fine, *Art and Judaism in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 4.
- Zeev Weiss, 'The Sepphoris Synagogue Mosaic,' *BAR* 26 (2000): 48–70.
- Jeffrey L. Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 1–33 and pp. 105–138.
- Barry Wimpfheimer, *Narrating the Law: A Poetics of Talmudic Legal Stories* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), pp. 1–62.
- Richard Kalmin, *The Sage in Jewish Society of Late Antiquity* (Routledge, 1999), ch. 1.
- Lee Levine, 'R. Simeon b. Yohai and the Purification of Tiberias,' *HUCA* 49 (1978): 143–85.
- Caryn A. Reeder, 'Wartime Rape, the Romans, and the First Jewish Revolt,' *JSJ* 48.3 (2017): 363–85.
- Julia Watts Belser, 'Sex in the Shadow of Rome,' *JFSR* 30.1 (2014): 5–24.
- Steven Fine, 'Why Was Titus Killed by a Gnat?' in *Emet le-Ya'akov* (Academic Studies Press, 2023), pp. 544–568.

Recommended content – enrichment reading:

- Rivka Ulmer, *Pesiqta Rabbati: A Synoptic Edition* (Scholars Press, 1997), Introduction.
- Marc Bregman, 'Pseudepigraphy in Rabbinic Literature,' in *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives*, ed. Chazon & Stone (Brill, 1999), pp. 27–41.
- Carol Bakhos, 'Pirqê de-Rabbi Eliezer,' in *Outside the Bible* (JPS, 2013), pp. 2765–2820 (selections).
- David Stern, *Parables in Midrash* (Harvard University Press, 1991), ch. 3.
- Myron Lerner, 'Works of Aggadic Midrash,' *LS2*, pp. 138–199 (Megillot and Writings sections).
- W. S. Green, 'What's in a Name?,' in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism I* (Scholars Press, 1979), pp. 77–94.
- Barry Wimpfheimer, *Narrating the Law* (Penn, 2011), pp. 1–30.
- Michal Bar-Asher Siegal, *Early Christian Monastic Literature and the Babylonian Talmud* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), ch. 1
- Amram Tropper, 'Yohanan Ben Zakkai, Amicus Caesaris,' *JSIJ* 4 (2005): 133–49.
- Shaye J. D. Cohen, 'The Significance of Yavneh,' *HUCA* 55 (1984): 27–53.
- Julia Watts Belser, *Power, Ethics, and Ecology in Jewish Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015), ch. 2.