

## Center for Christian-Jewish Learning Courses

### **Hannah Arendt (James Bernauer, S.J.)**

This course examines the range of Hannah Arendt's writings including her reflections on our historical epoch (*Origins of Totalitarianism*, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*) and her program for political and personal renaissance (*The Human Condition*, *Life of the Mind*).

### **Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue (Ruth Langer)**

In 1974, the Vatican explicitly called on Catholics to understand Jews as they understand themselves. In our world of dialogue and post-Holocaust repair of relations, Jews similarly ought to understand Christians. This course explores key topics in the contemporary Christian-Jewish dialogue with the goal of both enabling this understanding of the other and enhancing self-understanding. Students who do not identify with either tradition are welcome to enrich this conversation.

### **Passover in Midrash (Ruth Langer)**

Fundamental to any understanding of Judaism is an ability to enter into its formative literature, Midrash and Talmud, the primary texts of Jewish learning. Focusing on texts (in translation) relevant to the celebration of Passover, this course introduces students to the rabbinic approach to Scripture and their means of making it relevant in their (and our) world. This understanding is heightened by comparisons to early Christian modes of discourse on the same themes.

### **The Holocaust: A Moral History (James Bernauer, S.J.)**

The tragic event that ruptured modern Western morality is examined from a variety of perspectives in this course. Students study the testimony of both its victims and its perpetrators. Special attention is given to consideration of the intellectual and moral factors which motivated resistance or excused indifference. The course concludes with interpretations of its meaning for contemporary morality and of its theological significance for Christians and Jews.

### **Coming to Terms with Guilt: Jewish-Christian Relations (Katharina von Kellenbach)**

In preparation for the millennium celebration, Pope John Paul II issued a series of apologies for Christian complicity in historical evils, including the Holocaust, in order to facilitate a "purification of memory." This course explores this concept in its theological, ethical, and political dimensions. What role did the Holocaust play in shifting Christian teachings of Jewish guilt (for the death of Christ) to a recognition of Christian guilt for anti-Judaism? How do religious rituals of teshuvah and penance help individuals and communities confront guilt in the aftermath of political atrocity? Can we speak of the "purification of memory" in the context of Jewish-Christian relations after the Holocaust? Is Holocaust memory relevant and applicable to other instances of historical injustice, such as slavery, genocide, or sexual violence?

### **Israel in Jewish Theologies (Ruth Langer)**

Israel, both the people and the land, are central to Jewish theology as concrete manifestations of God's covenants. This course explores the evolving meanings of these concepts from the Bible to today, looking at themes like peoplehood, life in the land, exile from it, and (messianic) return. The second part of the course focuses specifically on the theologies of a range of modern Jewish thinkers, with the goal of helping students to understand aspects of contemporary Israel and its meaning to world Jewry.

### **Jews and Christians: Understanding the Other (Ruth Langer)**

Interreligious dialogue requires interreligious understanding. This course builds a foundation for genuine dialogue between Jews and Christians by posing fundamental theological questions in a comparative context. Students gain an understanding of the other tradition while also deepening their understanding of

their own, discussing such matters as the human experience of God, the purpose of human existence, the nature of religious community, and the ways that the communities respond to challenges, both contemporary and ancient.

**Reading the New Testament without Presupposing Supersessionism (Jesper Svartvik)**

*Supersessionism* teaches that Christianity has commonalities with Judaism while simultaneously replacing it. Finding expression throughout church history, it has shaped Christian traditions of reading the New Testament. Today, many biblical scholars argue that because the New Testament predates this idea, we need to read the New Testament *without* supersessionist presuppositions. Second Temple Judaism is not in theological contrast with the New Testament, but is its historical context. This course explores these rereadings of the New Testament, focussing on texts like Jesus' parables, the passion narratives, and the Pauline proclamation that the gospel is "good news" for Jews and gentiles.