

Center for Christian-Jewish Learning Courses

Judaism and Christianity in Dialogue (Daniel Joslyn-Siemiatkoski, 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.

Exploring the Theology of Abraham Joshua Heschel (Ruth Langer)

A refugee from the Nazis, Abraham Joshua Heschel became one of the most beloved and influential Jewish theologians of his day. He advised the bishops in formulating their new teachings about Jews and Judaism at the Second Vatican Council, he marched with Martin Luther King in Selma, he protested the Vietnam War, and he dialogued with other leading Christian theologians. This course is an exercise in comparative theology, engaging key elements of Heschel's writings and the Judaism expressed in them in order to investigate their potential for contributing to the self-understanding of Christians and practitioners of other religions.

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.

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.