Jewish Spiritual Practices

Dr. James Jacobson Maisels

Course Number: 702.2271
Class Time: Wednesday 12:00-15:00
Class Location: Room 2002 Terrace Bldg.
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Practice can be seen as at the core of the spiritual or religious life. This course focuses on a variety of spiritual technologies in Judaism. Each week a different practice will be explored through primary sources in translation and will aim to introduce students to the breadth and depth of Jewish spiritual practices. Methodological considerations of the nature of spiritual practice as a category, both religiously and academically, and its distinction from ritual and commandment, in both the history of Judaism and religious studies, will accompany our exploration of these practices. Texts and practices will range from the Hebrew Bible to twentieth century musar and Hasidic texts, though a particular emphasis is placed on Kabbalistic and Hasidic literature. Through this course students will be introduced to the necessary terminology, categories and context to understand the purpose, function and place of Jewish spiritual practices within the Jewish tradition.

Course Requirements:
- Weekly text-study of primary sources as well as selected secondary sources.
- Weekly one page reflection on the readings.
- Weekly practice homework and google group post on the weekly practice.
- Final Project

Final Grade:

- Weekly writing assignments 25%
- Weekly reading and class 25%
- Weekly practice homework and 10%
- Final project 40%
Course Outline and Reading List

1. Mindfulness Meditation and The Quieting Practice of the Piaseczner Rebbe
   a. Formal Practice

   Primary Sources
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, The Subject of Quieting, Derekh HaMelekh, p. 450-451

   Secondary Sources:

   b. Practice in Everyday Life

   Primary Sources
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Derekh HaMelekh, Breishit, p. 5,
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Haksharat HaAvreikhim, Chapt. 9, Part 4

   Secondary Sources:

2. Fellowship, Love and Community as a Spiritual practice
   a. Hasidic Co-counseling

   Primary Sources
   R. Moshe Cordovero, Hanhagot, #14
   R. Moshe Cordovero, Hanhagot, #15
   R. Abraham Kalisker, Pri HaAretz, Letters, Letter 30
   R. Abraham Kalisker, Pri HaAretz, Letters, Letter 6
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Bnei Mahshavha Tovah, Membership in the Community
   R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, Bnei Mahshavha Tovah, Group Commitments and Advice, 54-58

   Secondary Sources:


b. **Community as a Spiritual Practice**