Contemporary Perspectives on Rabbinic Family Narratives

Dr. Moshe Lavee

Course Number: 116.1111
Class Time: Wednesday, 15:00 – 18:00
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Class Location: TBA

Course Description:
Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity (Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash) offers a variety of stories, describing models of family relations. Rabbinic family stories deal with marital and intergeneration relations, and played an important role in construction of social structures among Jewish communities.
In the course we examine a selection of rabbinic narratives and consider modern responses to them. We will examine the ways by which modern figures have used this corpus of stories with in contemporary contexts, reflecting a variety of modern Jewish perspectives.
The course will include a Beth-Midrash study element: a dialogical pedagogy of guided study of texts in small groups of students. The course is also open for Israeli students and aimed at creating a place for mutual enrichment.

Course Requirements:
- Weekly Reading Assignments
- Class Participation
- Oral Presentation
- Term Paper

Final Grade:
Weekly Reading Assignments 10%
Class Participation 10%
Oral Presentation 30%
Term Paper 50%
Course Outline and Reading List

Week 1: The Study of Rabbinic Narratives in Modern Jewish Cultures: An Introduction

Weeks 2-3: Honor Thy Father and Mother
Primary sources: Babylonian Talmud, Qiddushin 29b-31a; Jerusalem Talmud, Peah 1:1
2. Valler Shullamit, Women and Womanhood in the Talmud, Atlanta, 1999, Ch. 6.

Weeks 4-6: As Father as Son: Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yochai and Rabbi Eleazar
Primary sources: Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 33b-35a; Bava Metzia 83b-84b.
Secondary sources:

Week 7-9: Marital Tensions
Primary Sources: Babylonian Talmud, Ketuboth, 62a-63b
Secondary sources:

Week 10 – 11 Marital Crisis
Primary Sources: Midrash Pesikta de-Rav Kahana 22:2; Babyloian Talmud, Gitin, 67b
Secondary sources:
2. Tal Ilan, Mine and Yours are hers: Retrieving Women's History from Rabbinic Literature, Leiden, 1997, pp. 85 – 130.
Weeks 12-14: Students Presentations, Methodological and Conceptual Reflections

Secondary Sources: