



CONGREGATION BETH EL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

THE RABBI SAMUEL SCOLNIC ADULT INSTITUTE

FOUNDED IN 1977 IN MEMORY OF SAUL BENDIT

Fall 2018

*"FIX A PERIOD FOR THE STUDY OF TORAH"
PIRKEI AVOT 1: 15*

REGISTER ONLINE!
Register NOW for the Early Bird Discount.
Deadline: September 28

SIX TUESDAY MORNINGS
October 9, 16, 23, and 30; November 6 and 13

SIX WEDNESDAY EVENINGS
October 10, 17, 24, and 31; November 7 and 14

*All classes are open to the public.
There is no prerequisite—only a desire to participate, learn, and enjoy.*

THE RABBI SAMUEL SCOLNIC ADULT INSTITUTE, founded in 1977 in memory of Saul Bendit, is one of the leading synagogue-based adult education programs in the Washington, DC area. Now in its 41st year, the Institute has received national and international recognition. The Fall program, running for six weeks, comprises 11 courses offered Wednesday evenings beginning October 10, and four classes offered Tuesday mornings, beginning October 9. We are confident that you will find the courses interesting and informative.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SCHEDULE

WITH MINYAN/REFRESHMENT BREAK FROM 8:20-8:40 PM

7:30 - 8:20 PM

8:40 - 9:30 PM

Mezuzah, Tefilin, and Sefer Torah
Rabbi Fabián Werbin

**Innovative Jewish Thinkers:
Eliezer ben Yehuda**
Rabbi Greg Harris

The Yiddish Theatre: Alive and Well
Hazzan Emeritus Abraham Lubin

**Jewish Comedians from the 1940s
on**
Hazzan Asa Fradkin

**Evolution and Cultural Influences Upon
Jewish Prayer: Liturgical Midrash**
Rabbi David Abramson

**Jewish Lyricists and the "Golden Age
of American Popular Song"**
Henry Kahn and Andrew Zatman

History of Israel: 1979 to the Present
Eric Gartman

**Portnoy on "Portnoy":
Discussing Philip Roth z"l**
Rabbi Mindy Avra Portnoy

**Prophecy and the End of Days:
Book of Daniel**
Gideon Amir

Who Wrote the Bible?
Dr. Richard Lederman

Latin American Jewish Literature
Dr. Saúl Sosnowski

TUESDAY MORNING SCHEDULE

WITH REFRESHMENT BREAK FROM 10:50-11:10 AM

10:00 - 10:50 AM

11:10 AM - NOON

**Portnoy on "Portnoy":
Discussing Philip Roth z"l**
Rabbi Mindy Avra Portnoy

**Prophecy and the End of Days:
Book of Daniel**
Gideon Amir

The Yiddish Theatre: Alive and Well
Hazzan Emeritus Abraham Lubin

Who Wrote the Bible?
Dr. Richard Lederman

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

MEZUZAH, TEFILIN, AND SEFER TORAH

Instructor: **Rabbi Fabián Werbin**, Wednesday evening

We will be learning about these central objects of the Jewish traditions. How did they develop? How are they kosher? Few of us are aware of the foundations, evolution, traditions, and care of these sacred items, extending from the Dead Sea Scrolls to the present. Following an introduction and discussion of the historical background, including using sample objects, we will consider these and other questions: Why it is so important that no letters are missing? Why are there different fonts, sizes and marks in a *Torah* scroll? Can we make a parchment of the *mezuzah* part of the *Torah* or vice versa? What is inside a *tefilin*? What are the letters in the back of the *mezuzah* parchment? These intriguing questions that rabbis are often asked will be answered in this class. We will also dive into the world of the Dead Sea Scrolls to explain the differences between the contemporary *tefilin* and the ancient ones found in the Scrolls.



Tefilin, tefillinwrapp.com

THE YIDDISH THEATRE: ALIVE AND WELL

Instructor: **Hazzan Emeritus Abraham Lubin**, Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening



Metropolitan Playhouse production of *The Jewish King Lear*, a popular Yiddish theatre play. Photo courtesy of NYBlueprint.com

This course offers an exploration and illustration of the world of the Yiddish Theatre. With the use of rare film footage, DVDs, CDs and a live performance, this genre of Jewish culture will come alive. Archival material from the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, and a live performance by a guest cantorial colleague who appeared in the Warsaw Yiddish Theatre and the New York Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, will truly bring this course to life. This course continues Hazzan Lubin's exploration of the world of American Jewish cultural history.

EVOLUTION AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES UPON JEWISH PRAYER: LITURGICAL MIDRASH

Instructor: **Rabbi David Abramson**, Wednesday evening

Join Rabbi Abramson for an intriguing exploration of the process by which biblical passages have been altered in Jewish prayer, and by which our traditional prayers themselves have evolved. Why did the Rabbis chop in half a verse in *Exodus*, describing God's attributes of mercy? Why was Jeremiah's "heal me, *Adonai*, and I shall be healed" altered when it was inserted into the *Amidah*? Why did the American Conservative Movement opt to replace the traditional *b'rakhah*, recited by Jewish men, thanking God "who has not made me a woman?" Should we feel uncomfortable with the gratitude expressed by *Aleinu*—thanking God, "who did not make us like the other nations of the lands, and did not place us like the families of the earth?"



At the Rabbi's (1860s), Carl Schleicher, Wikimedia Commons

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

HISTORY OF ISRAEL: 1979 TO THE PRESENT

Instructor: **Eric Gartman**, Wednesday evening



Want to learn more about present-day Israel? In this class we will examine the last few decades of Israel's turbulent history, from the aftermath of the Camp David accords to the present day, using a slideshow presentation to augment the lecture and discussion. Topics will include Israel's various wars, the peace process, and the first and second *Intifadas*. This course will be based on Eric Gartman's book *Return To Zion: The History of Modern Israel*.

PROPHECY AND THE END OF DAYS: BOOK OF DANIEL

Instructor: **Gideon Amir**, Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening

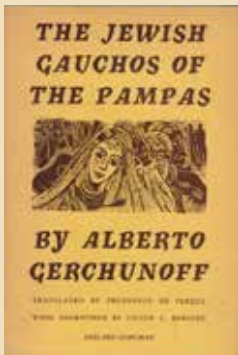
The Book of *Daniel* is a prophecy of history and a study of the "end of days." Influenced by latter Biblical stories including the story of *Joseph*, it contains a message specific to its time. This course begins with an introduction with historical background for the Book. We will examine the first six chapters, telling the story of Daniel, and then review the last six chapters which describe Daniel's amazing visions for the Messianic Era.



Daniel in the Lion's Den (1952), Robert Edward Weaver, Wikimedia Commons

LATIN AMERICAN JEWISH LITERATURE

Instructor: **Dr. Saúl Sosnowski**, Wednesday evening



By now there is a very substantial corpus of novels, short stories and poetry that fit this category. Most, given demographics, come from Argentina, but significant contributions also have been made by authors from Uruguay, México, Perú, and Brazil. The course will begin with the text that serves as background for this literature: Alberto Gerchunoff's *The Jewish Gauchos of the Pampas* (1910). These gauchos were Jewish immigrants who settled and worked in Argentine agricultural colonies. Then we will move to more contemporary texts that address issues of identity, tradition, acculturation, and insertion into history and politics.

INNOVATIVE JEWISH THINKERS: ELIEZER BEN YEHUDA

Instructor: **Rabbi Greg Harris**, Wednesday evening



Eliezer Ben Yehuda,
Wikimedia Commons

Eliezer ben Yehuda is considered the father of modern Hebrew. Born in the mid 19th century within the Russian Empire, he was a Zionist leader determined to shape the character of the Jewish people through language. While others focused on sovereignty and the politics of land, ben Yehuda was focused on reviving a language (rather than Yiddish and separate dialects) which would unify the Jewish people. His vision looked beyond nationalism and saw peoplehood.

JEWISH COMEDIANS FROM THE 1940S ON

Instructor: **Hazzan Asa Fradkin**, Wednesday evening

Jews have long had a special relationship with comedy. They have dominated the comedy landscape, including vaudeville, stand-up, television, and the borscht belt. Is this special relationship because of our painful history? Is it cultural or just a genetic gift? We will examine Jewish comedians era by era. Come find out the hidden stories of some of our greatest comedians including, for example, Milton Berle, Groucho Marx, Mel Brooks, Jack Benny, Sid Caesar, Imogene Coca, Gilda Radner, Lenny Bruce, Carl Reiner, Jerry Seinfeld, Jon Stewart, Amy Schumer, and many more.



Jon Stewart, photo courtesy of Comedy Central

JEWISH LYRICISTS AND THE “GOLDEN AGE OF AMERICAN POPULAR SONG”

Instructors: **Henry Kahn and Andrew Zatman**, Wednesday evening



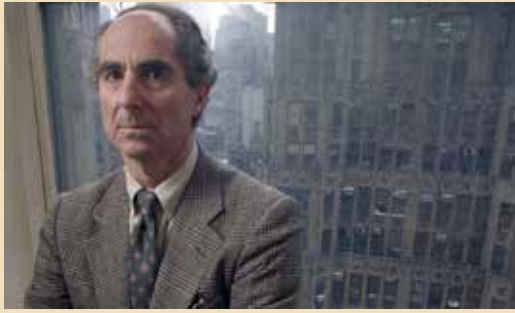
Arthur Schwartz and Dorothy Fields,
Wikimedia Commons

Jewish composers and lyricists wrote most of the iconic songs of the “Golden Age of American Popular Song,” which was roughly 1910 to 1960. These songs, written by immigrants or children of immigrants for Tin Pan Alley, Broadway and Hollywood, became a distinctly American art form, this musical genre eventually referred to as *The Great American Songbook*. We will examine songwriting from the perspective of the lyricist, focusing on how different lyricists approached writing songs and collaborating with composers, the Jewish backgrounds of most of the lyricists, and the Jewish content in a number of songs. Lyricists to be considered include Irving Berlin, Lorenz Hart, Ira Gershwin, Dorothy Fields, Cole Porter, and Oscar Hammerstein. Musical examples in live performance will be featured.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

PORTNOY ON "PORTNOY": DISCUSSING PHILIP ROTH Z"L

Instructor: **Rabbi Mindy Avra Portnoy**, Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening



Philip Roth, photo by Joe Tabbacca, Associated Press

"Portnoy" is the Russian word for "tailor", but the late writer Philip Roth changed its meaning forever when he published the best-selling book *Portnoy's Complaint* in 1969. This class will focus on the life and works of Roth. Our study will highlight the different stages of his life and writings beginning with *Goodbye Columbus* (1959) and continuing until *Nemesis* (2010). Themes will include: Jews in America, families, mortality, sex and love, politics, as well as his views of women, his love of baseball, and his attachment to Newark. We will also discuss some of the reactions to his award-winning work, especially in the Jewish community. The reading of *Goodbye Columbus* or *Portnoy's Complaint* before the first session is recommended, but not required.

WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

Instructor: **Dr. Richard Lederman**, Tuesday morning and Wednesday evening



Photo by Bishko Professional Photography Company Israel, bishko.co.il

While the traditional approach insists that the Bible is the revealed word of God, modern scholarship has demonstrated that the Bible is the product of the inspired poets, priests, prophets, and scribes of ancient Israel. It is a multivocal text, reflecting the myriad social, political and religious circles within ancient Israelite society. Finally, tracing the evolution of the Biblical text reveals the evolution of ancient Israelite history, society, and theology.

EARLY ALERT FOR SPRING 2019

Spring semester dates are Tuesday/Wednesday, February 26-27 through April 9-10 (no classes for Purim *Megillah*, March 19-20).

If you need assistance or special accommodations in order to participate in the Adult Institute, please call 301-652-2606, ext. 349. A member of the Institute Committee will contact you. Designated parking spaces are available for persons with disabilities. Wheelchairs are available at the entrance to Beth El.



INSTRUCTORS



RABBI DAVID L. ABRAMSON, currently serving as an Adjunct Rabbi at Beth El, also works as a chaplain for the Jewish Social Service Agency and at the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington, and is a teacher at Shoresh Hebrew High School. He received his rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) and served in pulpits in Arizona, Ohio, Massachusetts, and Minnesota for twenty-five years. He recently served as Tikvat Israel Congregation's interim rabbi. Rabbi Abramson has taught extensively in adult Jewish education programs as well as in Hebrew high schools.



GIDEON AMIR, born in Holland to Holocaust survivors, grew up in Israel. After serving in the military, he received undergraduate and graduate degrees from Hebrew University and the Weizmann Institute of Science. He has taught extensively at the college level in Israel and in the U.S. He completed a Master's Degree in Judaic Studies at Baltimore Hebrew University. He has been teaching Bible and a variety of Jewish subjects at area synagogues and churches, the Osher Program at JHU, Oasis, the Melton program, and the Foundation for Jewish Studies.



HAZZAN ASA FRADKIN joined Beth El in July 2017. He was ordained by the H.L. Miller Cantorial School of JTS in May 2007, where he earned the degrees of Hazzan and Masters in Sacred Music. At the Miller School, he was class president and founder and Chair of the School's *Tzedakah* Concert Committee. He holds an undergraduate degree in Vocal Studies with a minor in Jewish Studies from Indiana University's School of Music. At IU, he was active in Hillel and also graduated with a Certificate in Jewish Studies. He previously served as Hazzan at Temple Shalom in Greenwich, CT.



ERIC GARTMAN is the author of *Return to Zion: The History of Modern Israel* (Jewish Publication Society, 2015). He has been an intelligence analyst for the Department of Defense. After studying history as an undergraduate at the University of Arizona, Mr. Gartman did graduate work at the University of Virginia and the National Defense University. He has lived and studied in Israel and traveled extensively throughout the Middle East.



RABBI GREGORY HARRIS, Head Rabbi of Beth El, joined the Beth El community in 2002. He was ordained at JTS, where he also received a Master's Degree in Jewish Education. Rabbi Harris received his B.A. in Political Science from The American University. He is a Past President of the Washington Board of Rabbis and teaches throughout the community. Rabbi Harris is the Chair of the Pastoral Care Committee at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Life Communities and a past recipient of the Matthew Simon Rabbinic Award given by the Jewish Federation for leadership in the broader Jewish community.

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HENRY KAHN, a member of Beth El, is an accomplished singer with a long-standing interest in performing and learning about American popular song. He studied voice privately and was active in the Opera Workshop at American University for a number of years. He is a graduate of The George Washington University (GWU), the University of Miami and The Johns Hopkins University (JHU). He recently retired from the US Environmental Protection Agency. He taught at the University of Missouri (Columbia), the University of Miami, and was an Adjunct Associate Professor at GWU.



DR. RICHARD LEDERMAN spent 30 years in Jewish communal service, most recently as Director of Public Policy and Social Action and Executive Director of the Seaboard Region of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. He holds a B.A. in Religion and a Ph.D. in Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Literature. Dr. Lederman has served as a faculty member of the Florence E. Melton Adult Mini-School and *Me'ah*, an intensive adult Jewish learning program out of Boston's Hebrew College. He currently serves as adjunct professor in the School of Continuing Studies at Georgetown University, teaching Bible. He also teaches courses on Bible for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

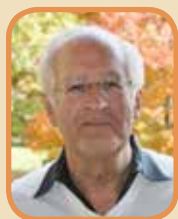


HAZZAN ABRAHAM LUBIN, the Hazzan Emeritus of Beth El, continues to be active in the wider Jewish community. He has officiated elsewhere at High Holiday and other services. He is Secretary of the Cantors Assembly Foundation and a past president of the Cantors Assembly. Hazzan Lubin was awarded an honorary Doctor of Music degree by JTS, and was presented the International Cantors Assembly's "Hazzanic Excellence Award" at their Spring 2018 Convention in Florida. He holds a "hazzan" degree from Jews' College, London, and a Master of Music degree from DePaul University. He lectures on Jewish music, and has performed in the U.S., Canada, Israel, Spain, Argentina, and the former Soviet Union. Hazzan Lubin served as editor of *The Journal of Synagogue Music* for ten years.



RABBI MINDY AVRA PORTNOY, currently serving as an Adjunct Rabbi at Beth El, has been a rabbi with Temple Sinai for 25 years, and is now Rabbi Emerita. She previously was Director of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation at The American University, and an originator and former national co-coordinator of the Women's Rabbinic Network. Rabbi Portnoy, a graduate of Yale University, was ordained in June 1980 by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, where she also received an MA in Hebrew literature. She was among the pioneers for women in the rabbinate. Among her various publications are five children's books, including *Ima on the Bima: My Mommy is a Rabbi*. She has taught at The American University, in Beth El Sisterhood's *Rosh Chodesh* program, and at other local venues.

DR. SAÚL SOSNOWSKI, Professor of Latin American Literature and Culture at the University of Maryland, was Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese



(1979-2000), Director of the Latin American Studies Center (which he founded in 1989), and, from 2000 to 2011, the University's Associate Provost for International Affairs. He is the author of several books and over 80 published articles, and editor or co-editor of over 15 volumes. He recently co-authored *Exile, Diaspora, end Return: Changing Cultural Landscapes in Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay*. Dr. Sosnowski is the founder and Editor of the literary journal *Hispanamérica*, currently in its 47th year of continuous publication. He is a member of Beth El.



RABBI FABIÁN WERBIN joined Beth El as Associate Rabbi in the summer of 2015. He was born and raised in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He completed two undergraduate degrees, in Bible and in Jewish Thought, from Haifa University in Israel. He received his rabbinic ordination in 2003 from the Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano in Buenos Aires. Most recently, he served for seven years as Rabbi of Beth Israel Synagogue in Roanoke, Virginia, and he holds certification as an elementary and high school teacher. He is also teaching adult classes in Bible and Introductory Judaism at Beth El.



ANDREW ZATMAN is a professional pianist, composer and teacher. He has a master's degree in composition and bachelor's degree in music from UCLA. His compositions include art songs, music for piano and chamber and choral groups and Jewish liturgical music. A review in the Washington Post referred to Andrew as "perhaps the finest composer of art songs of his generation". He has performed Jewish music throughout the Washington area, including the Kennedy Center, and at numerous venues across the United States.

All instructors have taught in our Adult Institute.

RABBI SAMUEL SCOLNIC (1923-2012) z"l served as Beth El's first full time Rabbi for 32 years, and as Rabbi Emeritus until his death in 2012. He founded the Saul Bendit Adult Institute and taught in the Institute from its inception in the Fall of 1977. The Institute is now known as the Rabbi Samuel Scolnic Adult Institute. Rabbi Scolnic held advanced degrees from the Jewish Theological Seminary. He was the founder and first President of the National Association of Retired Conservative Rabbis. He taught and lectured widely at area synagogues and at the Isaac Frank Jewish Public Library and other venues. Rabbi Scolnic received the Sheva R. and Marver R. Bernstein Master Teacher Award from the Foundation for Jewish Studies.



SAUL BENDIT (1913-1976) z"l was a resident of our Washington community for 37 years and an active participant in both Jewish and non-Jewish affairs. He had a deep love for Jewish culture and was very proud of his people and his faith. We are deeply indebted to his late wife Tanya and their family for underwriting the Adult Institute for many years after its inception.

THE RABBI SAMUEL SCOLNIC ADULT INSTITUTE COMMITTEE
FOUNDED IN 1977 IN MEMORY OF SAUL BENDIT

Jack Ventura, Chair

Stanley Baldinger	Irwin Pernick
David Florin	Donna Saady
Hazzan Asa Fradkin	Mark Schifrin
Steven Frank	David Schultz
Judy Gann	Judy Scolnic
Sara Gordon	Maury Sterns
Marilyn Hammerman	Janet Stotsky
Rabbi Gregory Harris	Ginger Teitel
Miriam Israel	Stephanie Ventura
Marcia Jeffries	Rabbi Fabián Werbin
Rita Kopin	Lew Winarsky
Rhoda Nichaman	

REGISTRATION AND OTHER INFORMATION

DATES FOR FALL TERM: Classes will meet at Beth El on six Tuesday mornings, October 9, 16, 23, and 30, and November 6 and 13; and six Wednesday evenings, October 10, 17, 24, and 31, and November 7 and 14. All classrooms are fully accessible by elevator.

REGISTRATION FORM: Please register online at: <http://www.bethelmc.org> or complete and return the form below with your remittance. **Online** registration is available for members and non-members.

REMITTANCE: If registering online, follow payment instructions. If registering by mail, please make check payable to BETH EL.

IMPORTANT: FOR EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT, PAYMENT FOR REGISTRATION MUST BE RECEIVED BY SEPTEMBER 28 EITHER ONLINE, BY MAIL, OR HAND-CARRIED TO THE BETH EL OFFICE.

Advance registration helps to ensure that:

- The course you want will have sufficient enrollment.
- Classrooms of adequate size will be assigned for your course.

PLEASE MAKE A NOTE of the courses for which you register; registration acknowledgments are not sent.

MINIMUM REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT: Ten students.

IF WEATHER IS SEVERE: Classes will not meet when Montgomery County Schools are closed because of inclement weather. Information on Rabbi Samuel Scolnic Adult Institute closing will be available on a taped message after 7 AM for Tuesday classes and after 5 PM for Wednesday classes; call 301-652-2606. As soon as the message starts, press "3" to retrieve closing information.

THE EVENING MINYAN WILL START AT 8:20 PM (rather than 8:00) on evenings when Institute classes are scheduled.

QUESTIONS? Call 301-652-2606, Ext. 349, or send an email to samuelscolnic@bethelmc.org.

THE RABBI SAMUEL SCOLNIC ADULT INSTITUTE
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COURSE FEE INFORMATION—

Early Bird registration – payment must be received by September 28, 2018:

Wednesday evening classes:

- Each 6-week, 50-minute course.....\$40/member; \$50/nonmember

Tuesday morning classes:

- Each 6-week, 50-minute course.....\$35/member; \$45/nonmember

Regular registration – payment received on September 29 or later:

Wednesday evening classes:

- Each 6-week, 50-minute course\$45/member; \$55/nonmember

Tuesday morning classes:

- Each 6-week, 50-minute course\$40/member; \$50/nonmember

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

REGISTER ONLINE OR COMPLETE THIS FORM — *PLEASE PRINT*

Registrant(s) home address:

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip + 4** _____ - _____

Home Phone _____

Please register me (us) for the following course(s)

1. Registrant's name _____ Beth El member? _____

Course(s) Tues, AM _____ \$ _____

Tues, AM _____ \$ _____

Wed, PM _____ \$ _____

Wed, PM _____ \$ _____

For urgent class information: E-mail _____

Phone: _____

2. Registrant's name _____ Beth El member? _____

Course(s) Tues, AM _____ \$ _____

Tues, AM _____ \$ _____

Wed, PM _____ \$ _____

Wed, PM _____ \$ _____

For urgent class information: E-mail _____

Phone: _____

Enclosed is a check, payable to BETH EL, for a total of: \$ _____

RABBI SAMUEL SCOLNIC ADULT INSTITUTE

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CONGREGATION BETH EL OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY
8215 OLD GEORGETOWN ROAD
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REMINDER! Classes begin Tuesday and Wednesday, OCTOBER 9 AND 10.

