



עמנואל
emanuel synagogue
Enriching Jewish life

A JOURNEY THROUGH JEWISH CIVILISATION
2019: 5779/5780
A Twelve Month Program of Adult Jewish Learning

Curriculum and Reading List

Gain insight into the most important concepts that underpin Judaism and the Jewish people.

INSTRUCTORS:

Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins
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REQUIRED TEXTS:

A Siddur (recommend either Siddur Sim Shalom or Mishkan Tefillah)

A Tanakh (recommend New JPS translation)

A Jewish Calendar (either download, or join the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies and receive one with your membership)

Kerry Olitzky and Ronald Isaacs	The How To Handbook For Jewish Living
Rabbi Wayne Dosick	Living Judaism, The Complete Guide to Jewish Belief, Tradition & Practice
Michael Strassfeld	The Jewish Holidays
Louis Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Practice
Louis Jacobs	The Book of Jewish Belief
Abba Eban	My People: The Story of the Jews

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Blu Greenberg	How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household
Cantor Jeffrey Shiovitz (ed.)	B'kol Echad (Shabbat songbook)
Olitzky, Kerry M (ed.)	The How to Handbook for Jewish Living

Contact the synagogue office on: 9389 6444 or at info@emanuel.org.au for more information

TERM ONE: FEBRUARY 7 - APRIL 11 7:30-9:00PM

COVENANT

Feb 7 Introduction, Judaism as a Civilisation, not a religion

Many people think of “Judaism” as a religion, including some of the authors whose books we are requiring you to read. Yet, for far more of our 4,000 year story we saw ourselves as a people first, “Am Yisrael”, the people of Israel, or “B’nei Yisrael”, the children of Israel. We will explore the more narrow understanding of Judaism as a religion, in order to embrace the broader concept of Judaism – its traditions, cultures, memories, language and land – as an unfolding civilisation of which each of us is part. This is our story....

Readings:

Dosick: pages 1-6; pages 51-61

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 1 (pages 1-9)

Avraham Infeld argues that Judaism is a civilization, a nation and a people, and not a religion: <https://www.5leggedtable.com/judaism-is-not-a-religion>

Feb 14 The Patriarchal Covenant – land and nation

Introducing the concept of covenant (*brit*) itself, as well as the lives of the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and their wives Sara, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, with a brief explanation of what “The Torah” is, the first book of Genesis being where the story of the patriarchs and matriarchs is told.

Readings:

Genesis 12:1-3 The covenant with Avraham

Genesis 26:2-5 The covenant with Isaac

Genesis 28: 10-14 The covenant with Jacob

Siddur: The Avot prayer of the Amidah

Abba Eban: The Age of the Patriarchs, pages 1-8

Dosick: Pages 17-18

Feb 15 DARKEINU SHABBAT DINNER following services which begin at 6:15PM (An opportunity to meet each other, form community and experience a Shabbat dinner with all the traditions involved. At this BYO event, we will introduce you to the customs of the evening of Shabbat.)

Feb 21 The National Covenant (what can it mean to be “the Chosen People?)

Expanding the concept of *brit* from the ancient ancestors to the Jewish people, our story teaches how our nation was formed in the caldron of slavery in Egypt and the redemption from there, taking us to the revelation “Standing at Sinai”. We recall that moment as the time we became a nation devoted in service, sometimes referred to as “the Chosen People”.

Readings:

Exodus: Chapters 1-15 for the original story of the slavery of our ancestors and their redemption from Egypt

Exodus: Chapters 19-20 for the original story of the revelation

Siddur: The Shema, and its blessing before (Ahavah Rabbah or Ahavat Olam)

Abba Eban: A Nation is Born, pages 9-19

Dosick: The Chosen People, page 19, pages 37-42

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 5, pages 38-45

Feb 28 God, the main character in our Narrative

Considering most think of Judaism as a religion more than the way of life of the Jews, in this class we will discuss the way Judaism has developed in its thinking about God, in order to enable each learner to approach this concept as openly as possible.

Readings:

Exodus 33:12-34:9 "The Attributes of God"

Siddur: The hymns, "Adon Olam" and "Yigdal"

Dosick: pages 7-17

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 2, pages 10-18

March 7 Torah and beyond – what it means to be “The People of the Book”

As a contemporary, pluralist community it is important for all of us to understand how the Torah historically was read as the “literal word of God”, but since the time of the 17th century Spinoza and the 19th century Enlightenment, most Jews have understood our story for the value of its being a narrative “toward God” as opposed to a dictate “from God”. As Jews, we should know how “Torah” refers not just to the first five books of our Bible, but also more broadly to the vast library of learning derived by the rabbis from Torah, including legend and law.

Readings:

Dosick, Chapter 3, Jewish Literature (pages 73-101)

Jacobs: Belief, Chapters 6 and 7, pages 46-66

March 14 Mitzvah and Halakha – living a life of service and obligation

The Torah contains a series of mitzvot, commandments, (what we should/must do) that the rabbinic tradition has developed into a system of halakha, or law (how we do that which we should/must do). This class will give an overview of how the system of mitzvot slowly developed into an mnemonic paradigm of “613 mitzvot”, along with how a pluralist approach to ancient concepts can allow us in our time to connect with each other and our tradition.

Readings:

Talmud Bavli, Makkot 24a (class handout)

Dosick: pages 101-113

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 4, pages 29-37 and Chapter 8, pages 67-76

Jacobs: Practice, Chapters 1 and 2, pages 1-11

March 20 PURIM AND ITS CELEBRATION

Purim is a minor festival of the Jews, and the best way to understand it is to live it – our Purim celebrations begin with the reading of the Megillah at 6:45 PM, followed by our infamous Purim Shpiel at 8:00PM. DARKEINU PARTICIPANTS ARRIVE AT 6:15 PM IN THE NEUWEG FOR A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PURIM AND HOW IT IS COMMEMORATED

Readings:

Dosick: pages 158-161

Strassfeld: pages 187-198, page 228

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 17, only pages 122-125

March 21 Shabbat – the sign of the covenant

A discussion of how Shabbat is the core celebration of our people, one of the signs of the covenant. We will look at the stories of the Torah that establish the Shabbat, and how it is a unique “island in time” in which we are to experience rest, joy and holiness.

Readings:

Genesis 1:1-2:3

Siddur – Kiddush for the evening of Shabbat and the day of Shabbat

Dosick: pages 127-130

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 11, pages 96-104

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 11, pages 74-80

March 28 The Jewish Calendar and the period of the Omer

One of the distinguishing marks of a civilisation is how it marks and commemorates time. Judaism has a unique way of looking at the timing of the day, the week and also the moon/month in conjunction with the solar year. This class will help us understand that ancient structure, and also one of the periods constructed by the rabbis, the seven week “Omer” between Pesach and Shavuot.

Readings:

Genesis 1:1-5 and 14-19

Leviticus Chapter 23 and Numbers Chapter 28-29

Strassfeld: “The Omer” pages 47-56; Appendix 1, pages 201-203; page 214

Dosick: pages 119-126, 174-176

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 13, pages 92-97

April 4 The Jewish Home and Synagogue (combined subjects due to Pesach)

From the time we concretised as a nation after leaving Egypt, until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70CE, we had centralised worship, focused around a priesthood serving in the Tabernacle of the wilderness and later the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. With the destruction of the Temples and our dispersion, the Synagogue became the place of communal gathering, learning and worship, as it is today. This class will guide us through the structural and functional development of the synagogue from then until now.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 210-215

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 13, pages 115-123

Jacobs: Practice, pages 28-29

April 11 Creating a Jewish Home

While Jews have connected with our land of Israel since the beginning of our story, with each other across the lands throughout our thousands of years of exile and dispersion, as crucial to our sense of common belonging has been the Jewish home alongside the synagogue. While the kitchen and dietary practice is central to the establishment of a Jewish home, this class will look at other aspects of creating a Jewish home, from ritual objects to readings.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 221-225; 247-249

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 14, pages 124-131

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 5, pages 28-40

April 14 10:00AM -2:00PM “PESACH FUNSHOP”

Pesach is the formative festival of our people, the first commanded in the Torah, the first of our three “Pilgrimage Festivals”. It has been commemorated in homes of Jews around the world for thousands of years, and to understand the “Haggadah” and “Seder night” one needs this extra time of preparation.

Readings:

Exodus Chapters 1-15 (reprise)

Leviticus 23: 4-8

Deuteronomy 16: 1-8

Dosick: pages 162-173

Strassfeld: pages 5-46; pages 204-213

Jacobs: Belief, pages 105-106

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 12, pages 81-91

***April 20 SECOND NIGHT SEDER immediately following services at 6:15PM
Join our community for a traditional second night celebration and commemoration of Pesach. Contact the Emanuel Synagogue office to reserve your place.***

April 28 ISRAEL SEMINAR – 10:00AM- 4:00 PM

In this day, we will explore the connection of the people of Israel with land of Israel, from the earliest times of the Tanakh, through the rabbinic period and exile, up to the time of the 19th century rise of Modern Zionism, the impact of the Shoah on the foundation of the modern State of Israel, and the complex issues of conflict and peace, religion and state. We conclude with a look at the relationship of Jews in Diaspora and Jews in Israel.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 195-196, Chapter 8, pages 323-356

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 18, pages 157-165

Strassfeld: pages 62-67

Eban: Chapter 17-19, pages 308-389 and Chapter 21, pages 430-466

TERM TWO: May 2 - July 4 7:30-9:00PM

LIVING JUDAISM

May 2 Kashrut

From the beginning of our story, understanding that we are part of the natural world and the food chain ourselves, there have been restrictions on our consumption of animals – we will first explore the Torah’s teaching on what have become known as the laws of “kashrut”, that which is fit or appropriate for us to eat as we deepen our connection with the life force.

Readings:

Genesis 1: 29-30

Genesis 9: 1-7

Leviticus 11: 1-47

Dosick: pages 256-268

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 15, pages 132-139

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 10, pages 66-73

May 9 Tz’aar Ba’lei Chayim and Bal Taschit

Our consumption (or not) of animals is just one way we understand our connection to other sentient beings and the environment, which sustains us all. Simple Torah principles have been expanded through the early rabbinic period; the question for contemporary Jews is with our new knowledge of animal sentience and connection in the web of life, how far we expand these basic principles to some of the more challenging concerns of our day. We will have a quick glance at the festival of Tu Bishvat, which is often neglected in Australia, as it generally occurs in our summer holiday, but which has evolved into a festival of environment awareness.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 155-156

Jacobs: Belief, pages 175-177

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 4, only pages 23-27

Strassfeld: pages 179-185

May 16 Love

Judaism is based in the concept that there is a single life force that has created all, and in that inter-connectivity the main *mitzvah* is to love. However, love is not just a feeling, but an action.

Readings:

Deuteronomy 6: 4-9

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 19, pages 166-173; Chapter 20, pages 174-175 and 177-179

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 20, pages 139-144

May 23 Jewish Mysticism and Spirituality

While the Torah has been misunderstood as “a book of law”, it’s far more the traditions and insights of our ancestors connecting with the Holy One as they understood that idea. From the time of revelation begins the mystical idea in Judaism.

Readings:

Exodus Chapter 24:9-18 and Chapter 33:17-34:7

Isaiah Chapter 6:1-3

Ezekiel Chapter 1

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 10, pages 86-95

Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Shabbat 33b – 34a

May 30 An overview of Jewish ethics

Jewish ethics covers nearly every aspect of life; some of the classes will be more detailed; in this we begin with a general overview of basic principles – each of us is created in the divine image, and as a people, we see ourselves called to live by the highest standards. Given time, we will focus on *Lashon Hara*, the laws of speech.

Readings:

Leviticus Chapter 19

Jacobs: Belief, Chapters 23 and 24, pages 196 -211

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 4, only pages 19-22

June 6 Shavuot

Originally this was simply an agricultural festival, the “Feast of Weeks”, celebrating the early Spring harvest. The rabbinic tradition connected this festival with the moment of revelation, the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. We will explore how this connection was made, and the traditions that have since developed for the festival of “The Time of the Giving of Torah”.

Readings:

Exodus 23: 14-17

Leviticus 23: 9-21

Deuteronomy 16: 9-12

Dosick: pages 176-181

Jacobs: Practice, pages 92-97

Strassfeld: pages 69-84, pages 214-215

June 8 TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT – the opportunity to experience the festival of Shavuot, with services beginning at 6:15pm, followed soon thereafter with an all night evening of learning

June 9 SHAVUOT MORNING SERVICES 9am–NOON, with the reading of the “Ten Utterances”, the covenant of Sinai, and Ezekiel’s vision, the source of much of Jewish mysticism

June 13 Tzedakah and Gemilut Chasadim

Tzedakah, righteous giving, covers a panoply of concepts based on giving away a portion of our wealth, and providing others the means to be self sufficient; *gemilut chasadim*, by contrast, is a broad concept concerning *loving actions* we can do for others.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 249-255

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 3, pages 12-18

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 21, pages 180-186

June 23 10am – 4pm PRAYER SEMINAR

We receive lessons from Torah, its study and application, and yet we also have deep conceptual lessons from our rabbis who constructed the formula for blessings and our siddur about how to relate to God and creation.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 201-210, 216-220, 226-245

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 19, pages 129-138

Strassfeld: Pages 233-237

June 20 Justice

Love does not and cannot mean “anything goes”. Rather, it requires us to take action to ensure that there is equity in society.

Readings:

Genesis 18:16-32

Deuteronomy 16:18-20

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 22, pages 187-195

June 27 Sexuality and Gender

Judaism understands that the physical and spiritual world are intertwined, and both potential expressions of the holy. While the Torah establishes certain parameters for sexual activity, these do not concern procreation. The rabbinic tradition has many teachings about human sexuality, and contemporary Jewish leaders have understood that the scientific knowledge we have gained, as well as an evolving understanding of love and relationships,

Readings:

Leviticus Chapters 18 and 20

Dosick, Pages 271-273

July 4 The Three Weeks and Tisha B'Av

During the First and Second Commonwealths, our ancestors had sovereignty over Eretz Israel, the Land of Israel, the capital of which was Jerusalem, with worship centralised at the Temple. The First and Second Temples were destroyed at approximately the same season, the ninth day of the month of Av, leading to the exile of our people and dispossession of the land.

Readings:

II Kings 24:1-25:26

Dosick: pages 196-199

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 18, pages 126-128

Strassfeld: pages 85-94, pages 215-217

TERM THREE: July 25 – September 26 7:30-9:00PM

THE CYCLES OF TIME

July 25 Life Cycle I – Brit Milah, Brit HaBat, Education and B'nei Mitzvah

Every tradition has rituals through the life cycle; Judaism's teaching from birth to adolescence focuses on the concept of *Brit* -covenant, and *chinukh* –education, and also leads us to a discussion of what it means to honour one's parents.

Readings:

Genesis: 17: 1-14

Dosick: Pages 285-294

Jacobs: Practice, Chapters 7 and 8, pages 47-59

Aug 1 Life Cycle II – Marriage and Divorce

In Torah times, marriage was a matter of acquisition of a woman from her father by the man who would become her husband; he had the right to marry more than one woman and to also divorce her; over time, these traditions have been modified, but to what extent remains a point of contention between Orthodox and other perspectives.

Readings:

Deuteronomy 22: 13-19; 28-29

Dosick: pages 295-302

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 25, pages 212-220

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 6, pages 41-46

Aug 8 Life Cycle III – Death, Funeral and Beyond

The Torah clearly requires burial for the dead, yet does not discuss greatly the concept of what happens beyond death; the rabbis developed traditions of burial and mourning, as well as concepts of life after death.

Readings:

Genesis 23: 1-20; 25: 7-10

Deuteronomy 21:22-23

Dosick: pages 303-322

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 27, pages 230-238

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 9, pages 60-65

Aug 15 Conversion

It is said that Ruth was the first to convert to Judaism, although that may be an anachronistic understanding to her commitment expressed in her words, "Your people shall be my people and your God my God." (Ruth 1:16) There has been over time a way for those who wish to join our people the opportunity to do so; perhaps it should better be seen as a "nationalisation" process with a faith component than a "conversion". We will explore the development of this tradition over the thousands of years, including contemporary issues.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 65-72, 269-270, 274-275

Rabbinic readings to come

Aug 17th - 5pm - Seudat Shlishit/Havdalah - An opportunity to learn and experience the rituals surrounding the end of Shabbat with a meal of course! Families are welcome.

Aug 22 Elul: Preparation for the New Year

While Rosh Hashanah is only given brief mention in the Torah, the rabbinic tradition established an entire month of preparation, including traditions of the recitation of selichot, the inclusion of Psalm 27 in our services and the sounding of the Shofar in the month of Elul as a preparation to the ten days of teshuvah, or repentance. We will explore the meaning of each of these.

Readings:

Psalm 27

Dosick: pages 139-146

Strassfeld: pages 217-218

Aug 29 The Machzor

The prayer service for the days of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur has become so intricate that a special siddur, known as the machzor, has been created, and with that, hundreds of different versions over the centuries; still, there are some core prayers and passages that highlight the meaning of these days.

Readings will be selected from the Machzor on the evening

Sept 5 Rosh Hashanah

In Torah times, Rosh Hashanah was the day of sounding of the shofar; the discussion of its elaboration in rabbinic times continues in this class.

Readings:

Leviticus 23: 23-25

Dosick: pages 130-134

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 15, pages 107-112

Strassfeld: pages 95-110, pages 218-219

Sept 12 Yom Kippur

The day of Yom Kippur had unique observances when the Temple stood and rituals were centralised in the priesthood; we will look at the ancient Yom Kippur, and see how its traditions and practices have evolved over the last 2,000 years.

Readings:

Leviticus Chapter 16 and 23: 26-32

Dosick: pages 134-138

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 16, pages 113-117

Strassfeld: pages 111-124, 219-220

Sept 19 Sukkot and Simchat Torah

Of the three pilgrimage festivals (Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot), Sukkot was known as “*The Festival*”. Indeed, it is a joyous conclusion to the “Days of Awe”. Simchat Torah is a recent celebration, only about 1,000 years old, an overlay on the little remembered festival of “Shemini Atzeret”, which concludes the festivals of the seventh month of Tishrei.

Readings:

Leviticus 23: 33-43
Numbers 29: 12-38
Deuteronomy 16: 13-17
Dosick: pages 147-151
Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 14, pages 98-106
Strassfeld: pages 125-160, 220-225

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING TIMES FOR THE MAJOR SERVICES OF THIS TIME:

Erev Rosh Hashanah	Sun 29 September 6:15PM
Rosh Hashanah Day One	Mon 30 September 8:30 AM (M); 9:00AM (P)
Rosh Hashanah Day Two	Tue 1 October M 8:30 AM
Erev Yom Kippur	Tue 8 October 5:45 PM (M); 6:15 PM (P)
Yom Kippur	Wed 9 October 9:00 AM (M); 11:00 AM (P)
Erev Sukkot	Sun 13 October 6:15 PM
Sukkot Day One	Mon 14 October 9:00 AM
Sukkot Day Two	Tues 15 October 9:00 AM
Hoshana Raba	Sun 20 October 9:00 AM
Erev Simchat Torah	Mon 21 October 6:15PM
Simchat Torah	Tues 22 October 9:00 AM

Oct 17 DARKEINU EVENING IN THE SUKKAH FROM 6:15PM - an opportunity to experience dining in the Sukkah, and understanding the traditions associated with it. This is a potluck vegetarian dinner, and like all our functions, BYO.

TERM FOUR: October 24 – December 12: 7:30 – 9:00pm

MEMORY

Oct 24 An Overview of Jewish History – From Patriarchs through First Temple

Our ancient stories, which we explored in first term, can be thought of as much as how we remember our past as opposed to how we actually lived it; the historicity of that time is opaque. However, how we remember shapes how we live, and the story of our settlement of Eretz Israel (the land of Israel) and our early kingdoms of Israel and Judah form the basis of who we still are as a people – we will look at the influence and roles of kings, priests and prophets, and the unfortunate demise of our First Temple in this class.

Readings:

Dosick: Chapter 9, pages 357-374

Eban: Chapters 3-5, pages 20-60

Oct 31 Second Temple Period/The Story of Chanukah

While our people enter into history in the First Temple period, it is during the Second Temple that we become part of the global struggle, forever to be in between the forces on the east - then Babylon and Persia – and west, Greece and Rome. Both east and west influenced the unfolding of Judaism, particularly its western Hellenism, which led to the revolt of the Maccabees, also a civil war among the Jews of Judea. Subsequent Roman conquest led to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. This period coincides with the life of Jesus and the early sages of our people.

Readings:

Eban: Chapters 6-8, pages 61-99

Dosick: pages 151-154

Jacobs: Practice, Chapter 17, only pages 118-122

Strassfeld: pages 161-178, 226- 228

Nov 7 Jews under Rome and Christianity

With the Roman conquest of the Kingdom of Judah, and the destruction of the Second Temple, our people were sent into exile for thousands of years and our land was renamed Palestine. As Rome became united with a triumphant Christianity, the persecutions of Rome morphed into the nascent antisemitism of the Byzantine Empire. As our people began our international exile under these trying circumstances, our spiritual centre shifted to Babylon, where the early rabbis compiled the authoritative Babylonian Talmud.

Readings:

Eban: Chapters 9 and 10, pages 100-123 and Chapter 12, pages 161-197

Nov 14 Jews in the age of Islam

Influenced by the Jews in Arabia, Mohammed wrote the Koran, connecting the Islamic world with the Jewish world forever. The newly Islamic Arabs began their conquests westward

from Arabia, welcomed by the Jews suffering under Byzantine oppression in Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. Jews moved with Muslims on their conquests through North Africa and into Spain. The relationship was complex, but often beneficial, as Judaism developed its poetry, grammar, philosophy and legal codes under Islamic influence.

Readings:

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 9, only pages 79-82

Eban: Chapter 11, pages 124-160

Nov 21 The Expulsion from Spain and its aftermath

While Jews in Spain (Sefarad) rose to the greatest heights under Islamic rule, as the Catholics began their "Reconquista", the situation deteriorated until the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. During the "Golden Years" some of the great Jewish philosophical and legal texts were written; in the aftermath of the expulsion, Jews found refuge back in the Land of Israel, under the rule of the Islamic Ottoman Empire, where some of the greatest mystical and legal texts of Judaism were written.

Readings:

Eban: Chapters 13 and 14, pages 198-245

Nov 28 The Emancipation

In the aftermath of the Renaissance and Reformation, and especially for Jews, the teachings of Spinoza, came the Enlightenment and Emancipation. The former eroded the notion that God is the author of Scripture; the latter began the notion of civil society (the separation of religion and state), which enabled Jews for the first time to become equal citizens in the lands in which they lived. For all the benefits of equality, the downside for Jews was the loss of the nearly 4,000-year-old understanding of ourselves as a nation, a distinct people, to a new concept of Judaism as a religion.

Readings:

Eban, Chapter 15, pages 246-279

Dec 5 Anti-Semitism and the Shoah

The roots of antisemitism go back to the Roman conquest of the Kingdom of Judah, 2,000 years ago, exacerbated when Rome became a Christian empire in the third century. By the Middle Ages, it had become an irrational, theologically based hatred that has in the last centuries has morphed through Nazism and Islamism. Antisemitism was one factor leading to the Shoah, the most extreme genocide in human history. This class can only adumbrate the issues. In addition to this class, we will have a tour of the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Readings:

Dosick: pages 181-194

Strassfeld: pages 56-62

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 17, pages 149-156

Eban: Chapter 16, pages 280-307 and Chapter 20, pages 390-429

Dec 12 Contemporary Schools of Judaism/Ask the Rabbi

The influence of Spinoza's philosophy, the Enlightenment and Emancipation led to the development of different streams or schools of Judaism. We will explore how they evolved and the different ways they identify with Israel, understand the concepts of Torah, mitzvah and halakha, and how they deal with contemporary social issues. This class gives you as well the opportunity to ask the questions you have been considering on these issues over the year.

Readings:

Dosic: 61-64

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 16, pages 140-148; Chapter 9, only pages 82-85

Dec 8 Visit to Sydney Jewish Museum – We will have a guided tour of the Museum, which has a specific focus on the Jewish experience of the Holocaust.

Dec 13 The Messianic Age/Ask the Rabbis

The concept of the messiah and the messianic age goes back to biblical times, and enables us to look toward the future, discussing what contribution can Jews and Judaism make to a contribution toward the future. The rabbis present will give their insight into that, providing an opening for you to ask your questions about what Judaism means for now and the future.

Readings:

Isaiah 11: 1-12

Siddur: Aleinu

Dosick: pages 43-50

Jacobs: Belief, Chapter 26, pages 221-229