

Medieval Hebrew Philosophic Texts

We shall discuss readings from major medieval Hebrew philosophic works. We begin with Maimonides' (1138-1204) *Book of Knowledge*, his systematic presentation of the foundations of religion, science, law, and ethics. We read Shemtob Falaquera's (c. 1225-1295) *Epistle of the Debate*, a lively philosophic dialogue between a philosopher and a fundamentalist. We next turn to the *Wars of the Lord* by Levi Gersonides (1288-1344), the most important Jewish Aristotelian after Maimonides; and then to the *Light of the Lord* by Hasdai Crescas (c. 1340-1410/11), the most important Jewish anti-Aristotelian. We conclude with the popular *Book of Principles* by Joseph Albo (d. after 1433). Discussions will be based on the original Hebrew texts, but readings are available also in English translation.

Requirements

Seminar paper (20-25pp.) on topic chosen by student with approval of instructor: approval by Mar. 26; due May 7.

Topics and Dates (subject to change)

- 1. Jan. 23, 30; Feb. 6, 13. Moses Maimonides (1135/8-1204), *Mishneh Torah, Sefer ha-Madda`*.** Available in many editions. Recommended edition: Y. Makbili and Y. Kara, Haifa: Or Vishua, 2006. *Sefer ha-Madda`* will be read with reference to Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. S. Pines, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. Secondary literature: Isadore Twersky, *The Code of Maimonides (Mishneh Torah)*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980; W.Z. Harvey, "The *Mishneh Torah* as a Key to the Secrets of the *Guide*," in E. Fleischer, G. Blidstein, C. Horowitz, and B. Septimus, eds., *Me'ah She'arim: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky*, Jerusalem: Magnes University Press, 2001, pp. 11-28.
- 2. Feb. 20, 27. Shemtob Falaquera (1225-1295), *Iggeret ha-Viqquah*.** Text in *Falaquera's Epistle of the Debate*, ed. and trans. Steven Harvey, Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1987.
- 3. Mar. 5, 19, 26. Levi Gersonides (1288-1344), *Milhamot Ha-Shem*.** Ed., Riva di Trento: Ottolengo & Marcaria, 1560. Cf. Gersonides, *The Wars of the Lord*, trans. Seymour Feldman, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984-1999, 3 vols.
- 4. Apr. 2, 9, 16. Hasdai Crescas (c. 1340-1410/11).** Text in Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1929. Cf. W.Z. Harvey, *Physics and Metaphysics in Hasdai Crescas*, Amsterdam: Gieben, 1998.
- 5. Apr. 23, 30 Joseph Albo (d. after 1433), *Sefer ha-Iqqarim*.** Text in *The Book of Principles*, ed. and trans. Isaac Husik, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1946, 4 vols.

Histories of Jewish Philosophy

1. Daniel H. Frank & Oliver Leaman, eds., *History of Jewish Philosophy* (Routledge History of World Philosophies), New York: Routledge, 1997, 2004.
2. Daniel H. Frank & Oliver Leaman, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
3. Julius Guttmann, *Philosophies of Judaism*, New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1964.
4. Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Religion*, 2 vols., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973-1977.
5. Isaac Husik, *A History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1916; new ed. New York: Dover, 2002.
6. Shlomo Pines, *Studies in the History of Jewish Thought* (The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines, vol. 5), Jerusalem: Magnes University Press, 1997.
7. Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Useful Anthologies of Medieval Philosophy

1. Arthur Hyman & James J. Walsh, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed., Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983.
2. Ralph Lerner & Muhsin Mahdi, *Medieval Political Philosophy*, Glencoe: The Free Press, 1963; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.
3. Joshua Parens & Joseph C. Macfarland, *Medieval Political Philosophy*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011 (a revision of Lerner & Mahdi).

Note. Further references to the secondary literature will be given during the semester.

Office hour: Monday 3:00pm-4:00pm, 622 Kent Hall
harvey@mcc.huji.ac.il