

Temple Beth Torah

2023-2024/5784



● Jewish Life ● Jewish Belonging ● Jewish Community

Adult and Family Learning & Programs



As the world entered the COVID shutdown in the spring of 2020, opportunities for Jewish learning literally exploded. From online Zoom lectures and courses to streaming of movies and shows, learners found an extraordinary range of options from which to choose. Yet despite their rich content and in contrast to traditional Jewish study, these learning experiences were largely solitary and rarely involved a group. Indeed, learning for Jews throughout the centuries has been one of the primary means of forming and sustaining community. Temple Beth Torah has long maintained an active in-person lifelong learning program. We believe face-to-face learning not only offers the most stimulating and engaging learning experience, but also allows us to form and maintain the bonds of true Jewish community. Beyond the “content-only” experience of online options, we strive to offer face-to-face classes that allow relationships to form and learning communities to thrive. We invite you to peruse our offerings in this catalog and to come join us for those that interest you.

Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.
Director of Education and Operations



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“Throughout the centuries, when the vast majority of Europe was illiterate, Jews maintained an educational infrastructure as their highest priority. It is no exaggeration to say that this lay at the heart of the Jewish ability to survive catastrophe, negotiate change and flourish in difficult circumstances.”

~Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

1 Thoughtful

SHORT COURSES

An Adult Confirmation Experience Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller



Sunday Lifelong Learning continues with a unique opportunity for an Adult Confirmation experience!

This is the perfect next step for those who have become Adult B’nai Mitzvah, or for anyone interested in wrestling with Jewish ideas, sharing with others, and deepening their connection.

Shavuot, the Festival of Receiving Torah at Sinai, is regarded as a joyful, communal celebration of receiving Ten Commandments, the Torah and the entire river of Jewish learning that has flowed from that moment. Our Confirmation Experience is about affirming that we are part of the ongoing dynamic of learning, self-understanding, and insight as we continually encounter the world of Torah.

This two-year adult learning journey will take us deep into study of Jewish texts, understanding God’s presence, obligations of community, deepening our prayer life, ritual, and so much more! We will have the chance to build on Hebrew reading and comprehension skills. Do not worry about making a two-year commitment; just come study with us!

Adult confirmation will culminate in a celebratory service at Shavuot time, 2025 that we will all have a hand in creating, sharing our own journeys and growth, as we celebrate Torah and community, read the Ten Commandments and rejoice.

Sundays **10 am – 11:15 am**
October 15, Nov. 19, Dec 10, Dec. 17, Jan. 21, Jan. 28, Feb. 25, March 3, March 10, March 17, April 7, April 14, April 21, April 28, May 19, June 2

Bob Dylan: A Jewish Lens Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.



California Lutheran University,
Fifty and Better Program
(Zoom and in-Person)

<https://www.callutheran.edu/centers/lifelong-learning/fifty-better/upcoming-sessions.html>

The 1960s witnessed an explosion of gifted songwriters and musicians. Bob Dylan ranks among the very top in this class. Over the course of a long and productive career, Dylan achieved a quality in his writing that elevated his work to the level of serious literature. Dylan has earned multiple literary awards in his career, most notably the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2016. Dylan’s work reflects multiple influences. Arguably, his Jewish background represents one of the clearest and most important influences on his work. His lyrics and poetry reflect a deep connection with Jewish tradition and biblical sources, especially the Hebrew prophets. These lectures will examine the Jewish elements in his work and seek to demonstrate the value a Jewish perspective brings to our overall understanding of Bob Dylan’s art and influence. This course will be taught using audio, video, and text analysis.

Fri. Oct. 6 **10 am – 12pm**
Becoming Bob Dylan: from Obscurity to Icon

Fri. Oct 13 **10am – 12pm**
Troubadour, and Prophet: The Many Faces of Bob Dylan





Leonard Cohen: Poet, Mystic, Jewish Troubadour
Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.

California Lutheran University, Fifty and Better Program (Zoom and in-Person)

<https://www.callutheran.edu/centers/lifelong-learning/fifty-better/upcoming-sessions.html>

In the early 1960s, Bob Dylan burst onto the folk music scene and forever changed the world of popular music. Dylan defined a way of writing and singing that merged poetry and songwriting and fundamentally reshaped both folk and rock music. Dylan influenced countless artists who followed in his wake, many of whom were dubbed “the next Dylan” by record companies and promoters. Leonard Cohen stands arguably as the most influential of the singer/songwriters to follow in Dylan’s path. Similar to Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen’s Jewish background deeply shaped his life and work. Cohen’s poetry and lyrics reflect a deep connection with Jewish tradition and biblical sources.

These lectures will examine the mixture of Jewish influences in the work of Leonard Cohen and will seek to demonstrate the value of viewing Leonard Cohen’s work through a Jewish lens. This course will be taught using audio, video, and text analysis.

Fri. Nov. 10 10 am – 12pm
From Poetry to Song: Leonard Cohen, the Early Years

Fri. Nov. 17 10 am – 12pm
Leonard Cohen: Between the Mountain and the World

JEWISH STUDIES LECTURE OF THE MONTH

A monthly lecture and discussion series devoted to exploration of a wide variety of topics in Jewish history and culture led by distinguished scholars and teachers. Lectures are held via Zoom typically on the

First Thursday of each month 7:00pm – 8:15pm



September 7
A Jewish Tale of Two Cities: Los Angeles and San Francisco, the Creation of Jewish Life in California
Joellyn Zollman, Ph.D.

In the 19th century, San Francisco was home the largest, wealthiest, most important Jewish community in California. In the 20th century, Los Angeles assumed this role. What do we know about the Jewish history of these two cities? How do we understand the shift in population and prominence? Join historian Joellyn Zollman to explore how Jews have impacted California, and how California, in turn, has impacted the American Jewish experience.

Joellyn Zollman holds a Ph.D. in Jewish Studies from Brandeis University, and she is scholar-in-residence for the Melton Travel Seminar’s U.S. Jewish Heritage tours.

October 10
The Last Days of Stalin
Joshua Rubinstein

Josh Rubinstein will speak to us on the events described in his recently published book *The Last Days of Stalin*. This book takes us back to the



second half of 1952 when no one could foresee an end to Joseph Stalin’s murderous regime. He was poised to challenge the newly elected US President Dwight Eisenhower with armed force, and was broadening a vicious campaign against Soviet Jews. Stalin’s sudden collapse and death in March 1953 was as dramatic and mysterious as his life. It is no overstatement to say that his passing marked a major turning point in the twentieth century. But after Stalin’s death, the overly cautious response by the Eisenhower administration to the Kremlin’s conciliatory gestures missed an opportunity to significantly reduce the tensions of the Cold War. Joshua Rubinstein is a longtime Associate of Harvard’s Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies and is currently Associate Director for major gifts at Harvard Law School. *The Last Days of Stalin* is his tenth book.

November 16
The Secret History of Jews in Baseball
Peter Dreier, Ph.D.



Since the late 1800s, American Jews have had a love affair with baseball – as players, fans, sportswriters, owners, and executives. Professor Peter Dreier will discuss the key Jewish figures who have influenced baseball from the Little Leagues to the Major Leagues. He will also present some surprising facts about how American Jews have participated in baseball, including some little-known and controversial moments.

Dr. Peter Dreier is the E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics at Occidental College, where he has taught since 1993. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He has written eight books, including *The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City*. His two most recent books, published in 2022, are *Baseball Rebels: The Players, People, and Social Movements That Shook Up the Game and Changed America* and *Major League Rebels: Baseball Battles Over Workers’ Rights and American Empire*.

December 5
Beyond Bagels and Burekas: American Jewish Language and Identity

Sarah Bunin Benor, Ph.D.



Using quotes and images, this talk highlights the diversity of American Jews by focusing on the diverse uses of “Jewish American English” – enriched by Yiddish, Hebrew, Aramaic, Russian, Farsi, Arabic, and other influences. Jews of various stripes use subtle variation in language to signal their textual knowledge, religious denomination, generation from immigration, ancestral origin, and orientation toward Israel. In short, “Jewish language” serves not only to distinguish Jews from non-Jews but also to distinguish Jews from Jews.

Sarah Bunin Benor holds a Ph.D. in Linguistics from Stanford University and is Vice Provost and Professor of Contemporary Jewish History at HUC-JIR, Los Angeles.

January 4
Barbra Streisand: The Three Jewish Films
Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.



Barbra Streisand achieved sudden national fame at age 26 with the release in 1968 of the movie *Funny Girl*. She had worked tirelessly over the previous decade to break into the entertainment industry, gaining first attention as a night club singer and then stage actress. But her breakthrough with *Funny Girl* not only brought her national attention, but also provided her the platform to establish her terms for presenting herself to the public. Contrary to most Jewish entertainers from the 1940s-early 1960s, Streisand chose not to modify her name to a less Jewish-sounding version, not to have the nose job many urged, and, most important, to press forward with her choices even when multiple directors, many Jewish themselves, declined to cast her saying she was “too Jewish.”

Over a long and storied career, Streisand has made 19 movies. Three of these films, *Funny Girl* (1968), *The Way We Were* (1974), and *Yentl* (1983) are distinctly Jewish. In this lecture we will examine these three films, explore their contributions both as popular movies and as Jewish films, and evaluate their lasting impact.

Cliff Wilcox has a Ph.D. in American intellectual history from the University of Michigan and is the Director of Education and Operations at Temple Beth Torah in Ventura, CA.

February 1
Introducing the New Normal: 21st Century American Judaism

Steven Windmueller, Ph.D.



Windmueller offers an overview of the key factors that are contributing to the changes unfolding in American religious life, as he explores the phenomena of the rise of "Virtual Judaism" and "Privatized Judaism." Dr. Windmueller will explore the impact of the "religious Nones," the boutique Jewish revolution, and the end of denominationalism, while analyzing what all of this may mean for the future of the American synagogue.

Steven Windmueller, Ph.D. is Emeritus Professor of Jewish Communal Studies at HUC-JIR, Los Angeles. He is the author of four books and over 100 articles on anti-Semitism, American Jewish political behavior, and Jewish institutional and cultural trends.

March 7
The Synagogue as Art Form
Christine Maasdam

Check online for a description



Christine Maasdam holds a Master's in Humanities and a B.A. in Cultural Geography. Her art studies include The Courtauld Institute of Art in London. She is a regular lecturer in the CLU-FAB and CSUCI-POLLI Program.

April 16
Landscapes and Inscapes: A Pilgrimage Through Art
Ruth Ellen Weisberg, Ph.D.



Check online for a description

Ruth Ellen Weisberg, Ph.D. is Professor of Art and Design at USC and former dean of the USC Roski School of Art and Design. She is a practicing artist and her works are exhibited nationally.

May 2
How Archeology Illuminates the Bible

Elaine Goodfriend, Ph.D.



Check online for a description

Elaine Goodfriend, Ph.D. is a lecturer at California State University, Northridge and teaches courses in History, Jewish Studies, and Religious Studies. She holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from UC Berkeley.

June 7
Pastrami, Pickles, and Rye: The Jewish Deli, Yesterday and Today

Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.



Just the title makes your mouth water. Join Cliff for a journey through the worlds of delis. Find out they are not only the staple of the Jewish culture but how they influence the world around them.

Cliff Wilcox has a Ph.D. in American intellectual history from the University of Michigan and is the Director of Education and Operations at Temple Beth Torah in Ventura, CA.

2 Literary Lifestyle

READ/REACT/REFRESH!

Beginning in the new Jewish year, there will be a series of opportunities for you to read well-written, thought-provoking short stories and books, come together as a group to react to them, and enjoy a variety of refreshments. Every quarter you'll be provided with the dates and titles of the next two upcoming stories and one book; we'll gather in the Temple Library on Shabbat after services from 12:30pm - 1:30pm to discuss them.

The stories can be downloaded from the provided links or you can pick up a copy outside the TBT office on the pamphlet wall. Bring the reading, a contribution to a dairy lunch, and perhaps a friend so that our literary circle can keep growing as our minds do.

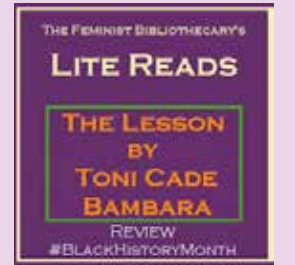
Shabbat after services 12:30pm – 1:30pm

Saturday, October 14
"1919: At the Connecticut Shore" by Jane Lazarre
Discussion led by Deborah O'Neal

Two women face each other, one with scissors in her hand. The women share a secret that neither will speak about and both find daring and shameful. Lazarre has written a short story for us that is full of mystery and meaning.

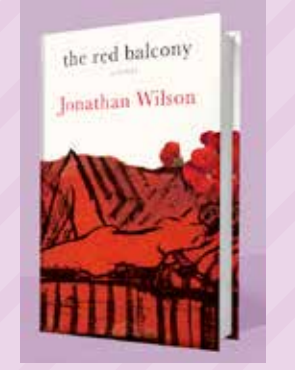


Saturday, November 11
"The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bambara
Discussion led by Deborah Pollack



"Back in the days when everyone was old and stupid or young and foolish and me and Sugar were the only ones just right, this lady moved on our block with nappy hair and proper speech and no makeup." And that lady takes a group of poor, inner city children to F.A.O. Schwarz! A remarkable experience ensues.

Saturday, December 16
"The Red Balcony" by Jonathan Wilson
272 pages
Discussion led by Judy Fleischman



Based on actual events, this is a gripping novel of love, history, and justice in the tinderbox of British Mandatory Palestine. In 1933 Ivor Castle, Oxford-educated and Jewish, arrives in Palestine to aid in the defense of two men accused of murder. As he travels between the crime scene in Tel Aviv and the mazelike streets of Jerusalem, he must discover whether he cares most for the law or the truth, whether he is more an Englishman or a Jew, and where and with whom he truly belongs

Watch T'kiah for future literary discussions!

To defend a country, you need an army. But to defend an identity, you need a school. Judaism is the religion of the book, not the sword.
~Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

3 Health and Wellness

Qigong

Led by Fredda Leiter



Would you like more energy and less stress?

Qigong, a practice of mindful movement, improves balance, flexibility, strength, and mental acuity.

Please wear sneakers or other comfortable shoes, be ready to practice both standing and seated. We meet weekly; feel free to drop in when you are able.

Fredda has practiced Qigong and Taichi for over 10 years. She has studied with Qigong and Taichi masters in the community, intensive workshops, and teacher training programs. She has taught in healthcare settings, in the community and on Zoom.

L'vri'ut! To your health!

Tuesday mornings

9am – 10 am

Note: No class 10/3

4 Community

Brotherhood Bagel Brunches with Speakers

Check online for a description



Sunday mornings 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Oct. 8, Nov. 12, Dec.10

Women of TBT Classes, Speakers, Brunches, Creative classes

- Speakers
- Workshops
- Jewish Cooking
- Environmental Awareness & Care



Dates to be announced – watch the T'kiah!

5 Family Events



Mishpacha Family Program

Taught by Alli Silverman Quiroz

Jewish practice is traditionally rooted in the family experience. Our Mishpacha class allows family members to attend class with their pre-school age children in a fun and hands-on learning environment. We welcome all families Jewish and interfaith to join us as we learn about Jewish holidays, foods, songs, and more.

This class is designed for children ages 2-4, *but families with younger children are invited to come and socialize!*

Sundays (twice per month) 9:15am – 11:00 am

First 3 sessions: Aug 27, Sep 10, Oct 1

Thank you Ventura County Jewish Federation for the generous funding.



6 Inspirational

EREV SHABBAT

FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH

Two ways to welcome the Shabbat

Oct. 6, Nov. 3, Dec. 1, Jan. 5, Feb. 2, March 1, April 5, May 3

Tot Shabbat

6pm – 6:30pm

with Rabbi Lisa & Cantor Robin

Ideal for families with children 8 and younger. A great introduction to our basic Shabbat prayers and a fantastic way for families to celebrate Shabbat together!



Reform Style Shabbat

7pm

Highlighting the Shabbat music of the 1990s

First Fridays of the month, come for the prayer melodies that were common in Reform congregations in the 1990s! An easy service to participate in, be as inspired today as you were when you first sang these familiar melodies.



Kabbalat Shabbat

This spiritual service invites us to move through the traditional psalms that welcome Shabbat, rather than the evening worship prayers. Including our Maagal Shira (song circle) musicians, this is a very musical and relaxing way to attune yourself to Shabbat.

Second Friday of the Month

7 pm



Shabbat Torah Study

Returns October 14

11:45am – 12:30pm

February: Immersive Prayer Month

So many have asked-here it is! A month where every service will be a Learner's Service; walking through the Erev Shabbat prayers, their meaning, order, and theology; the Shabbat morning prayers. Materials will be provided at each service to help you understand the flow, majesty of worship, and help de-mystify Jewish prayers for you!

Feb. 2-3; Feb. 9-10; Feb. 16-17; Feb. 23-24



MONDAY AFTERNOON AT THE MOVIES

2:00pm – 4:30pm

Please join us on the second or fourth Monday of the month for bagels, cream cheese, and coffee as we show classic Jewish films. These Jewish films stand as some of the best movies made. They also provide a great setting for community and conversation not only over the meaning of the films themselves but also over the nature of Jewish experience and identity.

See you at the movies!

Monday, Dec. 11

The Big Fix

An offbeat neo-noir detective film made in the late 70s. This movie features a young Richard Dreyfuss in the role of Moses Wine, a Jewish version of the Philip Marlowe type of hardboiled private detective. Moses Wine is distinctly Jewish and cleverly subverts the WASP tough guy private eye. *The Big Fix* is a deeply Jewish film, and we see in it the lasting power of Jewish values that Moses Wine had learned at a young age, namely his deep sense of obligation as a Jew to make the world a better place.



Monday, Jan. 22

The Way We Were

Barbra Streisand's *The Way We Were* just recently turned fifty. Multiple articles and even two books marked this occasion. It is clearly one of the great movie love stories. More than a love story, this movie also made a mark as a distinctly Jewish film. With the exception of Robert Redford, Jews dominated the making of the film. The Jewish elements go much deeper, however, than merely the identities of those who made the film. Most obvious, the plot revolves around the stark contrast between



Streisand's Jewish character Katie Morosky and Redford's Gentile character Hubbell Gardiner. Working as both a heartbreaking romance but also as an insightful view through Streisand's character into both gender and Jewish-Gentile dynamics of the 1950s-early 1960s.

Monday, Feb. 12

Private Benjamin

In the opening scenes of *Private Benjamin*, we see a young society girl, Judy Benjamin played by Goldie Hawn, devastated as her new husband drops dead suddenly on their wedding night.

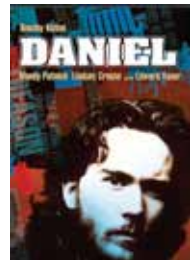


She is then approached by an unscrupulous Women's Army Corps recruiter and in her distraught state, enlists. The story pivots on Judy Benjamin's identity as a pampered society girl who is forced to make it on her own like her fellow recruits. Benjamin's Jewish identity stands as central to the film. Made in 1980 when the stereotype of the Jewish American Princess was at its peak, we see Judy Benjamin struggle to take on simple everyday tasks. In the end, Goldie Hawn delivers a performance that subtly undermines the helplessness of the Jewish American Princess and shows Judy Benjamin emerging as a self-aware young woman in charge of her own life.

Monday, Mar. 11

Daniel

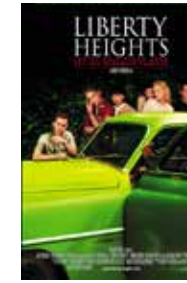
Daniel stands as one of the best films by veteran director Sidney Lumet (*The Pawnbroker*, *Twelve Angry Men*, *Network*). The film is based on the 1971 novel *The Book of Daniel* by E. L. Doctorow, who also collaborated with Lumet by writing the screenplay for the film. *Daniel* explores through fictionalized history the personal lives of the two children left behind after the execution for treason of their parents, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. This is a highly political story. Through the eyes of the two surviving children, we see the complex and lasting impact of deeply-held Jewish values of social responsibility taking hold in another generation, through both despair and hope.



Monday, Apr. 29

Liberty Heights

Writer and director Barry Levinson stands apart from virtually all other American film directors in his commitment to exploring on screen the experiences of Jewish Americans during the 1940s-1960s. Through his tetralogy of "Baltimore" films, *Diner* (1982), *Tin Men* (1987), *Avalon* (1990), and *Liberty Heights* (1999), we see an extended loving depiction of not only a city in transition, but also of the process of assimilation into mainstream America for Jewish Americans as they move from all-Jewish inner-city neighborhoods to the suburbs. *Liberty Heights* is arguably the most Jewish film in Levinson's Baltimore series. This film provides a highly nuanced window on the post-war period and shows, at the same time, a deeply affectionate and non-stereotypical picture of Jewish life in mid-century America.



Monday, May 13

An American Pickle

Based on a *New Yorker* short story by Simon Rich (who adapted it for screen), begins in 1919 with a Jewish immigrant, Herschel Greenbaum, who works in Brooklyn at a pickle factory and accidentally falls into a vat of brine. His unfortunate fall occurs just as the factory is shutting down for a health inspection, and he is preserved in the brine for the next 100 years. Herschel wakes up in 2019 and finds his world gone he searches for relatives and can only find a single person, his great-grandson Ben. The film turns upon the dynamic, both comical and thoughtful, between the deeply traditional Herschel and the secular 21st-century techie Ben. *An American Pickle* offers a warm and funny movie that is suitable for the entire family!



Handcrafts and Jewish-Themed Arts Workshops

Led by Joy Goldowitz

Judaica-themed Collage
Using a variety of papers, ephemera, embroidery, painting, photographs, etc.



Free-style Embroidery Sampler
Learn a variety of stitches and techniques; explore color combinations and motifs

Hanukkah necklaces and bracelets using charms and beads

Card-making
Utilize variety of materials and techniques

Select Sunday afternoons 2:00pm – 4:00pm
Dates to be announced – watch the T'kiah!

Love Letters: A Writing Workshop

Led by Deborah O'Neal

How to write letters, essays, notes or cards of appreciation, care and love to ancestors, descendants, family, friends, and the random person who found your wallet and returned it.



We will look at Hallmark card type responses from "You're the Best" to "Thanks a Million."

Then we will make those expressions our own with details about personal characteristics, favors given and received and anecdotes only you can tell.

Bring paper, pen, and your important memories

A sunny, Sunday afternoon in February
Dates to be announced – watch the T'kiah!

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