

Jewish Belonging ● Jewish Life ● Jewish Community

Nosh

Inspirational

Jewish Studies

Family

Literary Lifestyle

Travel

Naches

Jewish
Film
Collective

Prayer

Community

Wellness

Creative

Schmooze

Temple Beth Torah

2024-2025/5785



Adult and Family Learning & Programs



To our Temple Beth Torah Lifelong Learners:

Elie Wiesel once remarked, "I do not recall a Jewish home without a book on the table." Wiesel's keen observation reflects how we Jews have loved learning over the centuries and millennia and the value we place on individual and group study. In this spirit, 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.



This year, we are excited to bring forward a program filled with options for study of Jewish practice and identity, history, and culture; a variety of book-reading groups, creative arts and crafts, Jewish movies, and group travel. We hope you will find one or more activities that will be both engaging and rewarding. We urge you to come and share, read and think together and deepen both your personal connections with others as well as with the Jewish tradition.

Wishing all a shana tova and a meaningful year of learning and togetherness,

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

Section	Description	Page
1	Thoughtful	3
2	Inspirational	7
3	Literary Life Style	8
4	Community	9
5	Family Focus	9
6	Wellness	9
7	Movies	10
8	Creative	13
9	Travel	14

*"What we need more than anything else in the world is not textbooks but text-people."
~Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel*

Register for classes:
scan the QR code using your cellphone for shulcloud.com
or call 805-647-4181
Classes are free to TBT members and \$5 per class for non-members, unless noted.



1

Thoughtful

SHORT COURSES

An Adult Confirmation Experience - Year 2

Rabbi Lisa Hochberg-Miller



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

Even if you did not participate last year, you are welcome to join this Sunday morning class. This series is perfect for those who want to wrestle with Jewish ideas, enjoy lively discussion with others, and deepen their spiritual connection. This class is a great next step for those who have become adult b'nai mitzvah.

This second year of our Adult Confirmation journey will continue our study of core Jewish texts, understanding God's presence, Jewish history, deepening our prayer life, and celebrating ritual. This year, we will build on Hebrew reading and comprehension skills, for those who would like to participate in Hebrew in our confirmation service.

Adult Confirmation will culminate in a celebratory service on Erev Shavuot, the Festival of Receiving Torah at Sinai, on Sunday, June 1. This evening will be a creative service, including the reading of the Ten Commandments from Torah. There will be opportunities for class members to participate in Hebrew or English; there is a role for everyone. 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.

Sundays 10 am – 11:15 am
Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24, Dec 8, Jan. 12, 26, Feb. 2, 9, 23,
March 2, 9, 30, April 6, 20, 27, May 4, 18

Save the Date:

Adult Confirmation Service: Sunday, June 1, 2025

Excursions in Jewish History and Culture

Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.

TBT Library

Tuesday Mornings, 10:15-11:30 am

Join us for coffee and bagels on Tuesday mornings to engage in discussion and study of Jewish culture and history. Our Excursions courses offer a weekly lecture/discussion series in which we will explore select topics in Jewish history, ideas,



literature, and experience. We will spend 4-6 weeks per topic. Topics will include the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Jewish history, Zionism and its variants, Jewish ideas and philosophy, Jewish-American identity, and Jewish film and literature.

Unpacking the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict: Context and History

5 weeks, 11/12, 11/19, 11/26, 12/3, 12/17

Following the October 7th attack on Israel by Hamas, Israel has been locked in war against Hamas and its allies.



Yet the conflict between Israel and Palestine did not begin simply with the October 7th terrorist attack against Israel. Indeed, the conflict is longstanding, predating the establishment of Israel as a state in 1948. Over the course of five sessions, we will explore the origins, development, and implications of the bitter and ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestinian Arabs. We will explore the basic contours of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship and focus on the root cause of extended conflict. Our aim is not to try to find solutions to controversies, but rather to try to understand different sides of the conflict and perspectives of the participants. By thinking critically about the current conflict in Israel and its historical

roots, we aim to understand better the challenges and potential options Israel currently faces.

Sessions

- Jews in 19th Century Europe: Emancipation, Antisemitism, and the Zionist Ideal
- Birth of Modern Israel
- Israel's Defining Wars - Suez, Six-Day, Yom Kippur - and the Challenges of Victory
- From Dreams of Peace to Intifadas
- October 7 and the Joint Traps of War and Ideology

Jewish Women & the Shaping of America

6 weeks, 1/14, 1/21, 1/28, 2/4, 2/11, 2/18

In 1976, Jewish literary critic and intellectual Irving Howe published *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*. Beautifully written, lavishly illustrated, and a satisfying 694 pages in length, the book became a #1 national bestseller. No Jewish home in America seemed complete without a copy of *World of Our Fathers* on its coffee table. Yet as we look back at that book today, we see it left out so much - specifically, women. If there was a world of our fathers, was there not a world of our mothers? This series of discussions will leverage the important work done in recent decades on Jewish women's history to explore Jewish American history with an emphasis on the contributions of Jewish women from colonial times to present.



Sessions

- The First Two Centuries: Jewish American Experience, 1654-1880
- The Great Transformation: Eastern European Jewish Immigrants, 1880-1924
- Becoming Americans: Entry of Jewish Families into Mainstream USA, 1924-1952
- Suburbs, Conformity, and Rebellion: Complacency to Activism, 1952-1972
- Intellectual and Spiritual Explorations: Jewish Feminist Ideas and Culture, 1972-1997
- Leading by Example: Path breaking Jewish Women in Contemporary America

Zionism 101

4 weeks, 2/25, 3/4, 3/11, 3/18

Modern Zionism is the movement for self-determination and statehood for the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland of ancient Israel. Zionism as an ideology and practical plan arose in Europe in the late 19th century as a response to the rise of nationalism as an ideology and the emergence of national liberation movements across Europe. Theodor Herzl served as the leading spokesperson for the budding Zionist movement and launched the campaign that would eventuate in the formation of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Zionism today has become a controversial topic, particularly in face of the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. However, Zionism has and continues to be a broad movement that embraces multiple positions across the political spectrum that include progressives, moderates, conservatives, and those who are essentially apolitical. In these discussions, we will seek to understand the origins of Zionism, its philosophical and political underpinnings, historical development and achievements, variant forms, and current controversies.



Sessions

- Enlightenment and Pogroms: The European Matrix that Gave Rise to Zionism
- From Ideology to Successful Establishment of Nation State
- Israeli Success and its Backlash
- Zionism in the 21st Century: Variants, Controversies, Possible Directions

Jews and the Movies in America

3 weeks, 4/8, 4/15, 4/22

Beginning in the early 20th century, America led the world in development of the motion picture industry. Jewish Americans played pivotal roles in the creation of movies as technology, business, entertainment,



and art. This three-session series will explore contributions of Jews in America to the movie industry over the last 100 years.

Sessions

- Jews and the Emergence of Movies in America, 1910-1930
- Shadows and Limelight: The Mixed Experience of American Jews in the Movies, 1930-1960
- Into the Mainstream: Jews and the Making of America's Golden Years of Film, 1960-2010

*"I believe that Judaism made an extraordinarily wise decision when it made its teachers its heroes and lifelong education its passion."
~Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l*

JEWISH STUDIES

LECTURE OF THE MONTH

In this monthly lecture and discussion series, we will explore a wide variety of topics in Jewish history and culture with distinguished scholars and teachers. Lectures are held via Zoom typically on the

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

October 8

"October 7, One Year Later"

Muki Jankelowitz, M.A.



In the Middle East, we often say that a week is a very long time, because so much can (and often does) happen - all the more so, a year. This session will look at the aftermath of the Hamas attack on the 7th of October, 2023 and comment on its impact on Israelis, Palestinians, and the region as a whole. In addition to formal remarks on October 7th and its aftermath, Muki will offer reflections of his experience and that of his family as they have lived through the last year in Israel. We will conclude with an open question/answer session.

Muki Jankelowitz is a Jewish educator who has been working in guiding tours both in Israel and Jewish Europe over the last twenty years. He has personally

hosted tours for Temple Beth Torah in Israel. He holds a B.A. in sociology and history from Wits University in Johannesburg, an honors degree in Biblical archeology from the University of South Africa, and an M.A. in Jewish Studies from the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem.

November 7

"The Architecture of Hashem: Temple to Synagogue"

Christine Maasdam, M.A.



The destruction of the Temple Mount and the necessary transition to synagogues served as a defining moment for Judaism.

As there can only be one Temple, when destroyed how are the rituals to be kept alive? What is acceptable to incorporate into the structure of a temporary place of worship and continue to honor and obey the commandments? How will the community continue to be served and our people maintain faith? Many centuries have passed and we are still in our synagogues. What are the essential elements needed in a synagogue? Exploring the first synagogues, the immense European structures that developed, and the rise of American synagogues is the defining architecture of Hashem still apparent?

Christine Maasdam holds a Master 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, CSUC OLLI Program, and a return lecturer in the TBT Jewish Studies Lecture of the Month program.

December 5

"Pow! Ka-Blam! Hai-Ja! Comics, Graphic Novels, and Jewish Superheroes for the 21st Century"

Leah Hochman, Ph.D.



Together we'll explore the role male and female superheroes have played for American Jews in their attempts - successful and not - to design, create and use powerful personas to

explore their complex roles in families, in friendships, and within American society. We will look at secular heroes and observant heroines and find the power in the everyday and extraordinary people who populate our imagination.

Dr. Leah Hochman Associate Professor of Jewish thought at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Los Angeles. She holds a B.A. degree from Pitzer College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in religion and literature from Boston University.

February 6

“Over the Rainbow”: Arguing the Meaning of a Beloved Song in a Jewish Context”

Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.

In 1939, MGM released *The Wizard of Oz*, a film destined to become one of America’s most loved films. It featured, “Over the Rainbow,” a song that would arguably become one of America’s favorites. Sung by 17-year-old Judy Garland, the song became a hallmark of *The Wizard of Oz*. The National Endowment for the Arts and the Recording Industry Association of America recently named it as the greatest song of the twentieth century. With music written by celebrated composer Harold Arlen and lyricist Yip Harburg, generations of fans have loved “Over the Rainbow” for its themes of hope and transcendence. Many have tried to delve into the origins of the song’s lyrics and have offered various theories, including ideas about the Holocaust, world peace, or other religious and historical events that may have motivated lyricist Yip Harburg in its composition. This lecture will explore the origins of the song and its long and varied career, examine its Jewish connections, and offer an explanation for how it came to represent one of America’s most beloved “secular hymns.”



Cliff Wilcox, Ph.D.

Director of Education and Operations, TBT

March 6

“How Archeology Illuminates the Bible”

Elaine Goodfriend, Ph.D.



Did you know that the only person in the Torah who is mentioned in any archaeological discovery is a non-Jewish prophet named Balaam? Did the walls of Jericho really come tumbling down for Joshua and the Israelite army? Did the Israelites really believe that their God had a wife? Is the Bible’s description of David’s expansive kingdom fantasy or reality? How common was literacy in ancient Israel? Learn about the exciting discoveries from across the Middle East which verify (but often modify) our understanding of ancient Israel as described in the Bible.

Dr. Goodfriend 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 the University of California, Berkeley.

April 3

“This Year in Jerusalem”

Muki Jankelowitz, M.A.



In our tradition, we end the seder by praying that “Next Year we will be in Jerusalem.” In addition to facing extreme external challenges, the last few years have seen Israel facing several internal crises, on the political and judicial fronts, between religious and secular, and amongst the different sectors of Israeli society. This session will not wait for next year but will take a look at the reality in Jerusalem today. As in his previous sessions, Muki will offer reflections of his experience and that of his family on their experiences in contemporary Israel. We will conclude with an open question/answer session.

Muki Jankelowitz returns to update us regarding developments in Israel and among Israelis since his previous discussion with us on October 8.

EREV SHABBAT**First Friday of the Month**

Two ways to welcome the Shabbat

Tater 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.

**Nov 1, Dec 6, Jan 3,
Feb 7, Mar 7, Apr 14,
May 2, Jun 6**



Throwback Shabbat 7pm - 8:30pm
with Rabbi Lisa & Cantor Robin

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.

Second Friday of the Month

Kabbalat Shabbat 7pm - 8:30pm
with Rabbi Lisa & Cantor Robin

This reflective service invites us to move through the traditional psalms that welcome Shabbat, rather than the evening worship prayers.

**Third Friday of the Month**

Reform Style Shabbat 7pm - 8:30pm
With Rabbi Lisa and Cantor Robin

Standard Shabbat service using our Mishkan Tefillah siddur.

Fourth Friday of the Month

Reform Musical Style Shabbat 7pm - 8:30pm
With Ma'agal Shirah Musicians,
Rabbi Lisa & Cantor Robin



Includes our Ma'agal Shirah (song circle) musicians, this is a very musical, spiritual, and relaxing way to attune yourself to Shabbat.

SHABBAT MORNINGS

Morning Service 10:00am - 11:30am
with Rabbi Lisa & Cantor Robin

Come join us for Shabbat morning services. Our services are fully egalitarian (men and women participate equally). We believe we have found a balance between the traditional and the creative. Services are in a mix of Hebrew and English. Whether stepping into the synagogue for the first time, or if worship is familiar to you, we invite you to come find your place with us in our praying community.



Shabbat Torah Study
11:45am - 12:30pm
with Rabbi Lisa

Connect yourself to Jewish text, tradition, and thought through lively and engaging weekly Torah discussion. Join our round table of ideas and provoking questions, as we plumb the depths of Torah wisdom and find insights for our own lives. Torah study in the library follows Shabbat morning worship most weeks (with the exception of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, or a special Shabbat morning speaker) and is spiced with challah, Kiddush and oneg desserts.

Some come for services then leave, others come only for Torah study, some stay for the entire Shabbat morning offering. Try it and see how enriching it is to add some Torah study and some Shabbat to your life!

"If you truly wish your children to study Torah, study it yourself in their presence. They will follow your example. Otherwise they will not themselves study Torah but will simply instruct their children to do so."
~Rabbi Menahem Mendel of Kotzk

3

Literary Lifestyle



LITERARY LIFESTYLE

Read/React/Refresh!
After Shabbat Services
12:30pm - 1:30pm

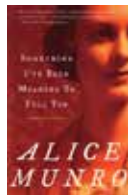
Beginning in the new Jewish year, we will host a series of opportunities for you to read well-written, thought-provoking short stories and books, come together as a group to react to them, and enjoy a variety of refreshments. Every quarter you'll be provided with the dates and titles of the next two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

The short stories can be downloaded from links provided through the weekly T'kiah 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.

October 19 - *Forgiveness in Families*

by Alice Munro from *Something I've Been Meaning to Tell You*

Led by Deborah Rose O'Neal



A deep touching story about the complexities and secrets lurking in every family.

November 23 - *Displaced Persons*

By Joan Leegant

Led by Deborah Pollack



An enlightened exploration of the variety of immigrants who make up the state of Israel.

December 14 - *On the Move*

by Oliver Sacks

Led by Alan Kirschbaum



Long before becoming the bestselling author of *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Oliver Sacks was a small English boy fascinated by metals, chemical reactions, photography, and more. In this charming memoir, he shares his passion for science and the quirky, challenging childhood that nurtured it.

January 11-Short Story Discussion

to be announced in T'kiah

February 22- Short Story Discussion

to be announced in T'kiah

March 22 - *The Realist*

by Asaf Hanuka

Led by Adam Kaiserman



In 2010, Israeli newspaper The Calcalist commissioned Asaf Hanuka, a noted illustrator and contributor to *Waltz With Bashir*, to create a weekly comic strip. The first strip follows Hanuka and his family as they urgently search for a new home in a chaotic Tel Aviv real estate market. With offbeat humor, he depicts everyday life in modern Tel Aviv. Archaia's edition, *The Realist*, combines both volumes of his earlier work, *KO À Tel Aviv*, into a single book for the first time.

April 26 - Short Story Discussion

to be announced in T'kiah

May 24-Short Story Discussion

to be announced in T'kiah

June 21- *Koshersoul: The Faith and Food Journey of an African American Jew*

by Michael W. Twitty

Led by Pam Small



In *Koshersoul*, Michael W. Twitty examines the fusion of African Atlantic and Jewish culinary traditions, viewing it as a dialogue of migrations. He highlights Jews of Color as essential cultural contributors in both communities and reflects on how food has shaped his own journey to Judaism. As intimate and thought-provoking as *The Cooking Gene*, *Koshersoul* provides sensory delight and nourishment for the soul.

"A good short story is a magic trick, and it's close-up magic. . . If a story touches you, it will stay with you, haunting the places in your mind that you rarely ever visit. "

~Neil Gaiman

4

Community



Brotherhood Bagel Brunches with Speakers
Check online for a description

Sunday mornings
9:30 am – 11:30 am

Oct. 20, watch the T'kiah! for more dates

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 Focus

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

Aug 25, Sep 9, Sep 29, Oct 6, Oct 20, Nov 10, Nov 24, Dec 8, Dec 15, Jan 1, Jan 26, Feb 2, Feb 23, Mar 2, Mar 16, Apr 6, Apr 27, May 4

Thank you Ventura County Jewish Federation for the generous funding.



6

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 Tai Chi for over 10 years. She has studied with Qigong and Tai Chi 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 – 10am

Calm Art - Reset your Mind

Jill Covell Bonilla

Are you Stressed?

Join Jill for a calming and immersive artistic experience that fosters relaxation and mindfulness.



Worried about your artistic skills? No need to be! Calm Art is designed to help you express your unique inner thoughts while nurturing your personal artistic voice through **art meditation** practices.

Jill Covell, MFA, Art Therapy Practitioner, Certified Master Mindset Life Coach (Emotional, CBT, REBT, and Confidence) more information at calm-art.net.

Thursday afternoons

3pm – 4pm

In the Library Class

Feb 6, Feb 13, Feb 20, Feb 27

Cost: \$10 per session



MONDAY AFTERNOON AT THE MOVIES

2:00pm – 4:30pm

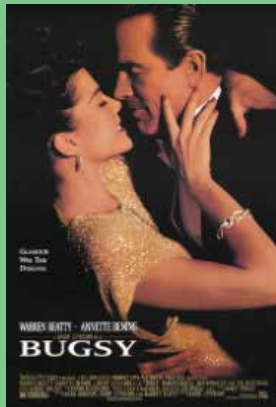
Please join us on the second or fourth Monday of the month as we show classic Jewish films. These Jewish films stand as some of the best movies made. They also provide a great setting for community and conversation not only over the meaning of the films themselves but also over the nature of Jewish experience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

See you at the movies!

Monday, October 14

Bugsy

Arguably the best of the rather unusual (but large) category of Jewish gangster films, *Bugsy* offers a somewhat romanticized biography of the flamboyant and creative yet ruthless mobster, Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel. Although the movie takes a few liberties with Siegel's biography, the core of its story - Jewish gangster from Lower East Side sent to Los Angeles in mid 1930s to take over the southern California crime syndicate and then over next ten years falls in love with Hollywood and tries to remake himself as Tinseltown celebrity. Deftly directed by Barry Levinson and featuring an all-star cast headed by Warren Beatty, *Bugsy* captures the charm and romance of Ben "Bugsy" Siegel that coexisted with

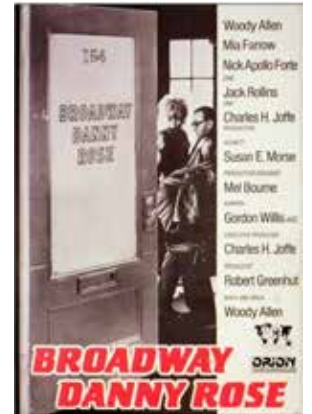


the ruthless and violent side of one of the most famous of America's mobsters of the 1930s-1940s. With the thoughtful script by James Toback and masterful direction by Barry Levinson, this film reaches for an understanding of the motivations behind Siegel's unconventional, indeed outrageous life. As such, *Bugsy* offers a view of an important but often unacknowledged side of Jewish life - the experiences of those who wanted success too much, who pushed too hard.

Monday, November 11

Broadway Danny Rose

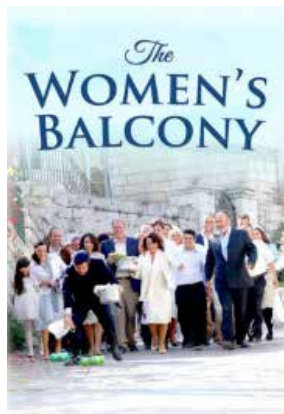
Broadway Danny Rose (1984) stands as one of the very best films made by Woody Allen during what are considered the golden years of his long career, from 1977-1992. A story about a second-rate Broadway agent who may not be the brightest agent but has a heart of gold and unfailing loyalty to each of his clients. Danny Rose is not only one of Woody Allen's most likable characters, he is also one of his most Jewish characters. Danny treats each of his clients as if they were members of his own family and, despite his lack of material success, leads a life that is an object lesson in commitment to humanity, compassion, and righteousness. *Broadway Danny Rose* probably offers one of the best examples of Woody Allen's use of the "schlemiel hero," a classic type in Yiddish literature. It has been called one of the "best Thanksgiving movies" both for the nostalgic and often hilarious annual Thanksgiving dinners Danny cooks for his beloved clients and for its deep-seated sense of moral goodness and gratitude that he radiates through his daily life. What better way to embrace the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday than to watch this film about generosity and human dignity?



Monday, December 23

The Women's Balcony

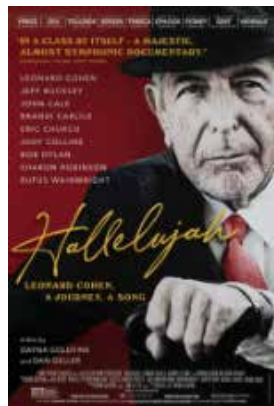
Released in Israel in 2016, *The Women's Balcony* quickly became both a critical and popular success in Israel and abroad. It remains popular and stands today as the highest grossing film in Israel in the last twenty years. The movie opens with the collapse of the women's balcony at an orthodox synagogue in Jerusalem while the congregation is celebrating a bar mitzvah. The rabbi's wife is seriously injured in the collapse. The injury to his wife proves too much to handle for the elder rabbi, and he suffers a breakdown which leaves the small congregation leaderless. A charismatic young rabbi named David shows up and appears ready to rescue the congregation. It quickly becomes apparent, though, that the plan Rabbi David is pushing for repair of the synagogue does not include replacing the women's balcony. Instead, the women are going to be squeezed into an uncomfortable auxiliary space and money saved for construction will be spent on new Torah scrolls. A war ensues - a battle over gender, religious devotion vs. fanaticism, and the very idea of a holy community. This film is quite funny, but it is also serious - a movie that is as current today as when it was released eight years ago.



Monday, January 27

Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, A Song

The song "Hallelujah" may arguably be called the most famous song of current age. This song has become almost ubiquitous, played at weddings and funerals, performed in singing competitions, featured in countless movies, and sung with feeling in synagogues, churches, and other devotional settings. Yet Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" almost



never came to be. It not only took Cohen years to write the song, he barely found a record producer to release the song once complete. And it took several years following its quiet release on a small label in 1983 for "Hallelujah" to attain its blockbuster status. The documentary *Hallelujah: Leonard Cohen, A Journey, a Song* (2022) tells the remarkable story of the creation of this song and its long path to discovery and later fame. In this remarkably captivating documentary, we watch Leonard Cohen talk about the difficult process of creativity and his sources for and painstaking development of the song. We hear about the difficulties Cohen had in the early 1980s in getting commercial support for his work. And we see the powerful influence of other artists who included the song in their live sets and earned an audience for it during the mid-1980s and early 1990s. This insightful and beautiful film expands our understanding of Cohen's poetic and musical achievements in "Hallelujah" and the meaning this widely-loved song has come to hold in the world today.

Monday, February 24

When Harry Met Sally

When Harry Met Sally (1989) has been described as "the greatest romcom of all time." What did this film do so right to garner such praise? From the writing of Nora Ephron, direction by Rob Reiner, and performances by Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal, what made this film work in such a powerful, even magical way? At least part of the secret came from the way that Reiner and Ephron focused their exploration on the specific process of dating, two people coming together and becoming a couple. One of the marketing lines on the movie posters at its time of release read, "Can men and women be friends, or does sex always get in the way?" The idea for the film actually emerged out of conversations between Rob Reiner and Nora Ephron about the harrowing experience of dating. Shortly after the breakup



between Reiner and his first wife Penny Marshall, Reiner and a friend Andrew Scheinman had a conversation with Ephron and described their experiences trying to date. Ephron listened to their remarks, added her own perspectives as a woman, and turned the joining conversation into a screenplay which became *When Harry Met Sally*. Through a series of engaging but sometimes awkward encounters, we see Harry and Sally become close, push each other away, and become closer again - always pulled together again simply by the power of how much they like each other. The scenes are specific, emotion-rich, and all driven by the process of them moving closer to each other. This film is deeply Jewish from the unforgettable deli scene to the character of Harry himself - the Woody Allen influenced neurotic male who must find a way to rise above his deep-seated relationship-destroying impulses. A film about attraction, connections, and love - this is a perfect Valentine's Day film, if only a week or so late!

Monday, March 17

***The Marx Brothers,
Monkey Business (1931)***

A Marx Brothers film as a Jewish movie? Sure, the brothers were all Jewish. But they never even uttered the word Jew or Jewish in their films. And those zany scripts . . . can we find anything of substance in their stories? Film scholars have indeed argued over the decades on whether the Marx Brothers' films can be considered Jewish movies with good arguments made for and against. Yet in recent years the "yes" votes have been getting stronger. This month's film, *Monkey Business*, shows the Marx Brothers as their most Jewish and funniest selves. In each of the films made by the Marx Brothers, we see a repeating theme of them trying to infiltrate elite settings under ridiculous and false pretenses. Through these ruses, we see the Marx Brothers repeatedly reenacting themes of the out of place immigrant in American society during the heavily



anti-immigrant and antisemitic 1920s and 1930s. In *Monkey Business*, we see the Marx Brothers coming to America on a ship as stowaways in pickle barrels. The props and codes all point to the Jewishness of their experience and feelings. Come revisit this film both for its wacky humor and for its insightful view of 1930s America from a Jewish perspective.

Monday, April 28

Hester Street

In the early 1970s, a young producer of educational films, Joan Micklin Silver, decided she wanted to be a full-fledged film director. Silver had the idea of making a film based on the novella *Yekl: A Tale of the New York Ghetto* by Abraham Cahan, which told the story of a Jewish immigrant couple coming to New York's Lower East Side in the 1890s. She had made educational films about immigration but wanted to tell the larger emotional and personal story of the immigrant experience. Plus, she saw her own story in Cahan's *Yekl*. She announced that she intended "to make a film that will count for my family." But when she approached leaders in the film industry in New York, she met immediate resistance. Rebuffed by many producers, one stood out particularly, telling her "feature films are expensive to make and expensive to market and women directors are one more problem we don't need." Finding no support in the film industry, her husband Raphael Silver, a commercial real estate developer (and son of famed Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver), stepped in to raise the money to make and distribute the film. The resulting movie, *Hester Street* (1975) tells the story of a Russian Jewish immigrant couple as they struggle with personal, social, and religious challenges in the course of becoming Americans. Written and directed by Joan Micklin Silver on a shoestring budget and tight schedule of 34 days, *Hester Street* emerged as a surprise hit and even won an Oscar nomination for its lead actress Carol Kane. The film remains as fresh today as when originally



released. In addition to telling a compelling story about the path of immigrant Jews to becoming American citizens, it deftly explores issues of identity, isolation, and assimilation.



8 Creative

Handcrafts and Jewish-Themed Arts Workshops

Come work with Joy Goldowitz and make some art to display in our lobby!

When: Sunday afternoons, 2:00 - 4:00



TBT Library
Embroidered Sampler
 Learn simple stitches, play with color, texture, and different motifs!

Sunday Oct 27, 2-4pm
 Cost for class and materials \$5

Embroidered Handkerchief

Learn simple stitches. Embroider a handkerchief for a bride, grieving friend or relative, or yourself! Lots of design choices!



Sunday, Nov 17, 2-4pm
 Cost for class and materials \$10



Pop-up Dimensional Card
 Create a pop-up dimensional card! Lots of elements to explore. Class limited to 11 students - first come, first served!

Sun, Dec 15, 2-4pm
 Cost for class and materials \$5



Paper Collage with Embroidery
 Use paper elements, markers, colored pencils, and thread to create a meaningful collage.

Sun Jan 19, 2-4pm
 Cost for class and materials \$5

Cards for Gifting or Keeping

We'll make an envelope with dimension, design a simple card, and make a few to gift or keep!



Sun, Feb 23 2-4pm
 Cost for class and materials \$5



Calligraphy Class
 Learn the basics of pointed pen calligraphy

Sun, Mar 9, 2-4 pm
 Cost for class and materials \$40

Each student will receive a kit to use and take home.

Pinot and Pissarro

Jill Covell Bonilla

Create your own version of Boulevard Montmartre to take home. Jill will lead you through the steps to recreate the famous painting, "The Boulevard Montmartre at Night," by the renowned Impressionist artist Camille Pissarro, both Spanish and Portuguese Jewish descent. As you paint, you'll also have the opportunity to learn more about Pissarro's life and artistic contributions to the Impressionist movement.



Light refreshments will be provided to enhance your experience!

Sunday, Nov 3, 4-6pm
 Cost for class and materials* \$35.00



Bo

Jewish New York

New York City easily qualifies as America's most Jewish city. Beginning in the 17th century when Sephardic Jews first landed in what was then New Amsterdam through the tumultuous decades of the late 19th - early 20th centuries when Eastern European Jews filled Manhattan's Lower East Side, to the dynamic years of the mid-late 20th century, Jews have exercised an outsized influence on the city's cultural and intellectual life. Come join us for a Temple Beth Torah adult education trip to New York City over a long weekend in late May (May 22-26) to sample some of the very best Jewish sites and experiences New York City has to offer.

Destinations will include (among others):

- The Jewish Museum
- The Tenement Museum
- Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island
- Jewish Delis
- A Broadway show

May 22-26, 2025 - travel details to be announced separately

Looking for the perfect venue for your special event?

Your ideal choice **Meister Hall** Event Rental Space,
located in Temple Beth Torah, 7620 Foothill Rd, Ventura, CA 93004

With a capacity to host 200 guests, It is perfect for life's celebrations:

- Weddings
- B Mitzvahs
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Book with us today for an unforgettable event experience!

Email: BonillaJill9@gmail.com or Phone: 805-258-9480

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