

Leland & Mary Gottstein Continuing Jewish Education Lecture Series



DR. RACHEL HAVRELOCK

SUNDAYS, 10:30 am

Topic: *Political Leadership in Ancient Israel*

Many different forms of political organization and leadership have roots in the Hebrew Bible. The twelve tribes of Israel influenced tribal societies, the Catholic priesthood modeled itself on the Kohanim, the Davidic dynasty sanctified European monarchies, and the American Republic based its founding documents on Deuteronomy.

This course focuses on the various types of leadership outlined in the Bible and reflects on their reception and influence. We dedicate each of the four sessions to particular figures: prophets, kings/queens, priests, and tribal leaders. In each session, we also move beyond ancient Israel to consider the continued impact of these roles and the tensions among them.

Our discussions will highlight how contemporary politics influences understandings of the Bible and how biblical forms of government continue to inspire political movements

January 24 - Ancient Israel & the State
January 31 - Monarchs

February 7 - Priests
February 14 - Prophets

Dr. Rachel Havrelock is Associate Professor of Jewish Studies and English at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Rachel's book, *River Jordan: The Mythology of a Dividing Line* illustrates her distinct methodology of combining biblical studies, literary and political theory, and the politics of interpretation.

Rachel's current book project, *The Joshua Generation: Politics and the Promised Land*, focuses on the structure and meanings of the book of Joshua. Rachel co-edits *AJS Perspectives: The Magazine of the Association for Jewish Studies* with Professor Matti Bunzl. She has taught a course at Bnai Tikvah for the past eight years

DR. CLAIRE SUFRIN

SUNDAYS, 10:30 am - February 21, March 6 & March 13

American Jewish Thinkers

Isaac Meyer Wise: Minhag America

- Wise (1819-1900) founded the Hebrew Union College and other important institutions of Reform Judaism. He believed that this movement of Judaism would thrive in this country and become a quintessential American religion. We will consider why he believed this and what he did to advance his vision of American Judaism.

Mordecai Kaplan: Jewish Pragmatism

- Kaplan (1881-1983) believed that American Jews needed to strengthen their communal bonds and rethink some of their major theological concepts. We will consider what he meant when he called Jews a "civilization" and God "the force that makes for good in the world."

Judith Plaskow and Rachel Adler: Jewish Feminism

- Plaskow (1947-) and Adler (1943-) are leading contemporary thinkers who call upon Jews to include women's perspectives in the way we define our communities, our values, and our traditions. We will focus on Adler's call to liberal Jews to develop a new halakhah.

Dr. Claire Sufrin, A Chicago-area native, teaches modern Jewish Studies at Northwestern University. She is a scholar of modern Judaism and is also an experienced adult educator. She holds a PhD in Religious Studies from Stanford University and a BA in Religious Studies from Yale University. She has taught previously at Stanford as well as Northeastern University in Boston, where she was the Schusterman Post-Doctoral Teaching Fellow in Jewish Studies.

Dr. Sufrin has published articles on 20th century German Jewish thought, post-Holocaust theology, and Jewish feminism, among other topics, and she is currently completing a book manuscript on the philosopher Martin Buber and his writings about the Bible.

