

## INTRODUCTION TO CLASSICAL JEWISH PHILOSOPHY

Dr. Adrian Sackson

Spring Semester

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Office Hours: TBA

### Short description:

In this text-based class, students will be introduced to works of some of the most important and influential Jewish thinkers who lived and wrote during the ‘golden age’ of Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages. These thinkers engaged critically and creatively with ideas from a wide variety of worlds: traditional rabbinic and biblical sources; ancient Greek philosophy and science; Muslim and Christian theologies. The course will introduce students to some of the big questions and disagreements that animated the intellectual lives of these philosophers: Did God create the world? What is the ‘good life’? What role, if any, is religion to play in the attainment of knowledge about the universe? Our exploration will focus particularly on two famous, influential, and very different Jewish thinkers—arguably the ‘Plato and Aristotle’ of the Jewish philosophical tradition: Judah Halevi, author of the *Kuzari*; and Moses Maimonides, author of the *Guide of the Perplexed*.

### Assessment\* :

Midterm paper [4-6 pages] (40%):

The task will be given out in the first week of class. The paper will be due mid-semester.

Final paper [6-8 pages] (50%):

The task will be given out in the first week of class. The due date is set by the program.

Participation (10%):

Attendance is mandatory. Active participation in class discussions is encouraged. Students are expected to be present—both physically and mentally.

### Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Students are permitted a maximum of three absences without penalty. Any additional absences will affect the final grade and may result in failure of the course.

### Academic conduct:

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\* Please note that if distance learning is required, the assessment procedure, modes of assessment and weightings may be changed.

Plagiarism is taken extremely seriously. Any instance of academic misconduct which includes: submitting someone else's work as your own; failure to accurately cite sources; taking words from another source without using quotation marks; submission of work for which you have previously received credit; working in a group for individual assignments; using unauthorized materials in an exam and sharing your work with other students, will result in failure of the assignment and will likely lead to further disciplinary measures.