

Bible Study

2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month,
7:30-9:30 pm
with Susan Schorr

Studying in English, we examine the Bible from a variety of perspectives: mythological, historical, literary, psychological, and as sacred text.

Torah Study

every Saturday morning,
9:00-10:00 am
with Rabbi Marc Margolius

Hamatmid

1st & 3rd Saturdays of the month,
1:30-3:30 pm
Study of the Prophets.

Chug Ivri

4th Saturday of the month,
2:00 pm
Hebrew speakers group.
Contact the WES office for location.

Continuing from the fall...

Hebrew Reading – Level I & Level II

Saturday mornings,
9:00-10:00 am
Dec 3, 10, 17
with Ken Klein and
David Friedman

The Stories of Our Lives: Spiritual Autobiography

Thursdays, 3:00-5:00 pm
Dec 8, 15, 22
with Rabbi Marc Margolius



Middah Study Groups

West End is studying a particular *middah* (ethical value/character trait) each month. As part of this year of immersion, lay-led study groups meet monthly to explore the Middah of the Month from the perspective of a shared concern or interest. How might doctors practice humility? What do the classical Jewish texts say about courage? How can parents teach their children the value of truth? CONTACT GROUP LEADERS FOR SCHEDULE & LOCATIONS.

Mesillat Yesharim, The Path of the Upright

led by Moshe Sayer and Josh Greenberg, Dec 24, 1:30 then the
2nd Saturday of the month, Jan 14, Feb 11, Mar 10, 1:30 pm
Study of this classic text on ethics by Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, using the new JPS edition translated by Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan and including new commentary.

Parenting Teens

led by Janet Rosenberg & Margie Schorr, Dec 12, 7:00 pm

Professional Ethics

led by Eva Posman & David Baskin, Dec 19, 7:00 pm

Ethics and Daily Living

led by Susan Schorr, Dec 21, 7:00 pm

Interfaith Families and Differing Ethical Traditions

led by Art Spar & Valerie Drath, Jan 19, 7:00 pm

Ethics in the Workplace

led by David Friedman & Bert Linder

Ethics in Social Action Work

led by Stan Samuels & Barbara Gish-Scult

A MECHON HADAR PROGRAM

"The Gift of Rest: Rediscovering the Beauty of the Sabbath" A Conversation with Senator Joseph Lieberman and Rabbi Ethan Tucker Sunday, Jan 8, 7:30-9:00 pm

Senator Lieberman's recent book, *The Gift of Rest*, will serve as the centerpiece of this conversation. What is the role of Shabbat in the contemporary world? How can Jewish observance be integrated into public life? When conflicts arise between the two, how can we deal with them?
Cost: \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door.
Please RSVP at: mechonhadarliebermanevent.eventbrite.com

WEST END SYNAGOGUE

190 AMSTERDAM AVE, AT 69TH ST (212) 579-0777



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ADULT EDUCATION WINTER 2011 - 2012

Emerson: His Spirituality and Mine and Kaplan's

Thursday, Dec 15, 7:30 pm
with Mel Scult

Despite Mordecai Kaplan's concern with community, ultimately his concept of salvation refers to the individual. The notion of the growth and transcendence of the individual is central to his work, and in this he was deeply influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson. This lecture will concentrate on Emerson's notion of individuality -- its value and its shortcomings. We'll also cover a poem based on an Emerson essay that Kaplan wrote and intended for use as a prayer. The language is Emerson's but the poem is Kaplan's. After 15 years of studying Emerson, our resident expert on Kaplan shares his understandings with us.
Held at WES, no need to register in advance.

WES Café Conversations

Dec 8, Jan 17, Feb 16, 8:00 pm
with Carole Kessner

Today's media offers an embarrassment of riches on Jewish ideas, Jewish politics, Jewish arts, Jewish loyalties, and the like. These essays, articles, reports, and reviews are often provocative or confusing, and cry out for discussion among intelligent, committed Jews. In this monthly conversation (*not a class*) we'll discuss a contemporary piece that can be accessed online or picked up at the synagogue. CONTACT THE WES OFFICE FOR LOCATION AND REGISTRATION.

The Rhythm and Meaning of Jewish Living

[LUNCH & LEARN]

Third Wednesday of the month,
12:30-1:30 pm
with Rabbi Marc Margolius

Jewish practice can be seen as an expression and interpretation of the cycles and processes embedded in nature, history, and psychology/ emotion/spirit. Join Rabbi Margolius in a series of monthly lunch-time sessions to explore the historical context and evolution of the Jewish holidays, and how we might "reconstruct" them in our lives today. Participants are encouraged to attend the full series, though drop-ins are welcome. Bring your own brown bag lunch, we'll provide drinks.

Session schedule:

January 18: Tu B'Shvat
February 15: Purim
March 21: Pesach
April 18: Sefirat HaOmer
May 16: Shavuot
June 20: Tisha B'Av

CONTACT THE WES OFFICE FOR LOCATION AND REGISTRATION.

Jewish History Intensive: The Rabbinic Period

Dec 19, Jan 19, Feb 21,

7:00-9:00 pm

with Nathan Schumer

This is an intensive program covering a fascinating period in Jewish history – from the destruction of the second Temple in 70 CE through the codification of the Babylonian Talmud in the sixth century. During this time Judaism underwent a seismic transformation: synagogues, rabbis and prayer replaced Temple, priests and sacrifice, the Jewish people were dispersed, and the Hebrew Bible was fixed. We'll examine the history, sociology, and religious practice of the time, and study the ways our forbears attempted to continue and reconstruct Judaism. We are studying *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* (2nd ed.) by Shaye Cohen. Because this is an intensive program, participants **MUST** do the assigned reading in advance. *Nathan Schumer is a Columbia PhD candidate in Ancient Jewish History. CONTACT WES FOR REGISTRATION AND LOCATION.*



Changing Attitudes toward Israel: An American Jewish Dilemma

Sunday, Feb 5, 10:00 am with Larry Cohler-Esses

In the not so distant past, the majority of American Jews were unified around two major topics: Israel's safety, prosperity and survival as a Jewish state, followed closely by the redemption of Soviet Jewry. Today there is little agreement in the American Jewish community on any issue relating to Israel. In fact, among American Jews under 30 the relationship to Israel is often filled with anger and negativity. The radical left questions its basic nature as a Jewish state. Many others feel personally estranged from or indifferent to a state whose changing demography, conflict with the Palestinians and policies toward those Palestinians and toward its own body politic feel alien to their own experiences as young American Jews. Given this rift, many ask: How significant will Israel remain to non-Orthodox American Jews? What might these changing attitudes mean for American Jewish life? What will they mean for Israel? And most immediately, why has the discussion of Israel become so toxic, a source for division rather than unity?

Larry Cohler-Esses is the Forward's assistant managing editor. He has reported frequently from Israel, including covering the first Intifada, and has covered the American Jewish community for three decades. His investigative exposes have won awards from the Columbia Journalism Review, the New York Press Association and the Rockower Awards for Jewish journalism.

Exploring Judaism: A Reconstructionist Approach

Last Saturday of the month, 10:00-11:00 am

Dec 31, Jan 28, Feb 25

with Karen Kolodny

This series explores how, as viewed through a Reconstructionist lens, Judaism can inform and add meaning to our daily lives. Using the classic primer by Rabbis Rebecca Alpert and Jacob Staub (whose title serves as the class's name), we investigate key aspects of Reconstructionist Judaism, such as:

- Why we embrace the idea that "belonging precedes behaving and believing," and what that means for the relationship between individual autonomy and communal needs.
- Why we reject the traditional idea of the Jews as a "chosen people," and the implications for interfaith relations.
- How one can develop a meaningful concept of God, without believing in a supernatural deity.
- What it means to understand Judaism as "the evolving religious civilization of the Jewish people," and how and why we integrate tradition with innovation.

You may join even if you missed previous sessions. No prior knowledge or experience necessary.

FILMS IN FEB

Featuring WES Filmmakers

The Rich Have Their Own Photographers

Feb 9, 7:30 pm

Join film director and WES member **Ezra Bookstein** for this deeply inspirational film about the life and artwork of America's premier social documentary photographer. In 1957, The Buffalo News declared Milton Rogovin "The Top Red in Buffalo" which effectively silenced his political voice as society shunned him and his friends disappeared. In reality, Rogovin was an optometrist promoting workers' rights in the local unions and helping to register Black voters. But refusing to be intimidated or be silenced, he found a new political voice - a camera. Through his prints, Rogovin was able to depict the extreme inequalities that exist and convey that message through beautiful works of art. Though his entire collection is housed by both the Library of Congress and the Center for Creative Photography, his prints are his protests - and his only concern was the fight for social justice.

Assault in the Ring

Feb 23, 7:30 pm

Join writer, director, producer and WES member **Eric Drath** for this Emmy Award winning documentary about a 1983 boxing match that ended in an upset decision victory for the challenger, but it was quickly discovered that his gloves had been tampered with. His opponent, previously undefeated and already enjoying a very promising career, never would fight again — killing himself eight months later. The investigation of the fight and trial led many to declare this fight the darkest day in the history of boxing. The film picks up the story 25 years later with the victor living in the basement of a gym in the Bronx.

AUTHOR'S NIGHTS

JERUSALEM MAIDEN

Jan 12, 7:30 pm

Talia Carner discusses her new novel (HarperCollins, June 2011), the story of young ultra-Orthodox woman at the end of the Ottoman Empire's rule of the Holy Land who must choose between her faith and her passion for art.



PIRKE AVOT: Timeless Wisdom for Modern Life

Jan 26, 7:30 pm

William Berkson provides a fresh, insightful, and exciting approach to this central and compelling classical Jewish ethical text... Most significantly, Berkson brings the ideas found in Avot into conversation with a wide variety of philosophical, psychological, and religious perspectives so that the reader can drink deeply from the wellsprings of wisdom that Avot offers for contemporary persons - Jews and non-Jews alike. This book is a most important contribution to Jewish conversation in our time!" Rabbi David Ellenson, President, Hebrew Union College.

PRECIOUS OBJECTS

Mar 1, 7:30 pm



Alicia Oltuski blends literary reportage with family narrative with to reveal the secrets of the diamond industry. She traces her family's diamond paved move from Communist Siberia to a DP Camp in post World War II Germany to NY's diamond district, exploring the connection between Jews and the industry. Entertaining and illuminating, *Precious Objects* offers an insider's look at the history, business, and society behind this secluded world.