

**Just In!**

**“What Matters: End of Life Planning”**

March 15, 7:00 pm & May 24, 6:00 pm

Topics: TBA



*The link to these events on Zoom will be provided in the weekly Daf preceding the event.*



**West End Synagogue**

**Adult Education**

**2020-2021**

*5781*



A Reconstructionist Congregation  
100 Amsterdam Avenue at 69th Street  
(212) 0579-0777  
www.westendsynagogue.org

**“Wise Aging, Living with Joy, Resilience and Spirit,”** Led by Sandy Warshaw.

Tuesdays, 3:00 – 4:30 pm

An eight-week course to explore the power to prepare to become stronger, more resilient and navigate the challenges of aging. WES members only.

**“Spiritual Autobiography,”** Judith Friedman,  
Every other Monday beginning Oct 5, 2020.  
3:00 pm.

Participants will write and share short pieces on childhood memories, spiritual awakenings, personal understandings of the Torah stories and more. WES members only.

**“Chug Ivri,”** 2:00 – 3:00 pm, Led by David Goldfarb. Last Shabbat of each month.

A chance to obtain fluency in Hebrew by reading and discussing stories, poetry and articles on current affairs.

**“Shabbat Study Minyan,”** 12:00 – 1:30 pm,  
Led by Michael Graff.

Close study of Jewish literature. Reading in advance of each session required.

**Middah on Mondays Study Group**

Monthly, third Monday of each month

7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Led by Susan Schorr

All WES members are invited to join our study of West End’s Middah (ethical value/character trait) of the month. Discussions are shaped using texts from both our tradition and from modern authors, pop culture and more.

**Torah on Tuesdays**

7:30 pm to 9:30 pm

2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month

Led by Susan Schorr

All are welcome to join our ongoing study of the Torah. We read the text (in English) and consider it from the perspectives of literature, sacred text, religious mythology, family lore, psychology, drama, history, pop culture and more. Drop in and join the conversation, or just listen and enjoy. No prior background or knowledge required.

**October 29, 2020**

**Rabbi/Professor Reuven Firestone,** “The Concept of Holy War in Judaism,” 7:30 pm  
Firestone, Professor in Medieval Judaism and Islam at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles says that we know about the Crusades and Jihad, the “Holy Wars” of our monotheist neighbors. “But Jews don’t do those kind of things!” In fact, he contends, Jews have done those kinds of things, and some still do. The Israelites were a militant community for centuries. But victories grew few and war eventually became a horrific disaster for the Jewish people. Judaism changed as a result from a militant to a quietist religion. After surviving for nearly two millennia, the Jewish people were nearly destroyed in our own lifetimes. Judaism is changing again as a result to become a more militarily assertive religion. How and why these changes are occurring will be Firestone’s focus.

**November 2, 2020**

**Mel Scult,** “The Journals of Mordecai Kaplan, Volume 3,” 6:00 pm

Scult, is the leading Kaplan scholar. In his talk he explores Kaplan’s compelling diary thoughts on the war, on Nazism, on democracy, on God and Judaism and the ethical life.

**November 10 • Nov. 24 •**

**December 1 • December 8, 2020.**

**Carole Kessner**, “Jews and Blacks in Literary Conversation,” 6:30 pm

Using a combination of fiction, poems, essays, letters, this mini-course will trace the “ups and downs” of that collaboration beginning with the founding in 1909 of the NAACP, through the sixties, and the current Black Lives Matter movement.

**November 23, 2020**

**Sam Norich**, “The Jewish Press, A Century Ago and Today.” 7:30 pm

Norich, President of the Forward for nineteen years, contends that even as the lives of American Jews have been transformed in the last hundred years, the Jewish press continues as a key instrument of community. But the American Jewish press has largely failed to adapt to the digital revolution and now faces fiscal and generational challenges. What can be done to save it, and what is the role of journalism that other institutions are incapable of playing?

**November 30, 2020 • Dec. 14, 2020 •**

**December 28, 2020 • Jan 11, 2021**

**Irwin Wall**, “The Jews in Politics,” 7:30 pm

In his four sessions he will discuss:

“The Jews and International Socialism.”

“Two Jewish Statesmen: Leon Blum and Pierre Mendes France.”

“FDR and the Jews.”

“Two Jewish Women Socialists: Emma Goldman and Rosa Luxemburg.”

**December 7, 2020 • December 14, 2020 •**

**December 21, 2020 • December 18, 2020**

**January 4, 2021.**

**Marcia Weller**, “Jewish Women’s Spirituality,” 1:00 pm

Weller, will facilitate a study group to read and discuss, *Four Centuries of Jewish Women’s Spirituality*, a source book. ed. Ellen M. Umansky, and Diane Ashton. (2007). The group hopes to find additional spiritual sustenance to sustain them in these difficult times.

**January 4 • January 25 •**

**February 1, 2021**

**Susan Schorr**, “Fun With Talmud,” 7:30 pm

We know that the Talmud combines elements of the U.S. Federal Register with Aesop’s Fables, the Federalist Papers with Poor Richard’s Almanack. It is the next-generation (after the Torah) source material for the Jewish legal code and articulates the principles for Jewish religious life without a temple. It also records the Jewish conversation for centuries. In this 3-session mini-course, we will get a brief taste of the varieties of Talmudic dialogue and enjoy the meanderings of their arguments and discussions.

**January 27 • February 17, 2021**

**Lorna Ronald**, “Technology and Jewish Values,” 7:30 pm

Ronald will introduce you to theoretical frameworks about how values are embedded in technology design and use. The mini-course will help you to apply these frameworks to your own interactions with technology in daily life. The goal is to help people better align technology to their own values.

**February 8, 2021**

**Brian Cohen**, “Jewish Students at Columbia,” 7:30 pm

Cohen, Director of Hillel at Columbia, will discuss the challenges facing Jewish students on the Columbia University campus.

**February 16, 2021**

**Dan Van Doren**, “Jewish Short Stories,” 7:30 pm

A celebration of Jewish short stories on Jewish themes. WES congregants will be chosen to read aloud two to three short, short stories by authors such as Grace Paley, Etgar Keret, Jonathan Rosen, and others, with time to discuss the stories afterward.

**March 1 • March 8, 2021**

**Art Spar**, “Mordecai Kaplan and God: Reconstructing the God of Pirke Avot,” 7:30 pm

In the first session, this mini-course will explore Kaplan’s theology using excerpts from Mel Scult’s, “The Radical American Judaism of Mordecai M. Kaplan.” The second session will look at our early Jewish text, Pirke Avot, discussing ways to reconstruct the God of our early Rabbis.

**March 4, 2021**

**Barry Seldes**, Author of *Leonard Bernstein: The Political Life of an American Musician* will speak on “The Jewishness of Leonard Bernstein,” 7:30 pm

Bernstein was very much aware of his Jewish ethnic and cultural heritage. How he gave expression to his Jewishness through his compositions for concert hall, Broadway stage, and orchestral conducting will be our focus.

**March 17, 2021**

**Mel Scult**, “Henrietta Szold,” 7:30 pm

Henrietta Szold is well known as the founder of Hadassah and as a key person in rescuing children from Germany in the 1930s. But what attracts Scult to her is her stature as a person. She was brilliant and heroic. In a sense her accomplishments have overshadowed her as a human being.

**April 5 • April 12 • April 26 • May 3, 2021**

**Mel Scult**, “The Book of Job and the Masque of Reason,” 7:30 pm

Robert Frost’s “The Masque of Reason,” is a comedy with a serious subject. It purports to be the 43rd chapter of the Book of Job which, of course, has only 42 chapters. It presents Job and Mrs. Job and God in quest of answers to the fundamental problem of evil and suffering. This mini-course will have 4 sessions: three dealing with the Book of Job itself and the fourth with Frost’s play. (Please bring a copy of the full Bible to the first class.)

**May 13, 2021**

**Robert Pollack**: “Jewish Ancestry is not Jewish Identity,” 7:30 pm

What does it take to be a Jew and who decides that? We will explore the range of answers to those questions and consider in particular the differences between Jewish identity and Jewish ancestry, which some have come to think of as a predestined matter of what is in our DNA.

**June 7, 2021**

**Henry Saltzman**, “Oy, Oy, My Teacher is a Goy,” 7:30 pm

Reading from his new book and narration of his story as a New York City teacher in a Yeshiva.

**June 19 and June 26, 2021**

**Connie Goldfarb**, “Art as Midrash,” after Kiddush