Rabbinic Texts and Theology TRVN16

Course Content

The focus of the course is a study of a selection of texts from classical rabbinic literature from the Mishnah to the Babylonian Talmud. The political, cultural and linguistic contexts in which they developed are discussed, as well as their origin, content and characteristics. A major part of the course is devoted to close readings of a selection of rabbinic texts in Hebrew with an English translation. To enable the inclusion of a larger number of texts in order to display the various genres included in rabbinic literature, some texts will be read only in translation. In addition to acquiring and developing skills in Mishnaic Hebrew, students will gain insight into rabbinic thought and culture as they are reflected in the texts. The course devotes special attention to rabbinic literature as a source of knowledge of rabbinic culture and the conditions of Jewish life in antiquity and late antiquity, as well as its significance for later Jewish tradition.

Intended learning outcomes

* Demonstrate knowledge of the most important rabbinic texts and their respective cultural context, genre and characteristics
* Provide a general account of insights into rabbinic thought and culture gained through a reading of a selection of rabbinic texts.
* Demonstrate basic skills in working with Mishnaic Hebrew
* Communicate in writing the ability to discuss a given rabbinic text in translation, and where appropriate the interpretive strategies of the text
* Critically assess rabbinic texts as sources for historical reconstruction of Jewish life in Israel and Babylonia 70–600 CE

Instructor and institution:

Karin Hedner Zetterholm (Karin.Zetterholm@ctr.lu.se), Lund University

Time period

E-learning: weeks 35–50

Compact seminar in Lund, November 8–9, 2023

Examination: Paper to be submitted by December 17 (posted on Dec. 11)

Form of Teaching

Instruction is provided via the internet and through a compact seminar (1,5 days in Lund). Participation in the course forum on the internet (weekly assignments) is a requirement, as well as the submission of an exam paper.A minimum of 6 out of a total of 8 assignments must be submitted. Please note that the weekly assignments have deadlines.Students may be asked to respond to other students’ assignments as well as submitting their own.

Examination

The examination is a paper of between eight and ten pages on a topic chosen by the instructor. A page is defined as having 2400 characters, including spaces. The student is given four days to write the paper. As part of the requirements for the course the student is required to submit 8 weekly assignments. To qualify for the exam the student must have completed 6 out of the total of 8 assignments. Any missing assignments must be handed in prior to the exam date (for due dates, see the syllabus).

Re-Exam

There will be an opportunity to do a re-exam February 18 (exam posted on February 12). The student must register for the re-exam by sending an email to Karin Zetterholm no later than February 5, 2024.