

PHL 131A, Jewish Business Ethics  
Monday/Wednesday/Thursday  
Time: 16:00 – 16:50

### **AJU Mission Statement**

**Learning and Scholarship:** We believe in the principle of Torah – learning as an intellectual and inspirational endeavor – that embraces both academic scholarship and the efforts of all Jews to explore their shared heritage through the formal and informal study of Judaism and the other great civilizations of the world.

**Culture:** We acknowledge that Judaism is a flourishing civilization with a culture that is fundamental to modern Jewish identity. We strive to advance that culture by encouraging artistic endeavor in all of its many forms.

**Ethics:** We recognize that ethics is the language of Judaism and its most important link to the world at large.

**Leadership:** We understand that the future of Jewish life depends on the careful preparation of dedicated and impassioned individuals who are called to leadership.

**Peoplehood:** We are a pluralistic institution that embraces diversity within Judaism and values the contributions of all groups to the growth of Jewish Civilization.

### **Students with Disabilities**

American Jewish University is committed to assisting our students with documented disabilities to have a successful career at AJU. Contact the Office of Student Affairs to request accommodations and begin the documentation process. (See Enhancing Accessibility and/or AJU website for complete policy.)

### **Standards of Academic Integrity**

The Honor Code of American Jewish University was written by a committee of undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and administrators. Under the Honor Code, students have a two-fold obligation: individually, they must not violate the code, and as a community, they are responsible to see that suspected violations are reported. Academic Dishonesty includes, but is not limited, to the following definitions:

**A. Examination Behavior:** Unless expressly permitted by the instructor, the use of external assistance during an exam shall be considered academically dishonest. Inappropriate exam behavior includes but is not limited to: (1) communicating with anyone in any way during an exam, (2) copying material from another student's exam, (3) allowing a student to copy from one's exam, (4) using unauthorized notes, calculators, or other sources of unauthorized assistance.

**B. Fabrication:** Any intentional falsification, invention of data, or citation in an academic exercise will be considered to be academic dishonesty. Fabrication involves but is not limited to: (1) inventing or altering data for a laboratory experiment or field project, (2) padding a bibliography of a term paper or research paper with

sources one did not utilize, (3) resubmitting returned and corrected academic work under the pretense of grader evaluation error when, in fact, the work has been altered from its original form.

**C. Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the appropriation and subsequent passing off of another's ideas or words as one's own. If the words or ideas of another are used, acknowledgement of the original source must be made through recognized referencing practices. Use of another's ideas or words must be properly acknowledged as follows:

- (1) Direct Quotation: Any use of direct quotation must be acknowledged by footnote citation and by either quotation marks or proper indentation and spacing.
- (2) Paraphrase: If another's ideas are borrowed in whole or in part and are merely recast in the student's own words, proper acknowledgement must, nonetheless, be made. A footnote or proper internal citation must follow the paraphrased material.

**D. Other Types of Academic Dishonesty:** Other forms of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Submitting a paper written by or obtained from another person.
- (2) Using a paper or essay in more than one class without the instructors' expressed permission.
- (3) Obtaining a copy of an examination in advance without the knowledge and consent of the instructor.
- (4) Altering academic records outside of official institutional procedures.
- (5) Using another person to complete academic assignments such as homework, take-home exams or using another person posing as oneself to take classroom examinations.

**Course Description:**

*Is it possible to be successful in business while remaining within the laws of Jewish ethics? Do ancient Jewish texts have any relevance in business world of 2010? Through analysis of original Jewish sources, along with other more modern media, this course aims to begin to tackle these questions and many more. The course will involve much discussion and debate in which students should come to each class ready to participate.*

**Course Goals:**

- To provide students with a broad understanding of what original Jewish texts say about how people should conduct themselves in business.
- To demonstrate how ancient Jewish concepts can be related and made relevant to modern issues of business ethics.
- To develop the student's critical thinking skills.
- To develop the student's listening and debating skills.

**Course Requirements:**

Completion of all reading assignments, attendance, punctuality, and participation in class.

**Required Reading and Other Assignments:**

Course book selections (see below under course schedule)

## **Assessment/Grading**

1. Midterm: Students will be required to write a research paper analyzing a modern business situation in relation to Jewish business ethics. The paper should be around 1,000 words long and demonstrate an ability to relate ancient Jewish principles to modern life. (30%)
2. Final exam: An in-class final exam will ask students to answer a number of short essay questions that will test their broad knowledge of all texts covered over the semester and their ability to apply ancient concepts to modern situations. (40%)
3. Ongoing reading assignments and quizzes. (10%)
4. Attendance, punctuality, and classroom participation. (20%)

**Note – Attendance is mandatory for all class sessions. Should a student miss 20% or more of class sessions, he/she will be automatically withdrawn from the course and receive a W. To get an excused absence one must be ill and bring a doctor's note.**

## **Course Schedule**

### **1. Introduction: Law or ethics? Are good ethics a duty or a suggestion? Part 1**

- Peter Singer; The life you can save: How to end world poverty.

### **2. Introduction: Law or ethics? Are good ethics a duty or a suggestion? Part 2**

- Traditional Jewish sources on Tzedaka

### **3. 'Thou shalt not steal' –Was God talking about downloads?**

- Asher Meir; Ethics and Intellectual property rights

### **4. Buying ethically – where have my sneakers come from? The ethics of Globalization.**

- Ira Rifkin; Jews and Globalisation

### **5. The Perfect Job for a nice Jewish boy?**

- . Hershey, H. Freidman; Ideal Occupations – The Talmudic Perspective

### **6. Jewish Perspectives on Trade Justice**

- Traditional sources on Trade Justice

### **7. Lies and deception, Advertising and Spin, Part 1**

- Hershey Friedman; The Prohibition against Deception in Today's World

### **8. Lies and deception, Advertising and Spin, Part 2**

- Jeremy Benstein; Advertising and the Tenth Commandment

## **9. Jewish Hotel Ethics**

- Shmuly Yanklowitz, Jewish Hotel Ethics

## **10. Workers' Rights**

- Rabbi Uzziel

## **11. Lending money the Jewish way, Part 1**

- Joseph Stern; Ribis: A Halachic Anthology

## **12. Lending money the Jewish way, Part 2**

- Torah.org; The Halachot of Lending

## **13. Jewish ethics and the environment**

- Saul Berman; Jewish Environmental Values: The Dynamic Tension Between Nature and Human Needs
- American Jewish World Service; Jewish Roots in Environmental Justice

## **14. Conclusion**

## **15. Final**

## **Bibliography**

Dosick, W; The Business Bible; (New York, Morrow, 1993)

Tamari, M; With All Your Possessions: Jewish Ethics and Economic Life; (New York, The Free Press; 1987)

Tamari, M; In the Market Place; (New York, Feldheim Publishers; 1991)

Levine, A; Economics and Jewish Law: Halakhic Perspectives; (New York, Ktav Publishing; 1987)

### **Useful Websites**

On One Foot (American Jewish World Service) - <http://www.on1foot.org/>

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life - <http://www.coejl.org>

Darchei Noam - [http://www.darchenoam.org/ethics/business/bus\\_home.htm](http://www.darchenoam.org/ethics/business/bus_home.htm)