

Text: Any of several texts may be used for this class. See the Readings page on the class website <http://jewishexperienceonline.com/readings> for more information. Simply put, you need to read a history of the Jewish people, but the choice is broad depending on your interests and tastes. If you would like help in choosing a book, talk with me.

Also, there are not specific readings for each class. Some people find it easier to read “ahead” and some prefer to hear a lecture first. Of necessity, in class we will focus mostly on those aspects of Jewish history that shape the origins of our holy texts.

1/11 **Welcome!** Getting to know you. Also a fresh look at Shabbat.

1/18 **Torah** – What Torah is, and is not. What does Tanakh mean? Where did the Jewish Bible come from? We will also talk a little about Midrash, the stories that fill in the “gaps” in the Biblical text.

1/25 **Biblical History** – Dr. Jehon Grist will join us for an evening of Biblical History. He is an entertaining lecturer and deeply knowledgeable on the subject. He will cover everything from the earliest times in Israel to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

2/1 **Medieval & Early Modern History I** – After the destruction of the Second Temple, the Jewish People scattered throughout the world, with only a remnant left in Israel. We will look at the turning points in Jewish history that gave rise to the Mishnah, the Gemara, the Talmud, the Legal Codes, and the Zohar.

2/8 **Medieval & Early Modern History II** – a continuation of last week’s study.

2/15 **Lost & Found** – We will explore the development of Jewish law & tradition by doing a real-life exercise based in the texts.

2/22 **Anti-Semitism and Shoah** – These are not pleasant topics, but they are inescapable when we are trying to understand the history of the Jewish people.

2/29 **Judaism in America** – How and why is America different for the Jews? We’ll also take a quick look at the development of Jewish community here in Northern California. We will finish, as always, with a vote on our Tzedakah Box Fund.