

# **International Institute for Secular Humanistic Judaism**

## **Life Cycle Ceremonies – JC 410 (3 credits), June 2020**

Faculty: Rabbi Adam Chalom, PhD & Rabbi Miriam S. Jerris, PhD

### **Class Sessions**

June 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 24 & 25 – 10 :00 am - Noon, & 1 :00 pm - 4 pm **CDT** – Rabbi Jerris will teach 10 - Noon and Rabbi Chalom 1-4, except for last day Rabbi Jerris will teach all day.

### **Course Description**

A course designed to explore the history and development of Jewish celebrations of life cycle events, from birth to death, as well as the practical skills of creating original Secular Humanistic Jewish ceremonies. This is not a course on counseling or counseling issues in the Life Cycle. Those topics are covered in PS 430. Ability to read in Hebrew is helpful.

### **Requirements to Complete the Course**

1. Class attendance at all sessions.
2. Students shall complete and send a one to two-page self-evaluation to course faculty no later than August 31, 2020. The self-evaluation includes understanding of the readings, your assessment of your class presentation and your sense of preparedness to be a capable life cycle ceremonialist.
3. Students shall complete an evaluation form for the course to be returned to Joshua Berg at [operations@iishj.org](mailto:operations@iishj.org), no later than August 31, 2020.
4. Students shall: A) complete a final paper (15-20 pages) based on a life-cycle of your choice, confirmed with faculty before you begin work. It shall include a history of the life cycle, textual references (*Bible, Mishna/Talmud, Mishne Torah* and *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*), ceremony elements of a traditional/rabbinic ceremony, changes in ceremony in reform Judaism, a discussion of ceremony elements of the traditional ceremony that can be used in Secular Humanistic Judaism and an original ceremony. Please include the ceremonial preparation materials you used in a complete bibliography. OR B) Prepare a practical manual for officiants on Birth, Bar/Bat Mitzvah or Marriage, or Death. Include a history of the life-cycle in Judaism, practical as well as ceremonial aspects, and how the life-cycle is expressed in Secular Humanistic Judaism. The paper will be double spaced, 12 point type with one inch margins. Papers/projects are due no later than April 30, 2020.

### **Required Texts**

*Celebrating Life's Passages, Humanistic Judaism*, Vol. XXVII, Number I-II, Winter/Spring 1999

(Available from the Society for Humanistic Judaism, [www.shj.org](http://www.shj.org))

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Society for Humanistic Judaism, selections. New members of Society for Humanistic Judaism receive this "guide." (Available from Society for Humanistic Judaism).

Marcus, I. *The Jewish Life Cycle: Rites of Passage from Biblical to Modern Times*, University of Washington Press. 2004.

Wine, Sherwin. *Judaism Beyond God*. Society for Humanistic Judaism, 1985, pp. 179-189, 221-234.

(Available at the Society for Humanistic Judaism and on Amazon. Electronic version available)

## Required Readings

- Required online readings are also listed here. There are additional required readings in the course pack.
- Davis, A. *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*. Metsudah Publications, 1996. (selections)
- Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Society for Humanistic Judaism. Read selections on Adult Celebrations, Celebrations, Birth Celebrations, Brit Mila, Bar/Bat Mitsva and Confirmation, Marriage, Marriage Celebrations, Intermarriage, Sexual Orientation, Divorce, Death, Funeral, Memorial Services, Mourning Practices, Adoption (Conversion).
- Lowenfeld, J. (2011, August 2). Little-known non-cutting ritual appeals to some who oppose circumcision. *JewishJournal.com*, Retrieved May 15, 2020 from <https://jewishjournal.com/community/94746/>
- Maimonides, M. *Mishneh Torah*, “Ishut,” *Sefer Nashim*.  
[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/952880/jewish/Chapter-Six.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/952880/jewish/Chapter-Six.htm)
- Maimonides, M. *Mishneh Torah*, “Gittin,” *Hilchot Gerushin*.  
[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/957706/jewish/Chapter-One.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/957706/jewish/Chapter-One.htm)
- Mishnah Online <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/index.htm>
- Scherman, N, tr. *The Complete Art Scroll Siddur*, Mesorah Publications, 1984. (Ashkenaz or Sefard)  
Page numbers will be Ashkenaz first and then Sefard. (selections)
- Seid, Judith. *God-Optional Judaism*. Citadel Press, 2002. pp. 143-192
- Wine, Sherwin. *Celebration: A Ceremonial and Philosophic Guide for Humanists and Humanistic Jews*. Prometheus Books, 1988, pp.313-390. (print may not be available, Kindle edition available)

## SCHEDULE

### Session 1 June 15, Celebrating The Jewish Life Cycle, 10:00 am-Noon

Role of Rabbi in Life Cycle Ceremonies

Wine, *Judaism Beyond God*, (pp. 179-180).

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism* – Celebrations

Rowens, M. “The Celebrations of Life.” *Celebrating Life’s Passages, Humanistic Judaism*, pp.2-4

### Session 2, June 15 , Birth and Celebrating New Life 1:00 pm–4:00 pm

#### B’rit Mila (Circumcision)

History and Overview

Marcus (pp. 30-81)

Wine, *Judaism Beyond God*, pp. 180-182.

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Birth Celebrations, Brit Mila

Text on B’rit Mila

Genesis 17:9-27, 21:1-8, 29:31-35

Exodus 4:24-26

Mishnah Shabbat 19:5 <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm041.htm>

Laws and Jewish Practice

The Laws of Circumcision, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, Chapter 163, pp.1077-1081

Traditional/Rabbinic Bris [circumcision] Ceremony, *Art Scroll Siddur*, pp. 208-215 or pp.224-231.

## **Pidyon Ha Ben**

### History and Overview

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Birth Celebrations

### Text on Pidyon Ha Ben

Genesis 22; Exodus 13:1-3, 13:15; Numbers 18:15-17; I Samuel 1:11.

### Laws and Jewish Practice

The Redemption of the Firstborn, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, Chapter 164, pp.1081-1085.

Pidyon HaBen Ceremony, *Art Scroll Siddur*, pp. 218-221 or pp.234-237

## **Session 3, June 16 -- Secular Humanistic Jewish Approach to Birth 10 - Noon**

### Philosophy

Statement of the Leadership Conference of Secular and Humanistic Jews on Circumcision

<https://iishj.org/lcshj/lcshj-resolutions/>

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 5-8.

### Ceremony Elements

#### Issues

Wine, S. "Circumcision." (course pack)

Lowenfeld, J. (URL in required readings)

#### Family Preparation

Preparing the Rabbi (all in course pack)

Birth Celebration Order of Service Sample

Goldfinger, E. *Naming Certificate Application*

Goldfinger, E. *Candle Values*

#### Certificates

Jerris, M. *Naming Certificate Cade D'Haem*

*Oraynu Naming Certificate*

#### Ceremonies

*God-Optional Judaism*, pp.143-151,

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp.8-15, 19-21

Ceremonial course pack

## **Session 4, June 16 - Coming of Age, Bar/Bat (B) Mitzvah, Growing Up 1-4**

### History and Overview

Marcus (pp. 82-123)

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Bar/Bat Mitsva and Confirmation.

Barr, R., "Bar and Bat Mitzvah Origins." (Course pack, p. )

Wine, S. *Judaism Beyond God*, pp. 182-186.

### Text on Coming of Age

Genesis 17:23-26

Mishnah, Pirke Avot 5:21, Mishnah Niddah 5:6, Ketubot 50a (Course pack, p.

### Laws and Jewish Practice

*Art Scroll Siddur*, Blessings Before and After Reading of Torah, pp.440-441 or 480-481.

Traditional/Rabbinic Bar Mitzvah Blessing, pp. 444-445 or 484-485,

Blessings Before and After Reading of Haftarah, pp. 446-447 or pp.484-487

## **Session 5, June 17, Secular Humanistic Jewish Approach to Coming of Age, 10-Noon**

Philosophy and Origina

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp.25-29.

Barr, R. (Course pack, pp.)

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Kibbutz Style (Course pack, pp.)

The Programs (in course pack unless otherwise noted)

SHJ Cultural B Mitzvah Program

Secular Jewish Circle Mitzvah Program

Ceremony Elements

Issues

Family Preparation

Preparing the Rabbi (all in course pack)

Oraynu Mitzvah Policies and Guidelines

Oraynu Application for Mitzvah

Oraynu Host Agreement

Goldfinger, E., *Mitzvah Candidate Interview*

Goldfinger, E., *Mitzvah Candidate Agreement*

Goldfinger, E., *Mitzvah Project List*

Goldfinger, E., *Mitzvah Ceremony Content*

Society for Humanistic Judaism Certificate

Chalom, A, Role Models

(<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i1gQz6nqatGhHfNIJTYFF9pTUQFkJFsr/view?usp=sharing>)

Ceremonies

*Celebration* pp.330-354

*God-Optional Judaism*, pp 152-164

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp.31-38

Ceremonial course pack

## **Session 6, June 17, Weddings and Marriage, 1-4**

History and Overview

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Marriage, Marriage Celebrations

Wine, *Judaism Beyond God*, pp. 187-190.

Text on Marriage

Genesis 1:26-29; Genesis 2:18-25; Genesis 24:1-8, 50-59, 63-67; Genesis 29:10-30; Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Mishnah Ta'anit 4:8 (Course pack)

Laws and Jewish Practice

*Mishne Torah*, "Ishut," Chapter 6:1-7.

*Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*

Pre-Nuptial Laws, Chapter 157, pp.1049-1052.

The Fast of the Bridegroom and the Bride, Chapter 146, pp.-999-1001

The Nuptial Ceremony, Chapter 147, pp.1001-1003

The Privacy Following the Marriage Ceremony, Chapter 148, pp. 1003-1005.

The Laws of Birkas Hamazon for Wedding and the Mitzvah to Gladden the Bride and Groom, Chapter 149, pp.1005-1009.

Ketubah Texts: <https://mpartworks.com/ketubah-text.htm>

*Art Scroll Siddur*, The Marriage Service, pp. 202-205 or pp. 218-221,  
Traditional Seven Blessings, pp. 206-207 or pp. 222-223

Herman, J. 12 Rituals you may see at a Jewish Wedding, [reformjudaism.org](http://reformjudaism.org) (course pack)

### **Session 7, June 22, Secular Humanistic Jewish Approach to Marriage 10-Noon**

#### Philosophy

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 39-45

Ceremony Elements

Hartman, H. (course pack)

Sukenik, M (course pack)

#### Issues

Preparing the Rabbi (all in course pack)

Levy, K. *Wedding Custom Reply*

Chalom, A. *Wedding Information Sheet and Contract*

Chalom, A. *Wedding Information Booklet*

Goldfinger, E. *Wedding Set Up*

Goldfinger, E. *Sample Processional*

Secular Humanistic Ketubah Texts

#### Family Preparation

#### Ceremonies

*Celebration*, pp. 365-376

*God-Optional Judaism*, pp. 165-179,

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 51-55

Ceremonial course pack

### **Session 8, June 22, Intermarriage & Same Sex Issues, 1-4 pm**

#### Text on Intermarriage

Genesis 27:46-28:9; Deuteronomy 7:1-6; Ezra 9:1-10:17; Ruth 1-4

#### Text on Homosexuality

Leviticus 18:22 and 20:13

#### Laws and Jewish Practice

#### Homosexuality

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/homo.html>

Amsel, N., *Homosexuality in Orthodox Judaism*,

[http://www.lookstein.org/resources/homosexuality\\_amsel.pdf](http://www.lookstein.org/resources/homosexuality_amsel.pdf)

#### **Divorce**

#### History and Overview

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Divorce

#### Text on Divorce

Deuteronomy 24:1; Malachai, 2:14

## Laws and Jewish Practice

*Mishne Torah, Gittin*, <http://www.sacred-texts.com/jud/etm/etm134.htm>

Chapter 1:1-5,9-11,15,24. Chapter 2:1,12,16,17,20. Chapter 4:1. Chapter 6: 1,3-4. Chapter 8:1. Chapter 10:1-2,22. Chapter 11:1.

## **Session 9, June 23, Intermarriage & Same-Sex Marriages, 10-12**

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Intermarriage

Wine, *Judaism Beyond God*, pp. 221-229

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 56-66

Jerris, M. *Intermarriage Bibliography* (course pack)

Recent Surveys on Intermarriage: 2000 AJC Opinion Survey, 2000-1 NJPS (course pack)

Jerris, M. *Intermarriage: Threat or Opportunity* (course pack p. )

Schere, Daniel: five years later: building on pew <https://washingtonjewishweek.com/46743/five-years-later-building-on-pew/featured-left/>, downloaded 5/17/20

Golin, Paul, *The Jewish Week*, "Just How Big is Intermarriage? You Don't Really Know," 8/13/2014

<http://www.thejewishweek.com/editorial-opinion/opinion/just-how-big-intermarriage-you-dont-really-know>

LCSHJ Statement on Intermarriage

<https://iishj.org/lcshj/lcshj-resolutions/>

AHR Statement on Intermarriage and Co-officiation,

<http://www.humanisticrabbis.org/intermarriage/>

<http://www.humanisticrabbis.org/co-officiating-at-wedding-ceremonies/>

Jerris, M. *Intermarriage Ceremony Outline* (course pack)

Goldfinger, E. *Intermarriage Prenup Philosophy* (course pack)

## **Same-Gender Marriage**

AHR and LCSHJ Diverse Sexualities and Gender Identity Statements

<http://www.humanisticrabbis.org/sexualities-identities/>

Jerris, Miriam, *keshetonline*, "What's Different About Gay Weddings Ceremonies," June 2003.

Downloaded 5/17/20. <https://www.keshetonline.org/resources/whats-different-about-gay-wedding-ceremonies/>

## **Divorce**

Class Discussion

## **Session 10, June 23, Death, Mourning and Celebrating Life, 1-4**

History and Overview

Marcus, (pp. 193-248)

Wine, *Judaism Beyond God*, pp. 187-190.

*Guide to Humanistic Judaism*, Death, Funeral, Memorial Services, Mourning Practices.

## Text

Genesis 3:17-19; Genesis 37:34

I Samuel 28:7-15; II Samuel 1:12

Job 1:21

### Laws and Jewish Practice

Laws Pertaining to Death, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, Chapters 194-221, pp. 1180-1283.

*Art Scroll Siddur*, K'riah pp.796-797 or pp.844-845, El Male Rachamim, pp.814-815 or pp. 860-861, Kaddish After Burial, pp. 800-801 or pp.848-849

### **Session 11, June 24, Secular Humanistic Jewish Approach to Death and Celebration of Life (in course pack unless otherwise noted). 10-Noon**

#### Philosophy

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 80-97

LCSHJ Statement Aid in Dying

#### Ceremony Elements

Examples of Humanistic Kaddish and Alternatives

#### Issues

#### Family Preparation

#### Preparing the Rabbi

Jerris, M. *Humanistic Jewish View of Death and Mourning*

Jerris, M. *Steps from First Call to Eulogy Preparation*

Jerris, M. *Questions to Prepare Eulogy*

Goldfinger, E., *Funeral/Memorial Information*

#### Ceremonies

*Celebration*, pp.377-390

*God- Optional Judaism*, pp. 180-189

*Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 98-106

Ceremonial course pack

### **Session 12, June 24, Conversion/Adoption, 1-4**

#### Text

Deuteronomy 23:3-9, Isaiah 56, Ezra 9:1-10:17, Ruth 1

### Laws and Jewish Practice

Denominational Difference regarding Conversion (downloaded 5/17/29):

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/cross-denominational-differences-regarding-conversion/>

### **Session 13, June 25, Secular Humanistic Jewish Adoption/Conversion (all in course pack unless otherwise noted). 10-12**

#### Philosophy

IFSHJ Statement, *Who is a Jew?* <http://www.shj.org/humanistic-jewish-life/issues-and-resolutions/who-is/>

Schweitzer, P. *Presentation on Conversion*

LCSHJ Conversion Considerations

Association of Humanistic Rabbis Statement on Conversion:

<http://www.humanisticrabbis.org/conversion-adoption/>

Preparing the Rabbi (all in course pack)

Goldfinger, E. Private Conversion Guidelines

Oraynu Syllabus and Reading List for Conversion (Intro to Judaism)

Jerris, M. *Society for Humanistic Judaism Distance Program for Conversion/Adoption*

Goldfinger, E. *Conversion Covenant*  
Certificate Goldfinger

### **Session 14, June 25, Other Ceremonies, Loose Ends and Summary, 1-4 (Jerris)**

Ceremonies of Love and Connection

Engagement (ceremonial course pack)

Other Commitment Ceremonies

Ceremonies for Women

Loss (Miscarriage, still birth), *Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 107-109

Ceremony of the Wise Woman (retirement/aging) *Celebrating Life's Passages*, pp. 77-79

Others

Others

SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

### **Additional Resources**

- Amichai, Y. *Yehuda Amichai: A Life of Poetry 1948-1994*. HarperCollins, 1994.
- Arisian, Khoren. *The New Wedding: Creating your own marriage ceremony*. Vintage Books, 1973.
- Black, A. *Without Burnt Offerings, Ceremonies of Humanism*. Viking Press, 1974.
- Bloch, A. *The Biblical and Historical Background of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies*. Ktav, 1980, pp. 1-59, 252-253, 258-260. (Course pack, pp.3-35)
- Brener, A. *Mourning and Mitzvah*. Jewish Lights, 1993, 2001.
- Bullough, Vern & Bonnie. *A Humanist Divorce Ceremony*, Council for Secular Humanism, 1997.
- Carmi, T. *Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse*. Penguin, 1981.
- Chill, A. *The Minhagim*. Sepher-Hermon, 1979.
- Diamant, Anita. *The Jewish Wedding Now*. Simon & Schuster, 2007.
- Diamant, Anita. *The New Jewish Baby Book*. Jewish Lights, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2008.
- Fine, I. *Midlife, A Rite of Passage & The Wise Woman, A Celebration*. Woman's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education, 1988.
- Gaster, T. *Holy and the Profane*. William Morrow, 1980.
- Goldman, R. *Questioning Circumcision, A Jewish Perspective*. Vanguard, 1998.
- Handlarski, D. *The A-Z of Intermarriage*. New Jewish Press, 2020.
- Jerris, M. & Malcolm, S, eds., *Here is Our Light*. Ben Yehuda Press, 2019.
- Klein, I. *A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice*. Jewish Theological Seminary of America. 1979, 1992
- Kolatch, A. *The New Name Dictionary, Modern English and Hebrew Names*. Jonathan David, 1989, 1994.
- Lamont, Corliss. *A Humanist Funeral Service*. Prometheus Books, 1977.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *A Humanist Wedding Service*. Prometheus Books, 1972.
- Lerner, D. *Celebrating Interfaith Marriages*. Henry Holt, 1999.
- Levine, E.R., ed., *A Ceremonies Sampler, New Rites, Celebrations and Observances of Jewish Women*. Woman's Institute for Continuing Jewish Education, 1991.
- Long, Rev. Amy. *Weddings, Funerals and Rites of Passage*. Self-Published, 2002.
- Macomb, Susanna Stefanachi. *Joining Hands and Hearts: Interfaith, Intercultural Wedding Celebrations*. Fireside, 2003.
- Mintz, R. *Modern Hebrew Poetry*. University of California, 1966.

- Munro, E. *Wedding Readings* Viking, 1989.
- Petsonk, J. & Remsen, J. *The Intermarriage Handbook*. Arbor House. 1988.
- Sewell, M, ed., *Cries of the Spirit*. Beacon Press, 1991.
- Willson, Jane W. *Sharing the Future*, Non-religious wedding ceremonies, British Humanist Association, 1988. (Available on Amazon, newer edition on British Humanist Association web-site)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *New Arrivals: Guide to Nonreligious Naming Ceremonies*, Baby naming ceremonies and poetry, published by British Humanist Association, 1991. (Available on Amazon, newer edition on British Humanist Association web-site)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Funerals Without God*, published by BHA and Prometheus Books, 1995. (Available on Amazon)
- Wolfelt, Alan D. *Creating Meaningful Funeral Ceremonies: A Guide for Caregivers*. Companion Press, 1994. (Available from Amazon)
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart*. Companion Press, 2003. (Available from Amazon)
- York, Sarah. *Remembering Well: Rituals for Celebrating Life and Mourning Death*. Jossey-Bass, 2000.

#### WEBSITES

- Association of Humanistic Rabbis. <http://www.humanisticrabbis.org/>.
- 18doors.org (formerly interfaithfamily.com). A very complete website for interfaith couples and families, including life cycles, <https://18doors.org/>
- Leadership Conference of Secular and Humanistic Jews. <http://iishj.org/organizations.html>
- Ritual Well. Website for Jewish rituals, <http://www.ritualwell.org/anita>