



The Ultraorthodox in Israeli Society: Differentiation vs. Integration

(Spring 2019, 6 credits)

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Course description and objectives

The course is designed to introduce students to Israel's fastest-growing demographic group: The Ultra-Orthodox community ("Haredim"). Estimated at 12% of Israel's population, forecasts suggest an incremental growth of up to 25% of Israel's population by 2048. The Haredi community of today is transitioning from a small and marginal minority, to a substantial minority and thus, the future of the Jewish state is closely tied to the future of this sector.

The course will familiarize the student with the characteristics of the Haredi society and the various streams within this community. The right of minorities to protect their culture and the tension it creates in Israel as a liberal and democratic state will be examined.

Many Israeli Haredim, with government encouragement, are undergoing a process of "Israelization", characterized by integration without assimilation. The course will address various dimensions of Haredi integration into the society at large, which exists simultaneously with: isolationism, criticism, and strong verbal protest from both inside the community and the outside.

The course will include class discussions, presentations and movies relevant to the studied topics.

In addition, there will be a tour in Mea Shearim, the Haredi neighborhood in Jerusalem. The tour will give a glimpse into the rich cultural and religious identity of the Ultra-Orthodox Jews living in Mea Shearim.

The course also integrates a monitored and facilitated service learning opportunity, which includes weekly interpersonal meetings between students and young Haredi people, with the aim of getting to know each other and practicing speaking, reading and/or writing in English. This is a high need among the Haredi community who often do not have the chance to practice English with native speakers of English and do

not have the opportunity to speak English within their communities. These meetings will take place for approximately 2 hours each week. Some of the meetings may be held over Skype, however it is a requirement to have at least one frontal meeting a week of at least 60 minutes. Moreover, preparation for these meetings is required, taking 12-15 hours for the whole semester. Throughout the course, facilitation and support materials will be given for the preparation of these meetings and the service learning component of the course.

Grade Composition and Attendance:

70% Final task – written assignment that includes theoretical perspectives on current issues relevant to the Haredi population in Israel – 10-15 pages

15% active involvement in classes and discussions

15% evaluation dedication to the commitment in the service learning component

Class attendance is mandatory, and full participation in the service learning component and the excursion to Mea Sharim is a condition in order to fulfill the course requirements.

Course outline and reading assignments:

Week 1 (class1+2): Introduction.

- Presentation of the course content and objectives.
- General background on Haredi society: its place in the context of Israeli society and central characteristics.

Stern, Y. (2018). *Who Are The Ultra-Orthodox Jews Of Israel?* the Forward's curated contributor network. <https://forward.com/scribe/391516/who-are-the-ultra-orthodox-jews-of-israel/>

Cahaner, L., Malach, G., & Choshen, M. (2018). *Statistical Report on Ultra-Orthodox Society in Israel 2017*. Center for Religion, Nation and State. The Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research. Jerusalem.

https://www-myjewishlearning-com.cdn.ampproject.org/v/s/www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-jewish-denominations/amp/?amp_js_v=a2&_gsa=1&usqp=mq331AQCCAE%3D#referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=From%20%251%24s&share=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.myjewishlearning.com%2Farticle%2Fthe-jewish-denominations%2F

Week 2 (class 3+4): Heterogeneity across the many streams of Haredi society.

- Between Hasidim and Lithuanians (“Yeshivish”) - differences and similarities.
- Major groups in Haredi society: “Haedah HaHaredit”, Chabad, Gur Hasidism, “Baali T’shuva”, and “Sephardim”.

Brown, B. (2000). Orthodox Judaism. In J. Neusner & A. Avery-Peck, A (Ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Judaism* (pp. 311-333). Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley-Blackwell.

https://www.academia.edu/4920047/Orthodox_Judaism_in_The_Blackwell_Companion_to_Judaism.

Heilman, S. (1992). *Defenders of the Faith - Inside Ultra-Orthodox Jewry*. New York: Schocken Books.

Leon, N. (2016). The ethnic structuring of "Sephardim" in Haredi society in Israel. *Jewish Social Studies* 22(1),130-160.

Week 3 (class 5+6): The Haredi "ghetto" - walls and cracks.

- Separating from society at large: physical, social, and cultural insulations.
- Cracks in the "wall":
 - Online media and its implications for Haredi society.
 - Case study: the penetration of a researcher into the closed world of women from extreme Hasidic sects in Mea She'arim.

Deutsch, N. (2009). The Forbidden Fork, the Cell Phone Holocaust, and Other Haredi Encounters with Technology. *Contemporary Jewry*, 29(1), 3.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12397-008-9002-7>

Sivan, E. (1995). The Enclave Culture. In M.E. Marty, & R.S. Appleby (Eds.), *Fundamentalism Comprehended* (pp.11-68). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Week 4 (class 7+8): Body and sexuality in Haredi society.

- The discourse on body and sexuality.
- The ideal of modesty - meanings and practices.
- "Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain" - indeed?

Hurwitz, S. (2017). These orthodox designers are making frum fashionable. *Forward*, February 9, 2017. <http://forward.com/culture/art/361782/these-orthodox-designers-are-making-frum-fashionable/>

Zalcborg, S. (2007). Grace is Deceitful and Beauty is Vain': How Hasidic Women Cope with the Requirement of Shaving One's Head and Wearing a Black Kerchief. *Gender Issues* 24(3), 13-34.

Zalcborg, S. & Zalcborg, S. (2012). Body and Sexuality Constructs among Youth of the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Community. In A. Kam-Tuck Yip and P. Nynäs (eds), *Religion, Gender and Sexuality in Everyday Life* (pp. 124-140). Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

Week 5 (class 9+10): "Woman of Valor"? - Women in Haredi society.

- The exclusion of women.
- Traditional gender roles vs following a career.
- Women as agents of change in Haredi society.

Rivka Neria-Ben Shahr, R. (2009). The Learners' Society: Education and employment among ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) women. *Women in Israeli Judaism* 14, 1-15.

Zalcborg, S. (2011). Shouldering the burden of the redemption: How the "fashion" of wearing capes developed in ultra-Orthodox society. *Nashim: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies & Gender Issues*. 22, 32-55.

Zalcborg Block, S. (2016). Religious coercion and violence against women: The case of Beit Shemesh. In F. Banda and L. Fishbayn Joffe (eds.), *Women's Rights and Religious Law. Domestic and International Perspectives* (pp.152-175). New York, NY: Routledge.

Week 6 (class 11+12): The ideal Haredi male vs the average Haredi man.

- Balancing Torah as Raison D'être and responsibilities of life, family, country.

- From God's army to the people's army: On the issue of enlisting ultra-Orthodox men to the IDF.

Hakak, Y. (2016). *Haredi masculinities between the yeshiva, the army, work and politics* (chapter 2, pp. 39-56). Leiden-Boston: Brill Press.

Stadler, N. (2008). *Yeshiva fundamentalism: Piety, gender, and resistance in the ultra-Orthodox world*. New York: New York University Press.

Week 7 (class 13+14): The Haredi family in Israel.

- The importance of marriage and family in Haredi society.
- The matchmaking process and the factors it involves.
- "Matchmaking capital" - criteria for choosing a spouse.

Zalcborg Block, S. (2012). Gender differences in the involvement of young people in the matchmaking process in an extreme ultra-Orthodox community. *Journal of Jewish Identities*, 5(2), 27-50.

Zalcborg Block, S. (2013). "The Art of the Deal"; Preferences in spouse selection among parents in a Hasidic community. *Israel Studies Review* 28(2), 61-82.

Week 8 (class 15+16): Dealing with taboo topics.

- Coping with sexual abuse in Haredi community.
- Treating issues of mental health.

Greenberg, D., Kallian, M., & Witztum, E. (2010). Value-sensitive psychiatric rehabilitation. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 47(4), 629-46.

Lightman, E.R. & Shor, R. (2002). Askanim: Informal helpers and cultural brokers as a bridge to secular helpers for the ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities of Israel and Canada. *Families in Society*, 83(3), 315-325.

Zalcborg, S. (2017). The place of culture and religion in patterns of reporting sexual abuse of ultra-Orthodox male victims. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 26(5), 590-607.

Week 9 (class 17+18): House and Habitat, design and strategy

- Between practical and decorative.
- Between private space and public space.

Meeting this week will include the tour in Mea Shearim, in Jerusalem.

An unforgettable experience within a world that is just an hour driving, yet so far away.

The tour will give a glimpse into the rich cultural and religious identity of the Ultra-Orthodox Jews living in Mea Shearim. We will visit traditional neighborhoods, giving you the opportunity to remove the veil of a culture that most people have only observed from the outside.

On this tour we will go back in time and remove the veil of a world that conducts itself entirely differently from everything we know and understand.

Please dress very modestly: women in skirts and sleeves to the elbow, men with a skullcap and shorts below the knee.

Week 10 (class 19+20): Consumerism, leisure culture, and recreation

- Consumerism in Haredi society.
- "Traditional" leisure activity versus "new generation" recreational activities.
- "Game theory": Children's games in Haredi society.

- Mansfeld, Y., & Cahaner, L., (2012). Ultra-Orthodox Jewish tourism: A differential passage out of a socio-cultural bubble to the "open space". *Tourism Analysis*, 18 (1): 15-27.
- Sanua, M. (2007). The "be virtuous" board game "Monopoly" in contemporary Yiddish for Satmar Hasidic girls. In J. Wertheimer (Ed.), *Imagining the American Jewish community* (pp.136-175). Waltham, Massachusetts: Brandeis University Press.

Week 11 (class 21+22): Leaving Haredi society.

- Conflicts and challenges facing those who leave the Haredi world.
- Haredi society's struggle with deserters.

Zalcborg Block, S. 2015. Completely orthodox completely modern. *Eretz Acheret: About Israel and Judaism*, 77, 56-61.

http://jmgads.com/eretz_aheret/EretzAcheretUnityoftheJewishPeople.pdf

Hillel – the Right to Choose. <https://www.hillel.org.il/en/>