

Arguing Jewish Law

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
SPRING 2025-
JST 3930 – 3 CREDIT
REL 3938
PHI 3930

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Office Hours: Tues. from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Smathers Library (East) or by appt.]

MEETING TIME: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays at 9:35 AM until 10:25 AM

LOCATION: WALKER 220B

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:

The course is designed to improve the students' persuasive skills through reading the Talmud, other Rabbinic Texts and Aristotle's Rhetoric. The course covers the Rabbinic system of persuasion and Aristotle's theory of Logos.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

Read Talmudic texts

Read Aristotle's Rhetoric independently

Recognize forms of arguments and fallacies and apply enthymemes and examples

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS:

Aristotle, *The Rhetoric*. Here is a link to the translation that I use on Amazon: [The Rhetoric](#)
You may use any translation but it must be a printed bound copy, not online.

Please be sure to register for the Canvas course. You are responsible for checking your Canvas page and the e-mail connected to the page on a regular basis for any class announcements or adjustments.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS AND GRADING EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated based upon three in-class exams (30%), a final exam (30%), an essay (25%), worksheets (10%) and class attendance (5%).

CLASS ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Attendance in class is required. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Students are allowed 6 absences during the course of the semester before loss of credit. Students are responsible for ensuring that they are not recorded as absent if they come in late. A student who fails to meet the attendance requirement more than 12 times will be dropped from the course.

COMPLIANCE WITH UF HONOR CODE:

Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Honor Code located here, [UF Honor Code](#). The UF Honor Code also prohibits use of artificial intelligence, including, but not limited to, ChatGPT and Harvey, to assist in completing quizzes, exams, papers, or other assessments unless expressly authorized by the professor to do so.

INFORMATION ON GRADING POLICIES:

The following chart describes the specific letter grade/grade point equivalent in place:

A 94-100	C 74-77
A- 90-93	C- 70-73
B+ 88-89	D+ 68-69
B 84-87	D 64-67
B- 80-83	D- 60-63
C+ 78-79	E below 60

Exams and the final exam are subject to a class curve.

Grading

- A. Midterm exams Feb. 5th (5%), Feb. 24th (10%), Apr. 2nd (15%)**
- B. Final exam May 2nd at 10:00 AM (30%)**
- C. Essay (25%) due March 28th**
- D. Class Participation (5%) Students are expected to prepare for class and answer questions during class. Attendance taken.
- E. worksheets (10%) due on exam days

OBSERVANCE OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:

UF Law respects students' observance of religious holidays. Students, upon prior notification to their instructors, shall be excused from class or other scheduled academic activity to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence. Students shall not be penalized due to absence from class or other scheduled academic activity because of religious observances.

EXAM DELAYS AND ACCOMMODATIONS:

Students are expected to take exams as scheduled in class. In the event that a student will have an exam schedule conflict the student must arrange at least five days prior to the exam an alternate exam date with the instructor. In the event of an emergency that results in a student missing an exam, the student must notify the instructor within 48 hours of the missed exam date to arrange an alternate exam date. Failure to take the exam as scheduled or otherwise in compliance with this rule shall result in loss of credit.

STATEMENT RELATED TO ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must first register with the Disability Resource Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/>). Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

STUDENT COURSE EVALUATIONS

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Students will

be notified when the evaluation period opens and may complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students here.

RECORDINGS OF CLASS

All classes will be recorded via Mediasite in case students must miss class for health reasons. The Office of Student Affairs will work with faculty to determine when students may have access to these recordings, and the recordings will be password protected. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Office of Student Affairs as soon as possible after an absence.

COURSE SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

This syllabus is offered as a guide to the direction of the course. Our pace will depend in part on the level of interest and the level of difficulty of each section and is subject to change.

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| 1 | 1/13 | Categories and members of categories
Aristotle Topics I, sections 8-9
Bava Kamma |
| | 1/15 | More Bava Kamma, the ox, the pit, the fire, the maveh
Exodus 21-22
Rhetoric Book I, ch. 10 |
| | 1/17 | Cont. |
| | 1/20 | Holiday, no class |

- 1/22 Subcategories, the Subcategories of the harm that Oxes do: tooth, horn, foot
- 1/24 Inductive and Deductive Reasoning
Rhetoric, Book I, ch. 2, lines 8-22
- 1/27 cont.
- 1/31 **Rhet. I.ii.8 (p.19)**, Book II, xx (p.273-279) examples and enthymemes
- 2/3 Inductive and Deductive reasoning, Book, I, ii.8-22 (p.18-33)
- 2/ 5 Exam I
- 2/7 Rules for Rabbinic Arguments: the Seven Rules of R. Hillel, Baraita of R. Ishmael (13 rules) Introduction to Sifra [Biblical verses](#)
- 2/10 **“Light and heavy” (קל וחומר); Topic of the more and less**
Hillel Rule 1; Aristotle Bk II.xxxiii.4 (p.301)
Rashi’s comment to Exodus 6.12 from Bereshit Rabbah 92.7
- 2/12 Rashi’s comment to Exodus 6.12 cont. Examples: Genesis 44.8, Exodus 6.12, Number 12.14, Deut. 31.27, I Samuel 23.3, Jeremiah 12.5, Ezekiel 15.5, Proverbs 11.31, Esther 9.12
- 2/14 cont.
- 2/17 **topics of from Opposites, Similar Inflexions, from relative Terms, from the definition** Bk II.xxxiii.1, 2-3 and 8 (p.297-299; 305)
- 2/19 cont.

- 2/21 cont.
- 2/24 Exam II
- 2/26 **“Equivalence” -"gezerah shavah"; topics of Similar Inflexions, from relative Terms, from the definition** Bk II.xxxiii.2-3 and 8 (p.297-299; 305)
 Enthymeme of analogy Bk. II.xxiii.17 (p. 313)
 Example
- 2/28 Examples: Bavli Pesachim 66a Numbers 9.2 and Numbers 28.2 [Pesachim 66a](#)
- 3/3 Bavli Shabbat 64a (limited by traditional teaching)
- 3/5 **“As we find it” “mah matzinu” from special to general.**
Topic of Induction, Book, I, ii.8 (p.18-25)
 Bava Metzia 87b
- 3/7 Shabbat 22a
- 3/10 Exodus 22.9
- 3/12 **general to the special Topics of previous judgment, negative precedent**
 Lev. 1.2, Lev. 7.20 and Bavli Sotah 43a
- 3/14 example: Sotah 43a
- 3/24 Deut 14.26 and Exodus 22.8
 Berachot 37a
- 3/26 Binyan av mikatuv echad (building a teaching upon one verse)
 Binyan av mishnai katuvim (building a teaching upon two verses),

Bava Metzia 87b

- 3/28 Bava Metzia 87b, Bava Kama 6a
- 3/31 Bava Kama 6a
- 4/2 Exam III
- 4/4 Devar halemed meinyano (a word learned from context)
Sifra, Intro. 1:6
- 4/7 Keyotza bo bamako acher (as comes from it in another place)
Samuel 1.11 in light of Numbers 6.5
- 4/9 More Aristotle Constructive enthymemes
From Division Bk. II.xxiii.10 (p. 305)
Enumerating the parts Bk. II.xxiii.13 (p. 311)
Identity of antecedents Bk. II.xxiii.18 (p. 313)
Contrary Public and private views Bk. II.xxiii.16 (p. 313)
- 4/11 Employing the consequence Bk. II.xxiii.14 (p. 311)
Human motivation Bk. II.xxiii.21 (p. 317)
Difference from before and after Bk. II.xxiii.19 (p. 315)
Consideration of time Bk. II.xxiii.6 (p. 301)
Enthymeme of analogy Bk. II.xxiii.17 (p.313)
- 4/14 Defensive enthymemes: accuse the accuser, Bk. II.xxiii.7 (p. 303)
Contrary dates, actions, words, Bk. II.xxiii.23 (p. 319)
Give the reason for the accusation, Bk. II.xxiii.24 (p. 319)
From the cause, Bk. II.xxiii.25 (p. 319)

- 4/16 It could have been done a better way Bk. II.xxiii.26 (p. 321)
 Making use of errors Bk. II.xxiii.28 (p. 321-323)
 Meaning of the name Bk. II.xxiii.29 (p. 323)
 General discussion of defensive enthymemes Bk. II.xxiii.30 (p. 323-325)
- 4/18 Fallacies or apparent enthymemes
 False syllogisms Bk. II.xxiv.1-2 (p. 325)
 homonymy Bk. II.xxiv.2 (p. 325-327)
 Combining what is divided Bk. II.xxiv.3 (p. 327)
- 4/21 Fallacies cont.
 By exaggeration Bk. II.xxiv.4 (p. 329)
 Confusing sign for the thing Bk. II.xxiv.5 (p. 329)
 From the consequence Bk. II.xxiv.7 (p. 331)
 Omitting how and why Bk. II.xxiv.9 (p. 333)

Apr. 23

Drash (Inquiry) meaning Rashi's comment to Gen. 1.4

Aristotle's definition of Metaphor Poetics 21 1457b
 Rhet. III.ii.8-13 (p. 355-359)

Metaphor is "a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars" (Poetics 1459a).

Final Exam May 2nd at 10:00 AM