



## From the Dean's Desk

### *The New Sy Syms Jewish Values Curriculum*

Life is full of dilemmas. Perhaps the most important dilemma is at the beginning of this week's parsha, Parshas R'ay: Moshe Rabbeinu vividly exhorts B'nei Yisrael about what they should do when faced with a choice between the blessings that will come from **living by Jewish Values** and fulfilling G-d's commandments, and the curses that will come from disregarding those values and commandments.

Today, difficult dilemmas emerge when we transition from college into the workplace. **How can we excel professionally while adhering to our Torah Values?** How can we resolve conflicts between our work demands and our priorities as religious Jews?

We typically are not prepared for these dilemmas. As a first step to helping our students prepare, last year on the Beren campus we approved our students attending Rabbi Aaron Cohen's new course on **Halachic Challenges in the Workplace**. For the coming Fall semester, we are introducing at Wilf three courses, including a parallel course on Practical Workplace Halacha.

The courses are part of a **four-course Jewish Values curriculum** that will give our students deep grounding in the challenges typically faced when entering the broader post-graduation world, practice with dealing with those challenges and knowledge of how best to interact with others in the workplace and society.

So far, the **student appetite** for these courses has been impressive. For the Fall semester, Jewish Business Law has 113 students registered across four sections, Practical Workplace Halacha has 102 students, and Jewish Public Policy has 57 students across two sections.

As a third stage of development of this curriculum, we are exploring bringing the remaining new courses to the Beren campus as well.

In the first pasuk of this week's parsha, the Ibn Ezra says that when Moshe Rabbeinu was describing the dilemmas the Jews would face, he addressed every individual separately.

Similarly, at YU we try to tune into **the needs of every Sy Syms student** and to make sure that everyone is prepared for the specific dilemmas they will face.

Please see below for details on the content of these Jewish Values courses and for bios of the star professors who have been developing and will be teaching those courses.

Dr. Noam Wasserman  
Dean

### The New Jewish Values Curriculum

The new Jewish Values curriculum offers practical, experiential and actionable courses. Collectively, the courses cover two broad **types of issues**: purely-business issues, and universal issues with a business lens. It also covers two **domains of interaction**: within the Jewish world, and between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. These dimensions, and the place of each course in the curriculum, are captured in the following diagram:

		Domain of Interaction	
		Within the Jewish World	Jewish with Non-Jewish Worlds
Types of issues	Purely business	Jewish Business Law	Practical Workplace Halacha
	Universal with business lens	Jewish Public Policy	Jewish-World Interactions

Thank you to the team that helped design the new curriculum: Dr. Moses Pava, Rabbi Dr. Ari Lamm, Rabbi Dovid Bashevkin, Dr. Daniel Rynhold, Rabbi Itamar Rosensweig, Dr. Avi Giloni, and myself.

Brief descriptions of the courses are as follows:

#### **Jewish Business Law in the Contemporary Marketplace**

- Lead professor: Rabbi Itamar Rosensweig
- Co-teacher: Rabbi Shlomo Weissmann – director, Beth Din of America

This course explores the application of Jewish civil law in the contemporary commercial marketplace.

The course covers:

1. the interaction between Jewish law, secular law and commercial custom
2. contemporary *beit din* procedure and jurisprudence, including the jurisdiction of contemporary *batei din*, different procedures for adjudicating disputes (*pesharah vs. din, zablax*), choice of law clauses, the appeal process, and the role of attorneys
3. substantive principles of Jewish law in the contemporary marketplace, such as: employment law, unjust enrichment, compensation for conferred benefits, foundations of Jewish contract law, tort theory and law, property law, and principles of fair competition

Throughout the course we will read and critically evaluate contemporary *beit din* decisions and examine how the principles and rules of Jewish law are applied in the modern marketplace. If time allows, we'll also discuss the relationship between rights and duties in Jewish law and the extent to which Jewish civil law recognizes economic considerations.

#### **Practical Workplace Halacha**

- Lead professor: Professor Ari Wasserman
- Co-teacher: Rabbi Yoni Levin

The workplace, with its many opportunities, is a constant, ever-changing challenge. We want to excel in our chosen profession, and still remain strong in our commitment to Torah and *mitzvos*.

There are challenges out there, but there are also solutions. You can learn how to succeed in the workplace and how to grow as a Torah Jew.

In this course, we'll discover how to deal with issues like business meetings in non-kosher restaurants, shaking hands with the opposite gender, wearing a *kippah* to work, social gatherings and holiday parties, personal use of office supplies, *yichud*, setting aside time to learn; *minchah* during the workday and much more.

#### **Jewish Public Policy**

- Lead professor: Rabbi Dovid Bashevkin

Jewish Public policy examines the intersection of Judaism and public policy in three different ways: 1) The Jewish approach to major public policy issues, 2) how general public policy affects the Jewish community, and 3) the internal application of public policy that the Jewish community has created to govern their own institutions, organizations, and policies.

Through the course, we will explore some of the key ways community has been conceptualized within the Jewish community, as well as some of the larger areas of debate, controversy, and coordination that have emerged in that process. Grounded in history, sociology, and economics, we will apply key concepts to contemporary case studies to help re-imagine the challenges and opportunities facing today's Jewish community.

### **Jewish-World Interactions [slated to debut in Spring 2021]**

- Lead professor: Rabbi Dr. Ari Lamm

We will explore a range of big questions raised by life in a commercial world. We will pay particular attention to the ways in which great Jewish ideas helped build our society, and the practical ways the values of our mesorah can help us change our own lives while influencing our neighbors as we venture out into our professional lives.

### *Star Professors*



**Rabbi Shlomo Weissmann**

(Jewish Business Law course)

Rabbi Weissman serves as the Menahel [Director] of the Beth Din of America and received rabbinical ordination from the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) in 2001 and advanced rabbinical ordination [Yadin Yadin] in 2014. He is a graduate of Columbia Law School, where he was a Harlan Fiske Stone Scholar. Prior to his association with the Beth Din of America, Rabbi Weissmann worked as an attorney at several prominent law firms, including Debevoise and Plimpton LLP.



**Prof. Ari Wasserman**

(Practical Workplace Halacha course)

Prof. Wasserman is a Torah lecturer, author, attorney and businessman. A member of the bar in New York, California and Massachusetts, he received his undergraduate degree at the University of Pennsylvania, and J.D. with honors from Harvard Law School. He began his legal career at Sullivan & Cromwell and subsequently worked in mid-size and start-up companies in a variety of industries.

He is the bestselling author of *Making It Work - A Practical Guide to Halacha in the Workplace* and *Making It All Work: Women Surviving and Thriving at Work* (co-written with Miryam Wasserman) about the challenges of being observant in the secular workplace, *Welcome to Our Table* (two volumes) on the weekly parashah, and several sefarim [books] in Hebrew.



**Rabbi Yoni Levin**

(Practical Workplace Halacha course)

Rabbi Yoni Levin is currently the Rosh Kollel of Emek Hamelech as well as the Assistant Rabbi of Aish Kodesh. Over the past eight years Rabbi Levin has made an annual Siyum Hashas with the goal of inspiring people to accomplish feats in Limud HaTorah that seemed beyond their reach. His grasp of Shas and Poskim has enabled him to give shiurim on a wide range of topics in Gemara, Halacha and Hashkafa.

Rabbi Levin received semicha [rabbinic ordination] from RIETS under the guidance of Rav Hershel Schachter and deals with numerous Shailos daily. He is also the author of a halachic column in 2.0 Magazine addressing modern day technology and science. Rabbi Levin also runs a summer Kollel housed in Aish Kodesh allowing young men to continue their learning at a serious level during their break from Yeshiva and school. Rabbi Levin spent a short period of time working as an actuary in PricewaterhouseCoopers before completing his semicha. His firsthand experience in the world of business allows him to appreciate the everyday challenge the working Jew faces in Halacha, Hashkafa and Yiras Shamyim.



**Rabbi Itamar Rosensweig**

(Jewish Business Law course)

Rabbi Itamar Rosensweig is a maggid shiur [Torah lecturer] at Yeshiva University and a dayan [judge] at the Beth Din of America. He received his semicha, Yoreh Yoreh and Yadin Yadin, from RIETS, where he was a fellow of the Wexner Kollel Elyon and editor-in-chief of the *Beit Yitzchak Journal of Talmudic and Halakhic Studies*. He received his BA, with honors, in physics and philosophy from Yeshiva University, an MA in medieval Jewish history from YU's Bernard Revel Graduate School and an MA in philosophy from Columbia University.

Rabbi Rosensweig studied Talmud with Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein at Yeshivat Har Etzion and the history of halacha with Prof. Haym Soloveitchik at Yeshiva University. He studied for many years with his father, Rabbi Michael Rosensweig, and for a decade attended his shiur at Yeshiva University. Previously, he taught an advanced Talmud shiur at Columbia University's Kraft Center and served as the resident scholar at Congregation Ahavath Torah in Englewood, New Jersey.



**Rabbi Dovid Bashevkin**

(Jewish Public Policy course)

Dovid Bashevkin is the director of education for NCSY, the youth movement of the Orthodox Union, and an instructor at Yeshiva University, where he teaches courses on public policy, religious crisis and rabbinic thought. After studying in Yeshivas Ner Yisroel, he completed rabbinic ordination at RIETS as well as a

master's degree at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies focusing on the thought of Rabbi Tzadok of Lublin under the guidance of Dr. Yaakov Elman.

He is currently pursuing a doctorate in public policy and management at The New School's Milano School of International Affairs, focusing on crisis management. In 2014, Dovid published a sefer on sin in Jewish thought entitled *B'Rogez Rachev Tizkor* and recently published an English work entitled *Sin a'gogue: Sin and Failure in Jewish Thought* (Boston: Academic Studies Press).

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[Sy Syms School of Business](#)  
2495 Amsterdam Avenue  
New York, NY 10033

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[sssbstud@lists.yu.edu](mailto:sssbstud@lists.yu.edu)

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**SJ Tannenbaum**

*Communications and Social Media Specialist, Sy Syms School of Business*

*Founder and Social Media Marketer, GenLink Marketing*

Sy Syms School of Business '22

Katz School of Science and Health '24

[LinkedIn](#)

Cell/WhatsApp: +19176858254