

**Back to the Garden**  
**STMA 593**  
**Spring 2009**  
**Rabbi Daniel A. Weiner**  
**Syllabus**

**Introduction and Objectives**

From the revolution of Vatican II through the post 9/11 heightened awareness of the need to build better interfaith bridges, efforts to instill compassion, inspire change and inform intellects concerning the “Other” have gained momentum. Despite occasional set backs, Christian/Jewish efforts, and the Christian/Jewish/Muslim programs that have emerged from them, are part of a sacred process that is here to stay.

But for these pathways to become enduring, we have to do more than dialogue and discuss. We must learn more about faith perspectives from within those traditions, not solely as outsiders observing an anthropological phenomenon. Because of its basis in Judaism, Christians are far better versed in Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish practice than Jews are informed of the beliefs of our nation’s Christian majority.

But that is for another class and cause. For informed Christian laity and enlightened clergy, good intentions to teach, preach and experience Judaism sometimes miss the mark. Toward that end, this course will seek to impart the basics of Judaism, create a solid foundation of knowledge, answer the questions you wanted to ask but were afraid to offer for fear of insult (I am not easily rocked), and chart a pathway to more fruitful and fulfilling bonds between Christians and Jews—bonds which can only be sustained by willing, knowledgeable and open leadership.

**Requirements and Criteria for Grading**

1. Attendance, reading and participation will comprise 50%.
2. A lesson plan or sermon will comprise the other 50%.

**Texts**

1. **Seasons of our Joy**, Arthur Waskow
2. **Basic Judaism**, Milton Steinberg
3. **Jews, God and History**, Max Dimont
4. **Modern Jews Engage the New Testament**, Michael Cook
5. **The Jewish Home**, Daniel Syme

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## **Schedule**

- April 2** Introduction: “I am a Jew?”: The Jew From the Inside and Out
- April 9** ***Off for Passover—Those who teach must also do!***
- April 16** “Don’t Know Much about History,” Read Dimont
- April 23** “Celebrate Good Times, C’mon”: Shabbat and High Holidays, Read chapters in Waskow
- April 30** “You’re once, twice, three times a deity...”: Pilgrimage and Minor Festivals—Read chapters in Waskow
- May 7** ***Special Field Trip to TDHS Clergy Institute***
- May 14** “To everything, turn, turn, turn...” The Jewish Life Cycle, Read Syme
- May 21** “Everyday I Write the Book”: Communion through Text, Read Steinberg
- May 28** “You Gotta Have Faith”: Great Jewish Theologies, Read Steinberg
- June 4** Parallel Paths: The Future of Jewish/Christian Relations, Read Cook