

# Messianism & Israel

Dr. Motti Inbari

**Course description:** Messianism is an important component in Jewish history. Even in Modern times, which are considered secular and rational, the messianic idea plays an important role in shaping political processes. The course examines the messianic idea as a religious, political and sociological phenomenon in modern Jewish history. It also compares the Jewish example to other case studies. Examining how the messianic narrative entered Jewish political discourse enables a critical discussion of its role in Zionist activities as an example of continuity or discontinuity with an older tradition.

**Prerequisites:** None. Recommended background: Familiarity with Judaism or Jewish civilization.

**Course Requirements :** a) One paper (5-7 pages) worth 40 points; b) A final exam, worth 50 points; d) Informed and well considered class participation, worth 10 points; e) Regular and punctual attendance is required. Excused absences (such as illness, university business, etc.) must be certified by documentation, such as a doctor's note. If you miss more than 3 class meetings without a valid written excuse you will be docked a full grade increment.

**University of Florida GatorLink Email :** Class announcements will be sent out to your gatormail accounts via the classrolls mailing list. Check your GatorLink email account on a regular basis; you will be held responsible for all amendments to reading or writing assignments posted there. 'I don't check my GatorLink account' will not be considered a valid excuse for failure to complete an assignment or follow instructions.

**Written assignments :** Historical writing demands that you make your arguments in a clear and precise manner and that you back them up with historical evidence.

Thus, written assignments will be graded on the basis of **style as well as content**. Completion of the written assignments is *absolutely required*. Late assignments **will not** be accepted.

**Reading assignments** : If you do not make a good faith effort to finish the reading assignments before the meeting, you will likely find yourself frustrated and confused during the lectures. If you find yourself falling behind in the readings, I suggest you at least skim the assigned readings before lecture so you are familiar with the themes and issues addressed on that day.

**Academic Honesty** : In writing papers, be certain to give proper credit whenever you use words, phrases, ideas, arguments, and conclusions drawn from someone else's work. Failure to give credit by quoting and/or footnoting is PLAGIARISM and is unacceptable. Any student caught plagiarizing will automatically fail the assignment and will face official prosecution at the instructor's discretion. To be sure that you are fully aware of the relevant policies please review the Student Honesty Guidelines at: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.html>.

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed

The following books are available for purchase at Goerings Books, 1717 NW 1st Ave.

#### Required

Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago, 1996).

#### Recommended

Zevi Yehuda Kook, *Torat Eretz Yisrael* (Jerusalem, 1991).

## **The subjects of the course and reading materials:**

### **1. The messianic idea in Hebrew scriptures**

- ❖ Ephraim Urbach, *The Sages, Their Concepts and Beliefs* (Jerusalem, 1975) 649-692.
- ❖ Gershom Scholem, “Messianism – Never Ending Quest”” *On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in our Times & Other Essays* (Philadelphia & Jerusalem, 1997) 102-113.
- ❖ Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin 96a – 98b*. Especially 97a-b.
- ❖ Moshe Maimonides, “The laws of Kings and Wars”, *Mishneh Torah*, Chapters 11-12.

### **2. Introductory to Jewish mysticism**

- Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, (New York: Schocken Books, 1960), 1-39.

### **3. Messianism as a sociological phenomena**

- ❖ Yonina Talmon, “Millenarian Movements”, *Archives europeennes de sociologie* (1966), pp. 156-200.
- ❖ Leon Festinger, Henry W. Riechen, & Stanley Schachter, *When Prophecy Fails*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1956, pp. 3-33.

### **4. Messianism and the crusades.**

- ❖ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Messianism in Medieval and Reformation Europe and its Bearing on Modern Totalitarian Movements* (London: Mercury Books, 1962) 13-108.

### **5. The expulsion from Spain and later the foundations of the Lurianic Kabala.**

❖ Gershom Scholem, “The Historical Development of Jewish Mysticism”, *On the Possibility of Jewish Mysticism in our Times & Other Essays* (Philadelphia & Jerusalem, 1997) 121-154.

## **6. The Sabbatian movement.**

❖ Gershom Scholem, “Sabbtai Sevi: The Mystical Messiah”, in Marc Saperstein (ed), *Essential Papers on Messianic Movements and Personalities in Jewish History*, (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 289-334.

❖ Gershom Scholem, “The Holiness of Sin”, *Commentary* 51 (1971) 41-70.

## **7. The messianic narrative in the modern age – the political Messianism**

• Jacob Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1955) 1-16, 38-49, 69-168.

## **8. General Zionism and messianism.**

❖ Yaacov Shavit, "Realism and Messianism in Zionism and the Yeshuv", *Studies in Contemporary Jewry* 7 (1991), p. 100-127.

❖ Jacob Katz, “Israel and the Messiah”, *Jewish Emancipation and Self Emancipation* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society) 153-166.

## **9. Jewish Orthodoxy – an Introductory.**

❖ Jacob Katz, “The Controversy over the Temple in Hamburg and the Rabbinic Assembly in Braunschweig: Milestones in the Development of Orthodoxy”, *Divine Law in Human Hands* (Jerusalem: Magness Press, 1998) 216-254.

## **10.Orthodoxy and Zionism**

• Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago, 1996) 10-39.

## **11.Religious Zionism and messianism.**

❖ Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 79-144.

❖ Avraham Isaac Kook, *The lights of Penitence* (NY: Paulist Press) 176-302.

❖ Zevi Yehuda Kook, *Torat Eretz Yisrael* ( Jerusalem, 1991) 97-274.

## **12.The critics of Zionism: the ultra Orthodoxy and the messianic idea.**

13. Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism*, 40-78; 145-180.

## **14.The Reform movement and the messianic idea**

- Gerson Greenberg, “Samuel Hirsch’s American Judaism”  
*Jewish Historical Quarterly* 62 (1972-3) 362-382.

## **15.Habad movement and the messianic expulsion.**

- ❖ Aviezer Ravitzky, *Messianism, Zionism, and Jewish Religious Radicalism* (Chicago, 1996) 181-206.

## **16.The movements for the reestablishment of the Third Temple.**

- ❖ Motti Inbari, “The Oslo Accords and the Temple Mount: A Case Study - The Movement for the Establishment of the Temple”,  
*Hebrew Union College Annual* 74 (2003), pp 279-323.

## **17 . General comparison: contemporary**

### **apocalyptic movements and Doomsday cults.**

- ❖ James Tabor & Eugene V. Gallagher, *Why Waco? - Cults and the Battle for Religious Freedom in America* (Berkeley, 1995)