

## Classical Jewish Thought: Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith

Professor: Rabbi Jonathan D. Schick

### Course Description:

Since its formulation, Maimonides' *Thirteen Principles of Faith* has stood the test of time as Judaism's seminal statement of creed. Yet, this formulation aroused both opposition and debate among the leading Jewish philosophers of the medieval era. This course will explore these Principles in depth, utilizing the original sources of Maimonides, as well as those of Nahmanides, Saadia Gaon, Halevi and other commentators.

### Required Texts:

1. Bleich, J. David. *With Perfect Faith: The Foundations of Jewish Belief*. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1983.
2. Additional Sourcebook provided by Instructor.

### Optional Texts:

1. Twersky, Isadore. *Introduction to the Code of Maimonides*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.
2. Korobkin, N. Daniel. *The Kuzari: In Defense of the Despised Faith*. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1998.
3. Rosner, Fred. *Maimonides Treatise on Resurrection*. Northvale, N.J.: Jason Aronson, 1997.
4. Mittleman, Alan. L. *Between Kant and Kabbalah*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.

### Course Requirements:

1. Regular Attendance, preparation and class participation. (20%)
2. Brief response papers. (20%)
3. Midterm essay examination. (30%)
4. Final essay examination. (30%)

## Course Outline:

### 1. Historical Overview of the leading Jewish philosophers of the Medieval Era:

- A. Maimonides
- B. Nahmanides
- C. Saadiah Gaon
- D. Jehuda HaLevi
- E. Joseph Albo
- F. Bakhya ibn Paquoda
- G. Gersonides
- H. Abarbanel

### 2. Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith

Introduction

Principle One: Existence

Principle Two: Unity

Principle Three: Incorporeality

Principle Four: Eternal Nature

Principle Five: Exclusivity

Principle Six: Prophecy

Principle Seven: Uniqueness of Moses' Prophecy

Principle Eight: Revelation

Principle Nine: Immutability of Bible

Principle Ten: Omniscience

Principle Eleven: Divine Reward and Punishment

Principle Twelve: Messianic Era

Principle Thirteen: Resurrection

### 3. Summary: Dogma in Judaism: From Maimonides, to Mendelssohn, to Modernity