Syllabus: Jewish Philosophy- Tefillah

Class Meeting Time:

Tuesdays 11:05-11:45 (JPhil 2)

Wednesdays 10:10-10:55 (JPhil 1)

Goals:

- Students will engage in deep discussions that get to the core of the meaning of tefillah, debating and learning new ideas from one another
- Students will read and analyze sources from ancient Sages, like the Rambam (Mainmonides), Rasag (Rav Saadia Gaon), Rabbenu Bachya ibn Pakuda, and Rabbi Yehuda HaLevy, to understand that we as Jews have been grappling with these concepts since the beginning of time.
- Students will read and analyze sources from modern Jewish thinkers, like Rav Moshe Feinstein, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, and Rav Ovadia Yosef, to understand that we as Jews continue to grapple with these concepts and find ways to fit them into our modern conception of the world.

Content, organized by Unit:

- Unit 1: Introduction to Tefillah (Prayer)
 - What does "tefillah" mean?
 - What is the purpose of tefillah?
 - Who structured and organized tefillah as we know it today?
 - The three daily amidah prayers
 - Tefillah and its connections to the Beit HaMikdash
- Unit 2: The Obligation of Women
 - Why might women have less of an obligation to pray than men?
 - Ancient sources for women's tefillah obligation
 - Modern sources for women's tefillah obligation
 - Conclusion: what do we do halachically with so many different opinions?
- Unit 3: The Meaning of the Shemoneh Esreh (Amidah)
 - Class will move through each beracha of the amidah and understand the core concept and deeper nuances
- Unit 4: Tefillah in Tanach