GRADUATE COURSE DESCRIPTION

Term: Spring 2012
Instructor: Dr. Joshua Ezra Burns
Course #: THEO 8150/8350 (combined)
Course Title: Special Questions in Old Testament Studies/Special Questions in New Testament Studies
Course Subtitle: Introduction to Classical Rabbinic Culture

Content:
This seminar will present an overview of classical rabbinic culture encompassing the history and literature of the rabbinic movement from its origins in first-century Judea through the composition of the Babylonian Talmud during the sixth and seventh centuries. After establishing the contents and contexts of the formative rabbinic tradition during the first half of the semester, we will proceed to discuss selected topics in rabbinic thought and practice including scriptural interpretation, theology, ethics, eschatology, and Jewish-Christian relations.

Format:
The course will follow a seminar format. Each class session will be devoted to exploring a specific topic and/or set of texts. Students will be asked to prepare synopses of the day’s assignments and to present said synopses to the class in order to facilitate general discussion.

Assignments and/or Examinations:
- Regular attendance and participation will be expected of all enrolled students.
- Each student will be expected to write an original research paper approximately twenty (20) double-spaced pages in length by the end of the semester.

Language Pre-requisites:
- All reading assignments will be in English, although reading knowledge of classical Hebrew and/or Aramaic will be useful for examining rabbinic documents in their original languages.