

Introduction to Modern Jewish Philosophy (Religious Studies / Philosophy 2JP3) – Winter 2018

TEXT PREPARATION 5 – Assignment due in class on April 3 from anyone who has not yet completed a Text Preparation assignment

This assignment consists of attendance of the full class session on April 3, plus completing the written assignment below, to be submitted in class on April 3 only.

(*Rationale:* Text Preparation assignments are designed to help you prepare the reading assignment for a particular class meeting, in conjunction with your participation in that class meeting, when we go over the reading selection together.)

This assignment is based on:

Yeshayahu Leibowitz, “Religious Praxis: The Meaning of Halakhah” (1953), trans. Eliezer Goldman [coursepack]

Detailed Instructions. In well-written paragraphs, a total of approximately 500 words, please address the following question with detailed reference to the text.

What is Leibowitz’s argument (or what are his arguments, if you see more than one in this selection) for his view that the essential, defining feature of Judaism as a religion is *halakha* (Jewish law) and observance of *mitzvot* (commandments)? Is it a convincing argument, and, if not, what flaws do you see in it?

Note: To refresh your memory on the key concepts used by Leibowitz, see for example chap. 5 (“The Legal Tradition”) in Nicholas de Lange, *Judaism* (assigned earlier in this course). Please let me know if any questions remain.

As was the case for the Text Summary assignment, your observations should be backed up with references that allow your reader to see what they are based on. For this purpose, please use in-text parenthetical page references, as in this sample sentence:

In discussing the possibility of revolt, Sartre refers to Hegel’s notion of dialectic (79).

Please print your assignment double-spaced and with one-inch margins, using an 11–12-point font. Please write your name and “Text Preparation 5” at the top of the first page, and indicate the total word count at the end. Please number and staple the pages you hand in.

Note: Since this is your first reading of this text, and since we have not yet discussed it in class, the Text Preparation assignment is simply a first effort at figuring out what the text says, and doing it will help you get the most of our in-class work on it. The assignment is not evaluated for whether it demonstrates a good understanding of the reading, but for evidence of your having worked in detail to understand the reading. Your fuller understanding will develop in the course of our class and tutorial meetings, and with successive re-readings.

Plagiarism Warning: This assignment is designed to be completed by means of independent work on the above-mentioned essay written by Yeshayahu Leibowitz, aided by the guidance you have received in class and by consulting the instructor: I am always available to discuss the questions you encounter as you read and re-read the texts for this class. It is neither necessary nor desirable that you consult outside

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sources in order to complete this assignment. Please remember that unacknowledged use of such sources constitutes plagiarism and is a violation of the university's [Academic Integrity policy](#).

Please keep a copy of your assignment to refer to in our class discussions.

posted March 28, 2018