

## CITY/FAITH &amp; REASON



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RABBI MORDECHAI GRONER

## Students explore Jewish faith

GRAEME MORTON  
CALGARY HERALD

Calgarians will have multiple opportunities to study Jewish faith and culture this year.

The local branch of the Florence Melton Adult Mini-School, operating under the umbrella of the Calgary Jewish Community Council, will be offering both first- and second-year courses in varied aspects of Jewish life.

“We had a wonderfully eclectic mix of students last year, ranging in age from their mid-20s to their mid-70s,” says Ruth Spivak, local director of the Melton school.

“Our goal is to reach as broad of range of potential students as possible. You don’t need to be affiliated with any particular synagogue or movement to take part. And we definitely welcome non-Jews as well,” she adds.

The first-year course, led by Rabbi Jordan Ofseyer and Lance Davis, focuses on Jewish theology, philosophy, festivals and rites of passage. Second-year studies, led by Yossi Sussisa and Shoshanna Kirmayer, concentrate on elements of history and ethics.

“There’s a lot of time within the course to discuss issues in pairs and in groups, so we get some lively sessions where the ideas are really boiling,” says Spivak.

The Florence Melton schools are associated with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Both courses will be offered on Tuesday nights from Sept. 23 to May

Some vacancies remain for the first-year course. Online information and registration is available at [jewishcalgary.org](http://jewishcalgary.org).

■ Meanwhile, the Jewish Learning Institute, the educational arm of the Chabad Lubavitch movement, has three major courses planned for this academic year.

“Our goal is to bring Jewish themes and concepts to everyday life in an interesting way that people can relate to,” says Rabbi Mordechai Groner, head instructor.

The season’s first course, Soul Maps, will explore how to nurture self-knowledge and understanding of your inner conflicts and strengths.

It’s scheduled to run for six Tuesday evenings from Nov. 11 to Dec 16.

Groner notes an estimated 30,000 people will be taking the Soul Maps course at the same time as Calgary students through JLI branches around the world.

Other JLI courses offered this term will include You Be The Judge — Dive into the Sea of Talmud (Feb. 10 to Mar. 24) and Biblical Reflections (May 5 to June 16)

“We had more than 100 different students attend our three major series last year, so there is definitely an appetite for this type of knowledge,” says Groner, who notes students can attend the first week free of charge before they commit to the course.

More information on the local JLI programs is available online at [JLI@chabadalberta.org](mailto:JLI@chabadalberta.org) or by calling (403) 238-4880.