NVHC Lifelong learning summer short course, July-August 2020

"The Golden Age of Hebrew Poetry in Medieval Spain, 950-1492"

Synopsis: Poetry has a prominent place in the Psalms, Jonah and other books of the Hebrew Bible, and is an integral part of the Jewish liturgy from rabbinical times through the middle ages (such as devotional prayers known as piyyutim) and to our own day, as well as secular poetry since the Hebrew renaissance that began in the early 19th century and continues in Israel. One of the high points of Hebrew poetry in Jewish history was from 10th to 15th century in Spain under both Muslim and Christian rule. This 5-part course will give a brief overview of what many scholars consider one of the richest parts of Jewish literature, focusing in particular on Samuel Ha-Nagid, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Moses Ibn Ezra, Yehuda Halevi, and a few other figures. We will look at how religious and secular poetry developed and interacted with each other, as well as taking on aspects of the broader Arab and Christian cultures.

You may want to look at these works, most of which are in the NVHC library or are available online:

ON HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF HEBREW LANGUAGE, TRANSLATIONS TO/FROM HEBREW


ON HEBREW POETRY GENERALLY, BIBLICAL ERA AND SUBSEQUENTLY


ON HEBREW POETRY/POETS OF MUSLIM AND CHRISTIAN SPAIN, 10th to 15th CENTURIES


*Haim Brody, Mivchar Ha-Shirah Ha-Ivrit /A Selection of Hebrew Poetry, (Bibliotheca Mundi, 1922).


*Hillel Halkin, Yehuda Halevi, (Schocken, 2010).

ON SPANISH JEWISH HISTORY, THE SEPHARDIC DIASPORA

On line sources:
http://www.medievalhebrewpoetry.org/


ON JEWISH CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC VARIETY IN DIASPORA


**Topics in course:**

**Week 1.** Overview of Hebrew poetry in Bible, rabbinical times, and Middle Ages; why Spain became birthplace of a new cultural synthesis, different from ancient Palestine, Babylonia, elsewhere

**Week 2.** Similarities and differences in Spain under Islam (950-1140) and Christianity (1140-1492)

**Week 3.** The poems, life of Shmuel Ha-Nagid (993-1056) and Moses Ibn Ezra (c. 1055-c.1138)

**Week 4.** The poems, life of Solomon Ibn Gabirol (c. 1021/22-c.1057/58) and Yehuda Halevi (c.1045-1141)

**Week 5.** The poetry of the Abraham Ibn Ezra (c. 1093-1167), unrelated to Moses Ibn Ezra