**Class 1:**

1. What religious laws were instituted to provide sustenance for the poor and which for the purpose of their rehabilitation?
2. Which biblical commandments relating to the poor are most similar to that of charity?
3. (What are the two social aspects that are linked to the sabbatical year?)
4. What is unique relating to the poor about the Jubilee year?
5. Why does Porat think that the Sabbath has a social element?
6. Why are the laws relating to lending money so central in the Biblical approach to social welfare?
7. Can one find “charity”, a free monetary gift, in the Torah?
8. How does Porat see in the Biblical laws that the poor has to make an effort and show responsibility?

**Class 2:**

1. What is the difference between *tsedaqah* in the Bible and amongst the Rabbis of the Talmud?
2. Where can one see in the Rabbis’s teaching how they transformed the meaning of *tsedaqah*?
3. How do the Rabbis reformulate the obligation of giving a loan to the poor (even before the sabbatical year)?
4. What is the difference, according to Gardner, between *tsedaqah* and other acts of kindness?
5. What is *gemilut hasadim* and how does it differ from charity?
6. Is “charity” limited to giving money or does it include clothing and food?
7. How does Gardner distinguish between charity and “harvest-time allocations”?
8. (In what way does Gardner’s treatment of “harvest-time allocations” differ from the way Porat treated them (last week’s reading)?)
9. In what ways did the Rabbis, according to Gardner, expand the support for the poor?
10. What role did the “urban poor” play in the development of charity in the Talmudic period?

**Class 3**

1. What can learned from the source depicting the acts of King Ammisaduqa?
2. What is important about the timing of Pharaoh Ramses acts of kindness?
3. In what way are the actions of Pharaoh Ramses different than those King Ammisaduqa with regard to the poor?
4. How do scholars explain the good deeds of monarchs in the ancient near-east?
5. What motivation lies behind “to do justice in the land” regarding the actions of monarchs in the ancient near-east?
6. In what central way is the Biblical model of welfare different than that of the other nations?
7. How central is the King to the laws relating to social welfare in the Bible?
8. What does Porat think can be derived from various social law from the harvest time (and lending money) which is different from the other nations?
9. What does Porat mean when he writes about “social justice as a legal issue”?

**Class 4**

1. What is the basic difference between “religious giving” as found in Judaism and other religions and the main expression of generosity in the classical world?
2. What is “Euergetism” and why is that important for this course?
3. Did the Greeks and Romans care for the poor?
4. Does the statement “God loves the poor” make sense within the Greek worldview?
5. What was the main motivation behind Greek generosity?
6. Within the Greco-Roman world when is “pity” acceptable?
7. How does Van-der- host explain the distribution of foods in the Roman city was not charity?
8. What was **the concrete** benefit that the generous person received in return for his act in the Greek world?
9. What kind of objects did the generous person in the Greek world usually donate?
10. What is the difference according to Gardner between Greek “Euergetism” and Jewish “Euergetism” as found in the Mishna Yuma?
11. What is the difference according to Gardner between Greek “Euergetism” and Jewish “Euergetism” as found in Tosefta Peah?
12. According to Gardner what kind of gifts are acceptable as a return for one’s generosity and what gifts are not?

**Class 5**

1. What are the two meaning of chessed in the Bible?
2. What are the two possible way to understand the word chatat in Proverbs 14:34?
3. What is the accepted scholarly way to understand the verse in Proverbs 14:34?
4. What is the Ibn Ezra understanding of the verse in Proverbs 14:34?
5. What was R. Yohanan ben Zakkai own approach to the verse in Proverbs 14:34?
6. What is there in common between R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua’s approach to Proverbs 14:34?
7. What is different between R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua’s approach to Proverbs 14:34?
8. To what kind of charitable giving is R. Eliezer reacting to?
9. To what kind of charitable giving is R. Yehoshua reacting to?
10. How did learning about “euergetism” in the Greco-Roman help us understand the approach of R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua’s approach to Proverbs 14:34?
11. )What is unique about Neḥunya ben HaKana approach to the verse in Proverbs 14:34?(
12. How did we explain the change in R. Yohanan ben Zakkai approach to the verse in Proverbs 14:34?
13. What does the source from Avot d'Rabbi Natan add to our understanding of the change in R. Yohanan ben Zakkai approach to the verse in Proverbs 14:34?

**Class 6**

1. What does the Talmud derive from the deeds of Hillel relating to charity?
2. How does the story of R. Nehemia undercut the halakhic understanding *dei mahsoro?*
3. Why is the Raba story so important for understanding the problematic nature of *dei mahsoro,* especially with regard to communal charity*?*
4. How does Halbertal understand the bottom-line, the lesson, to be learned from the story of Raba?
5. What is the natural reaction to the Mar Ukva story – who is right the son or the father?
6. What is the opinion of the father, Mar Ukva, regarding the subjective nature of charity?
7. How does Halbertal attempt to modify the message of the Mar Ukva story?
8. What is unique about the story R. Hanina (note 8)?
9. How did the medieval scholars attempt to explain away the story of R. Hanina (note 8)?
10. How does Halbertal re-read the deeds of Hillel in way that is different from the straightforward Talmudic reading?
11. What did Halbertal learn from the story of “one of the outstanding scholars of this generation”?
12. What is Halbertal’s major point in the first part of his study relating to the subjective nature of charity?

**Class 7**

1. How does the anonymous opinion brought by Halbertal (identified as “Geonim) limit the law of *dei mahsaro?*
2. How does R. Moses Isserliss (Rema) limit the law of *dei mahsaro?*
3. *What is* R. Moses Isserliss )Rema*(* approachtothe law of *dei mahsaro?*
4. What seems to be the motivating factor behind Rema’s approach to law of *dei mahsaro?*
5. What is Maimonides opinion on *dei mahsaro* according to Halbertal – upon whom is the obligation?
6. Does the law of *dei mahsaro* apply to communal charity according to Maimonides?
7. How does Halbertal demonstrate Maimonides opinion on *dei mahsaro* (i.e. how does he prove that this is the correct understanding in Maimonides)?
8. How does Halbertal explain Maimonides approach to *dei mahsaro*, from a philosophical perspective?
9. What is the ethical and moral ideal of charity according to Halbertal’s understanding of *dei mahsaro?*
10. What is the religious\philosophical problem (according to Halbertal) with arguing that *dei mahsaro* does not apply to the individual?
11. )Why does Halbertal have no problem with saying that the law of *dei mahsaro* does not apply to communal charity?(
12. According to Halbertal what is the differences between the individual’s obligation of charity in contrast to the communal obligation?

**Class 8**

1. At what level on the ladder of charity is someone who contributes to an organized charity fund (*kuppa*)?
2. What condition does Maimonides add before he suggests contributing to an organized charity fund (*kuppa*)?
3. )What kind of charity should one give according to Maimonides in the case that the administrator of the charity fund is not reliable?(
4. )Where and what was the “chamber of secrets” according to Maimonides?(
5. What is the importance of the “chamber of secrets” for Maimonides in his laws of charity?
6. What defines levels 2-4 of the ideal charity according to Maimonides?
7. What are the two reasons that Maimonides prefers anonymous giving?
8. What is the highest level of charity for Maimonides?
9. What is preferred: giving less than what is proper but with kindness, or giving the proper amount but with sadness?
10. Why is giving before being asked preferable to after being asked?
11. How did we explain the basic feeling of shame and embarrassment that the pauper feels?
12. Why is “gift” a problematic example of charity for level 1?
13. )How did we explain the example of “gift” in level 1 of charity?(
14. Why is level 1 so important to Maimonides, according to the way we explained in the course?
15. What common thread can be found in all three categories of the 8 levels of charity?
16. How is a gift similar to a loan?

**Class 9**

1. In what way is the story of the fisherman and the beggars similar to Maimonides’ highest level of giving?
2. In what way is the story of the fisherman and the beggars different from Maimonides’ highest level of giving according to the way I explained his position?
3. Why do the people running the BRC outreach program think that giving a homeless person a blanket is wrong?
4. In what way did Julie Salamon discover that John Ford’s approach to charity was more complex than it seemed at first?
5. What was John Ford’s personal approach to charity?
6. In what way is my understanding of Maimonides first level of charity different than the accepted understanding?
7. What are the two types of poverty as described by scholars?
8. What are the two different types of support of the poor as described in the class?
9. Why are the words of Maimonides in his Book of Commandments important to understanding his highest level of charity?
10. For what purpose did I bring Rashi’s commentary to the verse in Leviticus *If your brother grows poor and his hand falls…?*
11. How did I try to prove that Maimonides in his level one is referring to a person who has begun to fall but is not yet a recipient of charity?
12. What lesson can one learn from the donkey?
13. What is the difference between what Maimonides wrote in his Book of Commandments and his highest level of charity (as explained in the class)?

**Class 10**

1. What does Rashi’s attempt to accomplish in commentary to the Bible?
2. Why is Rashi’s commentary to the Talmud so important?
3. With regard to the originality of the project which of Rashi’s commentaries (Bible and Talmud) is more innovative?
4. When where did Rashi live?
5. How did Rashi explain the words of R. Elazar that charity is rewarded in accordance with hessed included therein?
6. Why is giving money at a time when produce is readily available an example of charity and hessed?
7. How did we try to prove that Rashi understands the principle of charity+hessed as being the ultimate ideal of charity even if it is not anonymous?
8. Why was Mar Ukba upset?
9. Why was Mar Ukba wife’s charity preferable to that of Mar Ukba?
10. Why is being at home make Mar Ukba’s wife charity special according to Rashi?
11. Why did the couple run into the furnace?
12. What does the story of Mar Ukba and his wife seemingly teach us about the highest level of charity?

**Class 11 (frontal class that was summarized later)**

1. What did we learn from Maimonides commentary to a Mishnah in Avot?
2. How did we explain Maimonides overall approach to encouraging Jews to give charity in his Mishneh Torah?
3. What was Maimonides main goal in writing about how to encourage Jews to give?
4. What were Maimonides tactics in getting the Jew to be generous as found in his Mishneh Torah?
5. How does Maimonides try to “shame” the Jew into being a generous person?
6. How does Maimonides try to arouse the emotion of sympathy and solidarity in the Jew?
7. What was Jacob b. Asher main goal in writing about how to encourage Jews to give?
8. What were Jacob b. Asher tactics in getting the Jew to be generous as found in his work Tur Yore Deah?
9. (What early rabbinic source did we bring as the inspiration for Jacob b. Asher’s approach to charity?)
10. What did we derive from Talmud Bava Batra (and other tractates) in explaining the approach of Jacob b. Asher?
11. What is the “deposit theory”?
12. What does Jacob b. Asher learn from offerings (*terumah*) and tithing (maaser)?
13. What did we learn from Maimonides personal biography that helps us understand his approach to charity?
14. What did we learn from Jacob b. Asher’s personal biography that helps us understand his approach to charity?
15. Why did we bring in the law of “better make your Shabbat like a weekday” and not have to ask for assistance from your fellow man?
16. For what purpose did we bring from Maimonides Hebrew Prologue to Epistle to Yemen?

**Class 12**

1. What does Rav Soloveitchik derive from the law of “*dei mahsaro*” of giving “sufficient for his need”?
2. What does Rav Soloveitchik derive from the use of Maimonides of the verse Then you shall uphold him; as a stranger and a settler shall he live *with you* ... that your brother may live *with you"*?
3. What does Rav Soloveitchik mean when he writes about the donor “the Halakhah must take into account a person's psychological state as well”?
4. How does Rav Soloveitchik resolve the contradiction within Maimonides Mishneh Torah?
5. How does Rav Soloveitchik differentiate between the two types of giving, mentioned by Maimonides in laws 4 and 14?
6. Why is the giving in law 4 so problematic according to Rav Soloveitchik?

**Class 13**

1. What is the central insight of Monotheism according to Jonathan Sacks?
2. In what way does the religious approach differ from the enlightenment in their approach to humanity?
3. What is the theology of Judaism regarding ownership according to Jonathan Sacks?
4. According to Rabbi Sacks what are the essential features of the “Seventh year” and the Jubilee?
5. What does Rabbi Sacks derive from the law of giving charity “sufficient for his need in that which he lacks”, “*Dei Mahsaro*”?
6. Jewish law states that even the poor are obligated to give charity – why is this so important to Rabbi Sacks?
7. According to Rabbi Sacks what is the basic religious and social problem of the huge disparities of wealth, exploitative practices, harsh conditions of employment?
8. What is Rabbi Sacks bottom line in regard to treating the problems that have arose from globalization?