The Teacher
Rabbi Mira Wasserman, Ph.D., is director of the Center for Jewish Ethics at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. A master teacher, she was honored for her cutting-edge scholarship when her recent book *Jews, Gentiles, and Other Animals: The Talmud after the Humanities* was awarded the Salo Baron prize for the best first book in Jewish studies published in 2017. Mira is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley (Ph.D. in Talmud), the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (M.A.H.L.; rabbinic ordination), the Jewish Theological Seminary (B.A.) and Barnard College (B.A.). Her current writing project focuses on how the Talmud can serve as a model for contemporary ethical deliberation.

**The Rationale**
Face-to-Face: The Jewish Ethics Beit Midrash is an experiment in using the practice of Talmud study to enliven and strengthen Jewish life and leadership. As American life grows more polarized, the Jewish community has fragmented, with Jews in the Philly metro area increasingly segregating along lines of neighborhood, generation, identity and politics. The practice of intensive Talmud study will build skills in communicating across difference; knit new networks of caring, respectful relationships; and ground generative conversation about values and meaning in the core texts of the rabbinic tradition.

**The Program**
Our pilot sessions will be held at Kismet, 4230 Main Street, Manayunk.

- 6:00 p.m.   Introductions over light dinner (Kosher dairy, catered by Nana’s Kitchen)
- 6:30-8:00   Guided study in small groups (*hevrutah*)
- 8:00-9:00   Teaching and discussion

At our closing session, we will leave time for review and for the completion of feedback forms.

**Experience Talmud study that joins cutting-edge scholarship with time-tested pedagogy**

**Gain skills in analyzing challenging texts from the heart of Jewish tradition**

**Hone leadership practices of listening and questioning across difference**

**Build rich relationships with leaders from Philadelphia’s diverse Jewish communities**

**Extend ancient Jewish debates about values and meaning into the present**
FAQ

I HAVE NEVER STUDIED TALMUD AND I DON’T KNOW HEBREW. WILL I BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no pre-requisites for participation, and full translations will be provided for all sources. Our study will be enhanced by participants from a wide range of Jewish and academic backgrounds. Training in the fields of law, literature and philosophy are helpful. Since the Talmud is a demanding text, written in a mix of languages and following its own rules of logic and interpretation, even those with a strong grounding in Hebrew can sometimes find the Talmud strange and difficult. Teachers and written resources will be on hand to help.

I'M INTERESTED IN JEWISH COMMUNITY, BUT DON'T HAVE A FORMAL ROLE. CAN I COME IF I AM NOT A LEADER?

In our view, leadership is something that can be practiced from the center of a community, or from the margins. This program promotes ethical leadership by building competencies in critical analysis and interpretation; in active listening and effective interpersonal communication; and in relationship-building. It promotes Jewish ethical leadership by grounding discussions about values and meaning in Talmud study.

I'D LIKE TO PARTICIPATE, BUT I CAN'T ATTEND ALL THREE DATES. CAN I STILL COME?

This pilot is a highly subsidized beta-test for a more extensive program. Your feedback will be far more valuable if you attend all three sessions. If you know that you will not be able attend at least two, best to wait for the next go-around. Of course, we understand that emergencies come up. If you miss the last session, we will ask that you complete the feedback form as quickly as possible.

I HAVE FRIENDS WHO WOULD LOVE THIS. CAN THEY COME?

This pilot is by invitation only, and registration is required so that we can gather all relevant feedback. Please give us names and contact info for friends you think would like to join us, and we will reach out to them directly.

SOUNDS GREAT. WHAT DOES IT COST?

The $25 suggested donation helps cover the cost of kosher food and materials. All other costs are subsidized by the Center for Jewish Ethics at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. In addition, we are offering stipends to help cover the cost of respite care, childcare and transportation. In your registration, you can make a donation, or request a stipend.