

A Search for Beginnings

Study Leader: Art Rosen

Wednesdays, 1:00–3:00 p.m.

4 weeks beginning April 16

AIL Classroom, Lethbridge Lodge, Colby-Sawyer College

Maximum number of participants: 40

The Judeo-Christian tradition can be thought of as an inverted pyramid, ever-widening but mounted on a dimly lit foundation. This course explores the very beginnings of Judaism and Christianity. It finds that much of both religions originated in surrounding cultures. It is a sensitive finding. If it holds, can one still speak of divinely revealed religions? And what of the beliefs attributed to Abraham and Jesus?

This course begins with Canaanite and Midianite theology and continues with an outline of Babylonian, Persian and Greco-Roman contributions. Together, they create a cultural stew that congeals and separates as concepts are added and discarded. In time, a unique blend develops, the faith of ancient Israel emerges, and from it comes Judaism and Christianity.

It is social anthropology applied to religious studies. It will raise many questions and should stimulate lively discussion.



Art Rosen

Art thought he had given his last AIL course and his t-shirt was hanging from the AIL rafters. But he is back for his 23rd course, A Search for Beginnings.

His college studies (Yale University and Brooklyn College) were in social anthropology, but his career was spent in advertising. Fair to say, few admen move comfortably from advertising campaigns to religious studies. Art has, and he will draw from both fields in what will be a challenging and most provocative course.