Judaic Studies

Acting Director - Fall 2018
David C. Jacobson

Director - Spring 2019
Saul Olyan

The Program in Judaic Studies is dedicated to the study of Jewish history, literature, language, politics and religions. Offering an interdisciplinary undergraduate concentration, the program provides students with the opportunity to explore Jewish culture and civilization across the ages. Since Christianity and Islam have deep roots in Judaism, and the Western world has been profoundly shaped by a deep and abiding tension with both Jewish religious tradition and the Jewish communities in its midst, the concentration puts particular importance on studying the interactions of Jews and non-Jews in both ancient and modern periods. The history and culture of the State of Israel and its place in the Middle East is also a major focus of study. These are all issues with significant contemporary resonance, so the concentration offers its students many new insights on the world in which we live.

The critical reading of texts - from the Hebrew Bible to contemporary Israeli poetry, from the kabbalah to modern Jewish autobiography, from philosophical treatises to communal record books - is central to the Judaic Studies concentration. Students are required to complete at least one year of course work in Hebrew, the language of foundational Jewish texts from antiquity to modern-day Israel. They are also encouraged to further improve their Hebrew, and where feasible, to study other appropriate languages such as Yiddish, Aramaic, ancient Greek, Arabic, or contemporary European languages.

For additional information, please visit the department’s website: http://www.brown.edu/academics/judaic-studies/

Judaic Studies Concentration Requirements

Jews have lived and flourished over thousands of years in a variety of social contexts, stretching from the Land of Israel and the eastern Mediterranean to Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Concentrators will have the opportunity to study Jews in these contexts, getting to know their social structures, and what they have created. The subjects of study cover an astonishing range, including history and society, Jewish law and philosophy, and Jewish literature and ritual. Students will learn to unlock this wealth in both the ancient and the modern worlds through a number of academic disciplines - History, Religious Studies, and Literature. These also provide tools for studying and analyzing human societies and cultures in general, for which Jewish experiences provide an important perspective.

PROGRAM IN JUDAIC STUDIES

Required Coursework

The Program in Judaic Studies offers two paths (detailed below). Please note that the following apply to each concentrator:

1) All students are required to take a total of ten courses.

2) All students must take one full year of Hebrew (two of the ten required courses). Generally, this requirement will consist of two courses in Elementary Hebrew (HEBR 0100/HEBR 0200) or the equivalent as determined by a proficiency examination. Fulfillment of the Hebrew requirement through examination does not reduce the requirement to take ten courses for the concentration.

3) Upon declaring a concentration in Judaic Studies, each student must define his or her primary disciplinary track (History, Religious Studies, or Language/Literature). Concentrators will then be assigned a faculty mentor in that discipline (within the Judaic Studies faculty) to help students select courses and construct a coherent concentration plan.

Program in History or Religious Studies:

For this track, students are expected to complete a minimum of four courses in their area of disciplinary focus (History or Religious Studies), at least one of which must and no more than two of which may be outside the Program in Judaic Studies in the department of disciplinary focus (preferably methods courses, such as in the History department or RELS 1000). Students in this track, in consultation with the concentration adviser and faculty mentor, may apply up to two additional Hebrew language courses (HEBR 0300, HEBR 0400, or HEBR 0500) to the additional four required courses for the concentration.

Program in Language/Literature:

For this track, students are expected to complete five courses in Hebrew language (HEBR 0100 / HEBR 0200; HEBR 0300/HEBR 0400; HEBR 0500). In addition, students will take Issues in Israel in Hebrew (HEBR 0600) and one further course in Judaic Studies (within the disciplinary focus). Two additional courses in the disciplinary focus, at least one of which must be outside the Program in Judaic Studies in a department of shared disciplinary focus (e.g. English or Comparative Literature), are also required. Fulfillment of the Hebrew requirement through proficiency examination does not reduce the requirement to take ten courses for the concentration.

4) Of the courses required in the Program in Judaic Studies, at least one should focus on the ancient period and one should focus on the modern period.

5) Each student, in discussion with his/her mentor, is required to designate an advanced course (1000 level) in his/her senior year either within the Judaic Studies program or in the corresponding disciplinary department as the capstone for his/her concentration. The capstone course is to be a capstone course in Judaic Studies that displays in an appropriate way the theoretical and interpretive issues of the concentration focus. If a student opts to fulfill this requirement in a course outside the Program in Judaic Studies, the student must get permission in advance both from his/her mentor and from the professor of the course in question since the student’s final project will address a Judaic Studies topic or theme.

6) Students who study at other institutions, either in the United States or abroad, may apply a maximum of four courses (two topical and two language courses) to the concentration.

7) Double concentrators may count up to two courses that they have used to complete their concentration requirements in another department towards their concentration in Judaic Studies.

Honors Program

Any student who wishes to engage more deeply in research related to Judaic Studies in any of its disciplines or branches is invited to consider writing an Honors Thesis.

The Honors Thesis

The goal of the thesis is to add to the existing scholarship in the field of Judaic Studies. It should be based on original research, involving the close reading of primary sources. The honors thesis is expected to present an argument based on the student's own analysis and will engage an ongoing debate or discussion in the field, demonstrating an awareness of the major research done until now and clearly identifying its own contribution, however limited. Since it is the equivalent of two semester-long courses, it should be a substantial piece of work (typically between 35,000-55,000 words) containing a sustained and consistently supported argument. To be successful, the student needs to adopt both a critical research methodology and a logical research strategy, both of which should be discussed in the thesis itself. In addition to being assessed in all these aspects, the thesis will also be graded on its organization (the way in which it is structured into separate and clearly defined chapters to support the main argument) as well as the quality and precision of its writing.

Work that simply describes and summarizes its sources along with previous research is not acceptable. The goal here is original research and analysis.

Entering the Program

In order to be considered a candidate for Honors, students will be expected to have maintained an outstanding record (at least A in
Judaic Studies courses. The Honors thesis, which fulfills the capstone requirement, will normally be written as a two-semester individual study project (numbered JUDS 1975/JUDS 1976) during the senior year.

A student contemplating a thesis should approach the faculty member with whom he or she hopes to work during the sixth semester. Once he or she has agreed to be the advisor (or helped find another member of the program better suited to the project), the student begins a process of consultation in order to determine a topic for the thesis, its sources, and proposed methodology. The contours of the project should also be laid out so that the student can commence productive research at the very beginning of the seventh semester. After this, a second reader for the thesis should be chosen by the advisor in consultation with the student.

This may be a faculty member of the Judaic Studies program, one of the affiliate faculty, or, should the topic require it, a member of a different department. By the last week of the semester, the student should submit a thesis information form detailing the thesis topic with a short description of the proposed project, countersigned by advisor and second reader.

Thesis Proposal
During the first three weeks of the seventh semester, the student should work with the faculty advisor to write a thesis proposal. This should be a brief document (1,500-2,000 words) explaining the topic chosen for the thesis and its significance to the field of Judaic Studies, with reference to previous research on the subject. The proposal should detail the questions to be asked and the kind of argument that will be made as well as explaining the primary sources and research methodology that will be employed. The proposed research strategy (i.e. the stages by which research and writing will be done) and timetable should be appended together with a brief, one page bibliography of primary sources and major research to be consulted.

Once the advisor is satisfied with the proposal, the student will be considered fully accepted into the Honors program and can enroll in the required independent study course by the last day to add a course in the fourth week of the term.

Research and Writing
It is the responsibility of the student to carry out the research program outlined in the proposal, as well as to write the thesis in an organized and timely fashion. During the process of research and writing, the advisor will continue to work closely with the student, providing guidance on research methods and suggesting further secondary reading. A regular meeting schedule will be set up to help the student meet the short- and long-term deadlines he or she has set. The advisor will also evaluate the progress of the research, providing any necessary direction and detailed feedback on written drafts.

The second reader will also be available to provide a measure of input and guidance during the process of research and writing. This may be particularly important in those areas where the primary advisor has limited expertise. The second reader may also be willing to help with giving feedback on various sections of the thesis drafts. All these roles should be determine by a process of consultation involving the advisor, the student, and the second reader him/herself.

The final thesis should have a complete scientific apparatus - citations and a full bibliography - in a form determined by the advisor.

It should be submitted no later than April 15 for May graduates and November 15 for December completers.

Assessment
The thesis will be assessed independently by the advisor and the second reader in written reports. In order to receive Honors, it should be deemed excellent according to the following standards:

- Is the scope of the work appropriate for an Honors thesis?
- To what extent does it qualify as original research?
- To what degree does it sustain an analytic argument throughout?
- To what degree is it rooted in an engagement with previous research?
- How well does it reflect critically on its method and process?
- To what extent is the organization adequate to the argument presented?
- How well is the thesis rooted in the common conventions of the field?

The two reports will be circulated to all faculty members in the program, who will review them before making the final determination at the next faculty meeting whether the thesis merits Honors. The meeting must be held, the decision reached, and the candidate informed before the Registrar's deadline for that semester.

Further Information
Students who are interested in further information about the concentration should contact the Judaic Studies Office at 163 George Street to make an appointment with the undergraduate concentration advisor. [Tel: 401.863.3912] or Judaic@brown.edu.

Courses

Biblical Hebrew
BHBR 0100. Introduction to Biblical Hebrew.
An introductory introduction to the fundamentals of biblical Hebrew grammar and vocabulary intended to prepare students to read biblical texts in the original language. For students with little or no prior knowledge of Hebrew.
BHBR 0200. Readings in Biblical Hebrew.
An introduction to the reading of biblical texts in Hebrew. Reading of selected texts from narrative, law, and poetry in the Hebrew Bible, with a few texts in post-classical Hebrew (the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Mishnah) introduced late in the semester. Intended for students who have completed BHBR 0100; others should consult the instructor.

Hebrew
HEBR 0100. Elementary Hebrew.
An introduction to the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in contemporary Israeli Hebrew. Students also read Hebrew texts adapted for their level of Hebrew based on biblical, rabbinic, and modern Hebrew literature, which introduce them to the approaches of Hebrew writers in various periods and to a variety of cultural issues. If registration is closed, please contact the professor and a wait list will be created. This is the first half of a year-long course whose first semester grade is normally a temporary one. Neither semester may be elected independently without special permission. Enrollment limited to 20.

HEBR 0100
Fall HEBR0100 S01 16671 TTh 1:00-2:20(06) (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)
Fall HEBR0100 S01 16671 MWF 1:00-1:50(06) (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)

HEBR 0200. Elementary Hebrew.
This is the second half of a year-long course, an introduction to the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in contemporary Israeli Hebrew. Students also read Hebrew texts adapted for their level of Hebrew based on biblical, rabbinic, and modern Hebrew literature, which introduce them to the approaches of Hebrew writers in various periods and to a variety of cultural issues. Prerequisite: HEBR 0100. Students must have taken HEBR 0100 for credit to receive credit for this course. Exceptions must be approved by both the academic department and the Committee on Academic Standing. Enrollment limited to 20.

HEBR 0200
Spr HEBR0200 S01 25166 TTh 1:00-2:20(06) (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)
Spr HEBR0200 S01 25166 MWF 1:00-1:50(06) (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)
HEBR 0300. Intermediate Hebrew.
Develops the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in contemporary Israeli Hebrew at the intermediate level and of reading Hebrew texts of the biblical, rabbinic, and modern periods (biblical stories, rabbinic legends, modern Hebrew poems, stories, essays, newspaper articles). Discussions and compositions focus on the psychological, cultural, political, and social issues reflected in the Hebrew sources that we study. Prerequisite: HEBR 0200 or equivalent. Enrollment limited to 20. If unable to enroll because of closed registration, please contact the professor and a wait list will be created.

Fall HEBR0300 S01 16313 TTh 12:00-12:50(12)  (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)
Fall HEBR0300 S01 16313 MWF 12:00-12:50(12)  (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)

HEBR 0400. Intermediate Hebrew.
Develops the skills of reading, writing, and conversing in contemporary Israeli Hebrew at the intermediate level and of reading Hebrew texts of the biblical, rabbinic, and modern periods (biblical stories, rabbinic legends, modern Hebrew poems, stories, essays, newspaper articles). Discussions and compositions focus on the psychological, cultural, political, and social issues reflected in the Hebrew sources that we study. Prerequisite: HEBR 0300 or equivalent. Enrollment limited to 20. If unable to enroll because of closed registration please contact the professor and a wait list will be created.

Spr HEBR0400 S01 25165 TTh 12:00-12:50(05)  (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)
Spr HEBR0400 S01 25165 MWF 12:00-12:50(05)  (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)

HEBR 0500. Writing and Speaking Hebrew.
Enables students to improve their skills in speaking and writing Hebrew on a variety of topics. Features advanced work on language structure and active language practice in the classroom. Class discussions of Israeli current events draw on Israeli stories, poems, television programs, and films and on the Israeli press. Students also compose essays and stories in Hebrew. Prerequisite: HEBR 0400 or equivalent. Enrollment limited to 20.

Fall HEBR0500 S01 16315 TTh 2:30-3:50(03)  (R. Adler Ben Yehuda)

HEBR 0600. Issues in Contemporary Israeli Society, Politics, and Culture in Hebrew.
An exploration of current issues in contemporary Israeli society, politics, and culture: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tensions between ultra-Orthodox and secular Jews, religion and state, Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, the economic gap between rich and poor, the integration of citizens from a variety of backgrounds (Jews of Middle Eastern, North African, Russian, and Ethiopian origin; Arab citizens of Israel), gender relations. Sources include films, television programs, Internet news, works of literature. Conducted in Hebrew. Emphasizes strengthening Hebrew reading, writing, and speaking skills. Prerequisite: HEBR 0500. Students who have not taken HEBR 0500 should see instructor for permission to enroll. DPLL

Spr HEBR0600 S01 25163 MWF 10:00-10:50(03)  (D. Jacobson)

Judaic Studies

JUDS 0050A. Believers, Agnostics, and Atheists in Contemporary Fiction and Memoirs.
In recent decades, there has been a resurgence of religiosity in contemporary society, while at the same time many have been skeptical and even hostile to religious belief and practice. Others are just not sure what to believe. We will study selections of fiction and memoirs by writers of Christian and Jewish background that explore such situations as the affirmation or negation of the existence of God, the role of religious ritual in a person's life, and the positive and negative impacts on society of religious institutions and the clergy who lead them. Enrollment limited to 19 first-year students.

Fall JUDS0050A S01 16318 MWF 10:00-10:50(14)  (D. Jacobson)

JUDS 0050E. From Amsterdam to Istanbul: Christians, Muslims, and Jews.
This course combines text, picture, and music to study the history of Europe and the wider world in the early modern period through the eyes of a minority. Examines the new Jewish centers in the Atlantic world, the Ukrainian steppe, and the Middle East from 1500-1800, and how they shaped these environments. Students study cultural revolutions, such as the spread of printing, the renaissance and new religious movements. See how the development of the modern state and the blurring of social, religious, and gender boundaries created new definitions of religious and cultural identity. Enrollment limit: 19 first year students. FYS WRIT

JUDS 0050H. Israel's Wars.
Israel's history has unfolded under the shadow of its prolonged conflict with the Palestinians and its Arab neighbors. This first year seminar will survey the military aspect of this conflict. The major aim of the course is to present an historical survey of the Israeli-Arab wars and Jewish-Palestinian encounters in the 20th century. This will provide some of the necessary background for understanding the present phase of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East, and help in comprehending the roots and causes of contemporary controversies between Israel and the Palestinians and/or its Arab neighboring states. Enrollment limited to 19 first year students. FYS

JUDS 0050J. Friendship in the Ancient World (RELS 0090F).
Interested students must register for RELS 0090F.

How have Jews come to terms with dynamic nature of the Modern World? How has life in new places and new times affected Jewish life? We will look at the changing structures of Jewish identity in the modern period as the Jews came to terms with their new, and ever changing situation in society. Each week a different form of Jewish identity will be examined in its specific historical setting. Among others we will look at a Court Jew, an Enlightened Jew, a Jewish Nationalist, a Jew in a Nazi Ghetto, an Israeli Jew, and a contemporary American Jew. Enrollment limited to 19 first year students. DPLL FYS WRIT

JUDS 0050M. Difficult Relations? Judaism and Christianity from the Middle Ages until the Present.
How have Jews come to terms with Christian neighbors? How do the causes of contemporary controversies between Israel and the Palestinians and/or its Arab neighboring states. Enrollment limited to 19 first year students. DPLL FYS WRIT

JUDS 0050N. Death and Afterlife in the Biblical Tradition (RELS 0090J).
Interested students must register for RELS 0090J.

JUDS 0060. The Bible and Moral Debate.
How was the Bible employed in past moral debates that divided American society, e.g., debates over the legitimacy of slavery? How is the Bible used in contemporary moral discourse, e.g., concerning abortion, capital punishment and gay rights? What does the Bible really have to say about such issues? This course will consider these and other questions through a close reading of pertinent texts which address topics such as abortion, homosexuality, capital punishment, immigration, gender, family violence, race and slavery, disability, genocide, the environment and inequality of wealth. No prerequisites. DPLL WRIT
JUDS 0061. Foreigners, Refugees, and the Ethics of Minority. This class investigates the legal and ethical definitions of persons and homelands by examining the relationship between concepts of native and foreigner, hospitality and neighbour, refuge and exile, minority and majority. We will adopt historical, philosophical, and legal perspectives and take the Jewish historical experience of exile and minority as a jumping off point for discussing the contemporary refugee and migration crisis. The goal of this class is to contextualize liberal democratic debates over rights to migration and mobility with historical religious and moral sources as well as to explore the possibilities for social integration of difference within pluralism. DPLL WRIT


JUDS 0080A. Ethics After Auschwitz?. Can we still speak of a "human condition"—a moral term—when human beings are capable of genocide? Does ethical responsibility have meaning if another's death can be manufactured by the state? Can traditional morality and religion still find a place in a world of which it cannot make sense? In this class, we will take the Holocaust as the beginning of a tragic account of contemporary humanity and examine the possibilities for human life and morality in light of the social and political orchestration of mass killing and oppression. Authors include, Adorno, Agamben, Arendt, Fackenheim, Foucault, Levi, and Levinas. SOPH DPLL WRIT

JUDS 0090C. Intermediate Biblical Hebrew. An intermediate course for those who have completed JUDS 0090A and 0090B, the introductory level courses. Focus on reading a single biblical book (translation, grammar and syntax, interpretation).

JUDS 0090D. Intermediate Biblical Hebrew II. An intermediate course, the continuation of JUDS 0090C. Focuses on reading a single biblical book (translation, grammar and syntax, interpretation). Intended for students who have completed JUDS 0090C; others should consult the instructor.

JUDS 0601. Authority and Autonomy. This course will introduce the history of Jewish thought, focusing upon the problems of authority and autonomy, normativity and agency, law and freedom. We will investigate the relationship between legally mandated actions and an individual's responsibility to tradition and community and question whether the concept of revealed "law" imposes a "necessary" obligation upon ethical agency or rather serves a pedagogical function (virtue). By focusing upon Jewish philosophical critiques and endorsements of the modern conception of autonomy, we will ask whether "I am the legitimate authority of my own actions or whether I require tradition or community to set an example. DPLL WRIT

JUDS 0602. Gender in Early Jewish and Christian Texts (RELS 0195). Interested students must register for RELS 0195.

JUDS 0603. Race, Religion, and the Secular. The most "secular" presidential election in American history saw the language of Christian America apparently yield to a rhetoric of racism, misogyny, and white identity. But racialization and secularization are very much intertwined. In an effort to understand how "whiteness" is tied to the history of Christianity and secular, liberal democracies, this class will trace the figure of the "Jew" in the Christian imagination, and examine the racial and religious othering of Judaism as an entry point for reflecting upon contemporary American social and political struggles surrounding religious and racial identities. WRIT DPLL

JUDS 0625. Israelite Religion (RELS 0320). Interested students must register for RELS 0320.

JUDS 0630. The Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and Its World. An introduction to the historical-critical study of the Hebrew Bible and a reconstruction of the history of Israel to the end of the Persian period (332 B.C.E.). Topics include biblical source criticism; Israel's obscure origins; reconstructing the settlement period; an imperial Israel under David and Solomon; institutions-law and authority, covenant, prophecy, temple cult and priesthood. All readings in translation. No prerequisites.

JUDS 0670. War and Peace in the Hebrew Bible and its Environment. An examination of the role of war and peace in the Hebrew Bible and in texts and art of ancient Israel's neighbors. Topics include divine beings, war and peace-making; peace treaties; explaining defeat and victory; ideologies of warfare; the treatment of prisoners, corpses and captured bones; the warrior as masculine ideal; civil war and coups; treaty obligations; ritual dimensions of war and peace (e.g., mourning, animal sacrifice, child sacrifice, divination, memorializing war); visual representations of war as propaganda; the idea of a future, eschatological war between the forces of good and the forces of evil. No prerequisites. WRIT

JUDS 0671. Sex and Gender in Ancient Israel. An introduction of Israelite views of the sexes, restrictions on sexual expression, and the construction of gender as evidenced by biblical sources and archeological data. Topics include creation stories on human origins and the human condition, including the origin of the two sexes and reproduction; marriage and family life (inheritance, internmarriage, divorce, the widow, status of the fetus); sexual boundaries (adultery, rape, incest, prostitution, homoeroticism); purity and sexual expression; male and female religious professionals and votaries; constructing gender: masculine and feminine behaviors. WRIT, DPLL

JUDS 0680. Judaism, Christianity, and the Bible. No book in human history has exercised as much influence as the Bible. Over the past 2,000 years, people have killed and died for the Bible, and it continues to exercise a powerful if contested role in modern politics. Yet how did it achieve this power? This course will trace the development of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) from its origins in ancient Israel to its development about five hundred years later as a foundational text of both Judaism and Christianity. The focus will be on how Jews and early Christians throughout antiquity understood and ascribed authority to the Bible. WRIT

JUDS 0681. Great Jewish Books. A survey of classic Jewish texts, from the Bible to modern literature. Each text will be discussed from the perspective of both its own historical and social context and its engagement with earlier ones. Attention will be paid on how these authors address perennial issues of human concern and how their answers are shaped by their experience as Jews. DPLL WRIT Fall JUDS0681 S01 16320 W 3:00-5:30(17) (M. Satlow)

JUDS 0683. Jews and Money. In the West, there has always been a complicated relationship between Jews and money. In the first part of this course, we will examine, both theoretically and empirically, the complex relationship between Jews, capitalism, socialism, nationalism, and anti-Semitism. In the second part of the course, we will return to the one aspect of the "cultural capital" that is sometimes said to have helped Jews to prosper: their religious tradition. We will put these religious teachings into conversation with pressing modern questions such as: What is "wealth" and "ownership"? Do the rich and poor have obligations to each other? DPLL WRIT

JUDS 0684. Great Jewish Books (RELS 0323). Interested students must register for RELS 0323.

JUDS 0686. The Ten Commandments. A history of the Ten Commandments from the Bible to today. How have the commandments been understood by Jews and Christians throughout time? What symbolic importance have they had? WRIT

JUDS 0700. A Game of Thrones: Religion and Nationalism, 1789-1933. While contemporary liberal democracy takes a neutral stance toward different religions, it was modern European conflict over religion that gave rise to this political theory. Supposed "friends" such as 19th-century German Protestants and Catholics fought bitterly about whose version of Christianity should be the basis of the modern state. "Enemies" such as the Jews were thought to be incapable of civic participation in the liberal state and undeserving of equal rights. This course will examine, both philosophically and historically, the tensions between religion and politics in modernity that led to the emergence of the theory of state neutrality. DPLL WRIT
JUDS 0820. God and Poetry.
In this seminar we will read selections from the biblical books of Psalms and Job and contemporary Jewish and Christian poetry, exploring how the language of poetry can serve as a means to convey the nature of relations between humanity and the divine. We will also discuss the underlying universal human psychological experiences reflected in the poems and how religiosity provides a framework for people to deal with those experiences. In our discussion of the contemporary Jewish and Christian poems, we will seek to understand the attempt of the poet to write about religious experience in a secular age. WRIT

JUDS 0830. The Bible as Literature.
Explores how methods of literary analysis can be applied to the reading of narratives of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible (in English translation). Also compares the ways that modern writers have transformed biblical stories into new interpretive literary works. For students interested in an introduction to the Bible, as well as students with a knowledge of the Bible who want to deepen their understanding of biblical narratives and investigate the influence of the Bible on modern literature. All readings in English. DPLL

JUDS 0840. "Coming Out" Jewish, Gay or Black: Mistaken Identity in Literature from USA and Brazil (POBS 0820).
Interested students must register for POBS 0820.

JUDS 0901. Brothers Betrayed: Jews and Poles from 1500 until Today.
Jews have lived on Polish lands for some nine hundred years. In that time, they and their non-Jewish neighbors have interacted in a wide range of ways, from friendship and co-operation to hatred and violence. In this course, we examine this centuries long relationship, focusing particularly on how peaceful co-existence between Poles and Jews could rapidly change to bitter hostility. Topics include: Jews and the early-modern nobility; the eighteenth-century “Polish-Jewish Brotherhood”; the exclusionary politics of the interwar Polish republic; Poland’s role in the Holocaust; the post-war Communist regime and the Jews; Polish-Jewish relations following the collapse of communism. DPLL WRIT

JUDS 0902. History of the Holocaust.
Explores questions raised by the Holocaust regarding how such barbarism erupted in our so-called civilized and enlightened age. Attempts to analyze the meaning of the Holocaust from three vantage points: that of European, and more particularly, German history; that of Jewish history; and that of those states and religious institutions which shared responsibility. Enrollment limited to 40. If unable to enroll because of closed registration please contact the professor and a wait list will be created. DPLL WRIT

JUDS 1002. Targumic Aramaic.
A systematic study of the grammar of Targumic Aramaic followed by readings from Targum Onqelos to the Book of Exodus. Prerequisite: knowledge of the grammar of a Semitic language (preferably Hebrew). Open to undergraduates and graduate students with the necessary background. Regular attendance and thorough preparation are mandatory for all students in this class. By the end of the semester, we will have translated at least four chapters of the Onqelos Targum to Exodus. This course will serve as a foundation for any further work students intend to do with Aramaic (e.g., Old, Imperial, Biblical, Talmudic).

JUDS 1530. Prophets and Priests in Exile: Biblical Literature of the 6th Century BCE.
The exile of Judah’s elite to Babylon elicited profound and conflicting literary responses. We will undertake a literary and historical analysis of a number of the most important works produced in response to the crisis of exile, including Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Second Isaiah, Lamentations, Psalm 137, the Priestly Writing, and the work of the exilic deuteronomists. Enrollment limited to 20.

The modern engagement with the many ways that we construct identity has been matched by a similar wave of studies about identity construction in the ancient world. In this course we will discuss the rise of “Judaism” and “Jewish identity” in the ancient period (looking at roughly 400 BCE-200 CE), and compare it with the movement of the followers of Jesus as a negotiation of a new identity within Judaism (roughly 30 CE-200 CE). We will conclude with the question of the “Parting of the Ways” of these two groups. WRIT

JUDS 1602. Mishnah and Tosefta.
An examination and close reading of the Mishnah and Tosefta, two third-century CE documents foundational to rabbinic Judaism. The class will focus on both contemporary scholarly understandings of these texts and readings, in the original Hebrew, of the text itself. Knowledge of Hebrew (biblical, rabbinic, or two years of modern or its equivalent) required. DPLL WRIT

Ancient Jews and Christians produced many texts that were not canonized in the Bible, texts often as interesting, beautiful, or theoretically rewarding as those later canonized. Why were they not also included? What was the process of canonization, and who was in charge? What were the contexts that produced the non-canonical texts? What were the contexts that produced the non-canonical texts? Were the texts omitted at odds with the mainstream, or even dangerous? What value did they have in the ancient world, and what value do they hold today for historical understanding? We will study some of the best of these texts, comparing them to biblical texts.

JUDS 1610. The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans.
Jerusalem earned a special eminence among the world’s famed ancient cities. Its sanctity to Jews, Christians, and Muslims made the city a focus of discussions and controversies regarding the evolving and changing identities throughout its long urban history. 1700+ archaeological excavations and surveys in and around the Old City have been conducted over the last 150 years. Examine the material remains of the city from the beginnings in the Chalcolithic period through the Ottoman period, 1917 CE. The contemporary literary sources as well as the more recent scholarly debates and discoveries help us understand the material remains of the relevant periods.

JUDS 1611. The Dead Sea Scrolls.
The Dead Sea scrolls have been rightly celebrated as changing our fundamental understanding of ancient Jewish and Christian history as well as the Bible. But what is in them, and why do they matter? In this course we will read through most of the scrolls in English translation and cover topics such as: authorship; historical context; religious practice; and scripture and its interpretation. The course will develop skills in analytical writing, close reading, and historical reasoning. Enrollment limited to 20. WRIT

JUDS 1613. Religion and Postcolonialism.
When eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Western scholars turned their gaze toward the East they began fetishizing the wonders and mysteries of the Orient. This powerful myth of the Orient helped to reimagine the Jews of Europe as an “internal colony” and also helped justify the colonization of and Christian missionizing among peoples abroad. This course will examine the social, political, and scholarly representations of religious and cultural otherness of Jews, Muslims, and Hindus who experienced Christianity as both a colonizing force as well as a model for imagining the nationalist projects of their post-colonial states. DPLL WRIT
JUDS 1614. Heidegger, the Jews, and the Crisis of Liberalism.
This class explores the enduring legacy of Heidegger’s critique of Western philosophy in political, theological, and social thought. Focusing primarily upon Heidegger’s reception in 20th-century Jewish philosophy, we will explore the allure of Heideggerian thought and its implication in both left and right political critiques of liberalism. Topics include onto-theology, phenomenology, and radical historicism; science, hermeneutics, and methodology in the humanities; liberalism and the secular; ethics, politics, action; de- and construction; time and the Other. Authors include Adorno, Arendt, Butler, Derrida, Levinas, Löwith, Marcuse, Rosenzweig, Schmitt, Strauss. DPLL WRIT

JUDS 1615. The Archaeology of Palestine.
Palestine constitutes one of the most important archaeological regions connected to the origins of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In this class we will examine the material remains of the region beginning in pre-historic times until the end of the Ottoman period in 1917. Literary sources as well as the more recent scholarly debates and discoveries help us understand the material remains of the relevant periods. WRIT

JUDS 1616. Adam and Eve in Early Biblical Interpretation (RELS 1144).
Interested students must register for RELS 1144.

This seminar surveys the history of archaeological exploration, discovery, and interpretation in the contexts of social, political, and religious debates from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, with an emphasis on the post-1967 period. It examines the legal settings and ethical precepts of archaeological activity and the developing discourse of cultural heritage. It analyzes the ongoing struggle to discover and define the city’s past, to expose its physical legacy, and to advance claims of scientific validity and objectivity against the challenges of religious zeal and political partisanship, the latter both intimately related though not necessarily limited to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. WRIT

JUDS 1625. Problems in Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism.
A series of topics in Israelite religion and ancient Judaism which are of current scholarly interest are explored in a seminar setting. Students are encouraged to read widely and pursue individual research interests. The course assumes a basic knowledge of biblical literature and scholarly criticism. Enrollment limited to 20.

JUDS 1630. The Talmud.
Written from the first to seventh centuries CE, the Talmud (which runs to 20 volumes) contains law, lore, theological speculation, and complex argumentation. We will read a selection in depth and examine both traditional and modern critical (e.g. historical and literary) approaches to this fundamental text. No prerequisites; all texts in English translation. Enrollment limited to 20. DPLL WRIT

JUDS 1635. Problems in Israelite History.
Topics of recent and current debate among specialists in the field of Israelite history. Problems include (1) the historicity of the patriarchs and matriarchs; (2) the historical evidence relevant to the question of an exodus; (3) the nature of Israel’s settlement in Canaan; (4) the 10th century, era of empire or literary fiction? (5) the land of Judah after the Babylonian conquest. Enrollment limited to 20.

Surveys the major practices, traditions, and beliefs of the Jews, with an emphasis on modern Jewish communities. How does a Jewish community shape its practices and beliefs against its own specific historical circumstances to create a coherent and meaningful religious system? What is “Judaism,” and how do scholars of religion explain and interpret it? DPLL WRIT

JUDS 1645. Jews and Judaism in the Greco Roman Mediterranean.
An advanced survey of the evidence for Jews and Judaism in the Greco-Roman Mediterranean (Egypt, Asia Minor, Rome, North Africa, etc.). Sources include synagogue mosaics, burial and donor inscriptions, personal documents, and references in non-Jewish writers, including Christians. Also considers what theoretical models best enable us to reconstruct the identity, practices and beliefs of the ancient diaspora Jewish communities. Enrollment limited to 20.

JUDS 1650. Religion and Sexuality.
For millennia, religious thinkers have wrestled with the nature of sexuality. This class will examine how these thinkers have dealt with the essential questions that sexuality raises. Why do humans have sexual desire? Are there proper limits to sexual activity? While the focus of this class will be on Judaism and Christianity from antiquity to the present, we will also discuss Hindu, Muslim, and Tantra views. Topics to be addressed include: the nature and purpose of human sexual desire; contraception; adultery; homosexuality; abortion; and masturbation. No prerequisites. WRIT

JUDS 1654. Russian Jewish Literature and Film (RUSS 1900).
Interested students must register for RUSS 1900.

JUDS 1655. Religion in the Dead Sea Scrolls (RELS 1150).
Interested students must register for RELS 1150.

Interested students must register for HMAN 1970I.

Reviews the discoveries and related scholarship of ancient synagogues, churches, and mosques in ancient Palestine. Focuses on their architectural and decorative as well as their spiritual and religious characteristics, and examines how those institutions influenced each other throughout their history of development. WRIT

JUDS 1675. Parting of the Ways: The Separation of Judaism and Christianity.
Jesus may have been Jewish, but for many centuries, Jews and Christians alike have considered their religions and their self-identifications to be mutually exclusive. When, why and how did these differences become definitive? Some modern scholars argue that “the ways parted early”: others contend that they never parted at all. We focus on the period before Christianity becomes the official religion of the Roman Empire (late 4th century C.E.), with attention to persons in antiquity who contested these distinctions, and even to some in our own time (“Hebrew Christians,” “Messianic Jews,” and “Jews for Jesus”). Enrollment limited to 20. WRIT

JUDS 1680. The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls.
Qumran is one of the most prominent archaeological sites in the world. Its fame derives from its proximity to a series of caves where some 800 ancient scrolls were found. Scholars have debated the relevance of this site to the histories of Judaism and Christianity. This seminar will examine the debates regarding the character of Qumran through the material finds from old and new excavations conducted at the site itself and in the Dead Sea region. The lectures and readings are intended to stimulate a discussion about how to use texts and material culture for reconstructing the past. Enrollment limited to 20.

JUDS 1690. Prophets and Priests in Exile: Biblical Literature of the 6th Century BCE.
The exile of Judah’s elite to Babylon elicited profound and conflicting literary responses. We will undertake a literary and historical analysis of a number of the most important works produced in response to the crisis of exile, including Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Second Isaiah, Lamentations, Psalm 137, the Priestly Writing, and the work of the exilic deuteronomists. Enrollment limited to 20.

JUDS 1695. Philo (RELS 1130).
Interested students must register for RELS 1130.

Interested students must register for HMAN 1971U.

The 20th century was an age of revolutions, both political and social, in which Jews played pivotal roles. The student uprisings of the 1960s, the Feminist revolution, and the rise of the LGBTQ movement were crucial moments of change in the development of the western world. We will discuss the Jews’ roles in all these revolutionary movements, as well as in the great political revolutions of the time. WRIT DPLL
What can the experience of the Jews teach us about the growth of the modern economy in the era of globalization? What were the economic, political, and cultural conditions that allowed Jewish bankers to create the economic networks that helped underpin the modern world? We will answer these questions by examining the careers and interactions of the major Jewish bankers and banking dynasties such as the Rothschilds, Jacob Schiff, and Gerson Bleichroder. We will see how these Jewish economic networks helped create - and were exploited by – the modern European economic systems of Europe, the United States and Israel. DPLL WRIT

This course surveys the history of Israel from its Proclamation of Independence in 1948 until today. Israel's history has unfolded under the shadow of its prolonged conflict with the Palestinians and its Arab neighbors. At the same time, an entirely new, vibrant and dynamic society and culture has developed there. This course aims to familiarize the student with the major outlines of Israel's development, and with different narratives and interpretations of that history. The reading materials and class discussions will examine not only the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also its influence on Israeli politics, society and culture. WRIT
Spr JUDS1711 S01 25682 TTh 10:30-11:50(09) (R. Rojanski)

JUDS 1712. History of Zionism and the Birth of the State of Israel.
Examines the history of the Zionist movement within the context of the history of European nationalism and as one of numerous Jewish political responses to rising antisemitism. Explores the ideological and political foundations of the Zionist movement until Israel's establishment as well as broader concerns of Jewish politics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. WRIT

JUDS 1713. Introduction to Yiddish Culture and Language.
Yiddish was the language spoken by most Jews in Eastern Europe and the countries to which they emigrated (including the U.S., England, South Africa, South American countries, and Israel) from the nineteenth century until after the Holocaust. It was the basis for a transnational Jewish culture and literature, and it played a central role in modern Jewish political life. We will explore the history of Yiddish culture and the development of the Yiddish press, literature, and cinema. The connection between Yiddish and modern Jewish politics will also be discussed. Students in this course will also have the opportunity to develop a basic knowledge of the Yiddish language. DPLL

By comparing memoirs from the early modern period through contemporary times and from widely divergent geographical settings such as eastern, central and western Europe, North Africa, the U.S., and Palestine-Israel, this course considers how Jews in different historical settings have understood their “Jewishness” and their relationship to their past, as well as the historian’s role in this relationship. Enrollment limited to 20.

JUDS 1715. Women and Gender in the Modern Jewish World.
This course will focus on Jewish women’s encounters with modernity in a variety of contexts: Western and Eastern Europe, United States, and Israel. The goal of this course is to uncover the experiences of Jewish women and to use gender analysis as a means of enriching our understanding of Jewish life. Students will consider how gender has shaped Jewish women’s experience in the context of immigration, assimilation, religious observance, home, work, motherhood, family, and feminism.

JUDS 1716. The End of Modern Jewish History.
This course addresses the changes to the Jewish diaspora throughout the second half of the twentieth century. It begins by considering the constellation of processes that defined modern Jewish history from the 1750s until the 1940s, including demographic growth; geographic spread; the struggle for political and legal emancipation; cultural, social, and economic integration; and the birth of modern anti-Semitism. The course then asks in what ways the Holocaust and the birth of Israel transformed Jewish life in the diaspora, positing that in the 1940s a new era of Jewish history began. DPLL WRIT

JUDS 1718. Modernity, Jews, and Urban Identities in Central Europe.
The course will explore the distinct cultural identities that Jewish modernist intellectuals like Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, Sigmund Freud, Franz Kafka and Karl Kraus forged for themselves in response to the conflicting challenges of assimilation, anti-semitism and modernization. Readings will be based on primary sources and special emphasis will be placed on the historical contexts of Berlin, Vienna, Budapest and Prague where these thinkers lived their lives. DPLL WRIT
Spr JUDS1718 S01 25201 M 3:00-5:30(13) (P. Nahme)

Hasidism was a social movement founded on mystical ideas. Using the texts of its greatest masters, we will learn how revolutionary new ideas about God and the world became a powerful movement for social change. We will examine Hasidism’s kabbalistic background, and the mystical ideology of the Ba’al Shem Tov and his followers. We will focus on the development of the Zaddok and the Hasidic Court, as well as their conflicts with the rabbinc and community establishments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The seminar will involve critical reading of primary sources in translation and class discussions of historiography. WRIT

What roles did the family play in modern Jewish society and how did Jewish women participate in them? These questions are at the heart of this seminar. Through discussions of primary sources (in translation) and modern research, we will use the tools of gender analysis to examine the history of the Jewish family from the mid-seventeenth century until today. Topics discussed include: Jewish law and the family, women and the politics of the family economy, sex and the erotic, women’s spirituality, the bourgeois Jewish family in imperial Germany, Jewish family life before the Holocaust, and intermarriage in the contemporary USA. WRIT

JUDS 1723. Jews and Muslims.
This course considers interactions between Muslims and Jews in various historical settings from the early Islamic world, to Medieval Spain, to contemporary Europe and the Middle East. The goal is to move beyond simplistic histories of interfaith utopia, Islamic persecution, and Zionist domination to consider the complexities of ethno-religious interaction in a variety of social, cultural, economic and political contexts. WRIT

The seminar explores the relationship between humor, popular culture and Jewish ethnic identity in early 20th-century Europe and America. It argues that self-deprecating humor and satiric performance of Jewish stereotypes were not expressions of self-hatred, but complex cultural gestures that led to in integration within mainstream society. Topics to be considered are: the joke as a social gesture; the Jewish music hall as an urban institution;the politics of blackface in American Vaudeville; the East-European Jews in Hollywood. DPLL
Fall JUDS1726 S01 16677 Th 4:00-6:30(04) (M. Gluck)

Interested students must register for HIST 1551.

Being a diasporic people without a nation-state until the mid-20th century, the Jews in Eastern Europe created Jewish cultures that were also influenced by the non-Jewish environment. How did these cultures develop in the age of mass migrations? How did the new Jewish cultures express the ideas of “homeland” and “diaspora”? Was the Jewish/Hebrew culture created in Israel part of the Jewish cultural discourse, or did it define itself separately? During the course, we will explore Jewish culture in four cities, also examining their relations with each other, in order to understand the transnational nature of these unique Jewish cultures. Enrollment limited to 40.


Interested students must register for HIST 1976R.


Interested students must register for GRMN 1660L.


Interested students must register for HMAN 1971U.


What are the relationships between Man, God, and the World? Over the centuries, Jewish mystics have sought and found many different answers to this question. In doing so, they created new spiritual formations for Judaism to supplant rational philosophy as bearer of the truth about the Cosmos. We will examine the most important mystical texts produced by Jews to understand this crucial strand of Jewish - and Human - religious, spiritual, and cultural development. Among other books, we will read from the Zohar, Lurianic Kabbalah, the false messianic testimonies of the Sabbatean movement, Hasidism, and the thought of Martin Buber. Enrollment limited to 20. DPLL

JUDS 1742. Modern Jewish History and Society.

The study of Jews in their historical and contemporary communities of western and eastern Europe, the U.S., and Israel. Major themes include emancipation and assimilation; secularization and new religious expressions; the Holocaust and modern anti-Semitism; Zionism; immigration, ethnicity, and nationalism; family and intermarriage; education, Jewish culture, and politics.

JUDS 1743. American Jewish History.

By the mid-20th century, the U.S.’s Jewish population was one of the world’s largest and most important. In 1654, however, when 23 Jews landed in New Amsterdam, their position was far from assured. The history of American Jewish settlement is considered by exploring the interaction between the political, social, and cultural environment and successive waves of Jewish migrants. WRIT

JUDS 1745. History of the Holocaust.

Explores questions raised by the Holocaust regarding how such barbarism erupted in our so-called civilized and enlightened age. Attempts to analyze the meaning of the Holocaust from three vantage points: that of European, and more particularly, German history; that of Jewish history; and that of those states and religious institutions which shared responsibility. Enrollment limited to 50. If unable to enroll because of closed registration please contact the professor and a wait list will be created. WRIT


This course introduces students to Jews in the Islamic World from the beginnings of Islam through the modern era. Topics include the legal and social status of Jews under Islam, the structure and schisms of the Jewish community in Islamic empires, Jewish-Muslim relations, the intellectual transformations of Judaism under the impact of Islamic and Arabic culture, and historiographic perspectives. Students will be exposed to a range of primary and secondary source materials and have an opportunity to pursue a research topic in depth.


What were the different experiences for Jews living among Christians and Muslims? How did Islam and Christianity affect the development of Jewish society and culture? Examine these questions by looking at two flourishing Jewish centers from 1500-1800: one in the Muslim Ottoman Empire, the other in the Christian Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Topics to be discussed include: Christian and Muslim attitudes towards Jews and the empires, Jewish responses to them, Jewish-Muslim relations in Polish and Ottoman towns; the development of Jewish law in both settings; Christianity, Islam, and anti-Jewish violence; the interactions of Jewish, Muslim, and Christian mystical movements. Enrollment limit: 20.


In Jewish historical memory, Zionism is seen as the dominant Jewish national ideology throughout the 20th century. However, emerging in 1897, the Zionist movement aroused significant Jewish opposition. Many different Jewish ideologies developed, ranging from non-Zionism to anti-Zionism. This course will discuss the different arguments used by both Zionists and their opponents. We will look at the various options: Zionism, Diaspora Nationalism, Socialism and Communism, and Reform Judaism (before 1967), as well as Israeli Zionism and the opposition it aroused from Post-Zionists. Our focal question will be: why did Zionism evoke so much opposition among different Jewish groups. DPLL WRIT

JUDS 1753. Blacks and Jews in American History and Culture.

African Americans and American Jews have interacted throughout the history of the United States. Through readings, images, and films, this course will explore this complex, sometimes tortured relationship in its religious, cultural and political aspects. It will discuss the role of Jews in the slave trade, the contributions of both groups to American popular culture, both groups’ involvement in the struggle for the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the rise of Black Power, attitudes to Zionism, affirmative action and more. We will try to answer the question how the experiences of both groups both overlapped and led to conflict.

JUDS 1801. Jewish Magic.

This course is designed to introduce you to a wide variety of texts representing magical beliefs and practices found in mainstream and marginal Jewish life from the biblical and rabbinic through the early modern periods (with some present-day comparison). It is also designed to acquaint you with some of the kinds of literature (legends, liturgical compositions, chronicles, exempla, amulets, magic recipe books) that describe magical practices with varying degrees of sympathy. One question we will ask in our discussions is how the literary representations of magic relate to actual magical beliefs and practices of their time.

JUDS 1810. Israeli Literature in Hebrew.

For students interested in reading selections of Hebrew fiction, drama, and poetry. Concentrates on major issues of the State of Israel, for example: the relationship between modernity and tradition, responses to the Holocaust, the Arab-Israeli conflict, and other cultural, social, and political issues. Israeli feature films are viewed and discussed. Conducted in Hebrew. Emphasizes strengthening Hebrew reading, writing, and speaking skills. Prerequisite: JUDS 0500. Students who have not taken JUDS 0500 should see instructor for permission to enroll.

JUDS 1820. Holocaust Literature.

Readings in works of prose and poetry by victims and survivors of the Holocaust that portray experiences in ghettos, in concentration camps, and in hiding. Additional readings in works of the post-war era by survivors and their offspring. Discussion of the moral, psychological, religious, and cultural dimensions of the Holocaust and its ongoing impact on humanity. WRIT

JUDS 1830. Esthers of the Diaspora (POBS 1500H).

Interested students must register for POBS 1500H.

JUDS 1840. The ‘New Jew’ and the Diaspora: Voices from Israel, Brazil and America (POBS 1500W).

Interested students must register for POBS 1500W.
Section numbers vary by instructor. Please see Banner for the correct
course reference number (CRN) to use when registering for this course.

JUDS 1975. Honors Thesis Semester I.
First of two semesters working with a faculty member in the Program
in Judaic Studies to complete an honors thesis. Instructor permission
required.

JUDS 1976. Honors Thesis Semester II.
Second of two semesters working with a faculty member in the Program
in Judaic Studies to complete an honors thesis. Instructor permission
required.

JUDS 2040. Yiddish for Research.
This is a course in Yiddish reading for research purposes designed
primarily for advanced undergraduates and graduate students. This means
that the emphasis will be on learning how to read and decipher a range
of texts in modern Yiddish in different genres written. We will read the
Yiddish classics and discuss their language, style and content, as well
as newspaper articles published at the beginning of the 20th century and
various historical documents. We will learn to read and understand non-
standard pre-1930s Yiddish as well as American and Soviet Yiddish.
Participation in this course requires the instructor’s permission. Enrollment
limited to 40.

JUDS 2060B. Methods in Ancient History (HIST 2970I).
Interested students must register for HIST 2970I.

JUDS 2450. Exchange Scholar Program.
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

Helvetica was used instead of Arial.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.