

# Judaic Studies

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

A concentration in Judaic Studies includes the following requirements:

1. All students are required to take a total of *10 courses* that count toward the concentration.
2. All students must take one full year of modern Hebrew (two of the 10 required courses for the concentration) or fulfill the Hebrew requirement through examination. Usually, the Hebrew requirement is fulfilled by taking HEBR 0100 and HEBR 0200. Fulfillment of the Hebrew requirement through examination does not reduce the total number of 10 courses required for the concentration.
3. Students choosing to continue with Hebrew language study may count up to two additional Hebrew courses (HEBR 0300, HEBR 0400, or HEBR 0500) toward fulfillment of the concentration requirements. HEBR 0600 is counted as a regular, non-language course for the purposes of fulfilling concentration requirements.
4. Of the courses required for a concentration in Judaic Studies, students must fulfill both a historical and a methodological breadth requirement. For example, students primarily studying ancient Judaism must enroll in at least one course in medieval or modern Judaism, and students studying primarily modern Judaism must enroll in at least one class focusing on the ancient or medieval period. In addition, at least one course should offer training in a discipline different from the student's primary disciplinary interest (e.g., a student whose main interest is Jewish history will take at least one course in Jewish thought, literature or religion). These two breadth requirements ensure that the student gains a broader perspective on Judaic Studies as an interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary field of study concerned with Jews and Judaism over three millennia of history.
5. Subject to the approval of the concentration adviser, up to two courses outside of Judaic Studies that relate directly to the concentration may be counted toward the concentration (e.g., a course on a particular historical context, in a particular discipline, or on a relevant topic, including courses taken abroad that are approved by Brown for transfer credit).
6. After consultation with the concentration adviser, each senior concentrator who is not writing a senior thesis in Judaic Studies to fulfill the capstone requirement will designate an advanced course (1000 level) in Judaic Studies as that student's capstone course. Alternatively, seniors may choose to do an independent study with a Judaic Studies faculty member that will function as the capstone course. Within the context of the capstone course, the student will conduct independent research and write a substantial paper of 20-25 pages on a topic in Judaic Studies that displays in an appropriate way the theoretical and methodological approaches, as well as the interpretive issues, most of interest to the student, thereby engaging the student's particular disciplinary focus/foci in a serious and substantive way. The student, in consultation with the capstone instructor, will complete the capstone form by the end of the second week of classes of the semester during which the capstone will be undertaken and submit the form to the concentration adviser for final approval. The form includes questions about the capstone course, the topic of the paper, the disciplinary approach(es) the student intends to utilize, and how the paper will fulfill the goals of the capstone. The

capstone is an opportunity for students to hone their writing skills, to enhance their ability to undertake independent research, to learn more about and experience Judaic Studies as an interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary field, to make well-considered choices with regard to the topic or problem to be examined and the disciplinary approach(es) to be utilized, and to make use of language skills where appropriate.

7. Double concentrators may count up to two courses that deal with Jewish history, society, culture or religion that they have used to complete the requirements of their other concentration toward their Judaic Studies concentration.
8. Each student who opts to write a senior thesis to fulfill the capstone requirement will approach a potential thesis adviser in Judaic Studies before the end of the second semester of the junior year and secure that faculty member's agreement to advise the thesis. The thesis will be written over two semesters during the senior year and constitute two of the 10 required courses for the concentration. By the end of the second week of classes of the senior year, the student will present the concentration adviser with a succinct thesis plan approved by the thesis adviser. The second reader of each thesis will be chosen by the concentrator in consultation with the thesis adviser before the end of September of the senior year. Once the second reader has agreed to participate, the second reader will read a draft of each chapter of the thesis and provide feedback after it has been approved by the thesis adviser. In no case will the second reader be invited to participate after the thesis has been completed.
9. Study Abroad or Elsewhere in the US: Students who study at other institutions, either in the United States or abroad, may apply up to two topical courses (non-language study) toward completion of the concentration's requirements as long as Brown approves the courses for transfer credit. These approved courses will count as the two courses taken outside Judaic Studies. Students who study in Israel are required to enroll in a one month Summer/Winter Upan (a Hebrew language and cultural immersion course) prior to the beginning of the semester as well as a Hebrew language course during their semester in Israel. Students will receive one transfer credit toward the concentration for both of these language courses combined. Students whose level of proficiency allows them to enroll in a university course conducted in Hebrew are exempt from the Upan requirement.

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### Student Goals

Students in this concentration will:

- Have an opportunity to explore aspects of the history, culture, literature, religion, politics, thought and societies of the Jews from ancient times to the present
- Acquire at minimum an elementary proficiency in Hebrew
- Complete a capstone course or honors thesis
- Have an opportunity to explore some of the ways in which more than one discipline contributes to the study of Jews and Judaism through time and space
- Have an opportunity to learn about the often complex dynamics characteristic of the interactions of Jews with others in their larger environment as well as the reciprocal influences of Jewish and non-Jewish cultures.

### 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: 401.863.3910] or [Judaic@brown.edu](mailto:Judaic@brown.edu).