

JEWISH STUDIES

Department Website: <http://ccjs.uchicago.edu>

PROGRAM OF STUDY

The BA program in Jewish Studies provides a context in which College students may examine the texts, cultures, languages, and histories of Jews and Judaism over three millennia. The perspective is contextual, comparative, and interdisciplinary. The long and diverse history of Jews and Judaism affords unique opportunities to study modes of continuity and change, interpretation and innovation, and isolation and integration of a world historical civilization. Students are encouraged to develop appropriate skills (in texts, languages, history, and culture) for independent work.

Students in other fields of study may also complete a minor in Jewish Studies. Information follows the description of the major.

JEWISH CIVILIZATION SEQUENCE

A three-course Jewish Civilization sequence is offered in the Autumn, Winter, and Spring Quarters, and in some years, there is also a Civilization I and II sequence beginning Winter Quarter. Jewish Civilization I begins in antiquity and extends through the medieval period (JWSC 12000 Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period). Jewish Civilization II begins in the early modern period and extends to the present (JWSC 12001 Jewish Civilization II: Early Modern Period to 21st Century). With Jewish Civilization III courses, students have the option of taking a third unit of Jewish Civilization; these courses vary in topic (JWSC 1200X). Jewish Civilization courses may be used to fulfill the College's general education requirement in civilization studies. It is recommended, though not required, that students take these courses in sequence. Students who register for the Jewish Civilization I course will automatically be preregistered for the corresponding Jewish Civilization II course in the following quarter. In order for the Jewish Civilization III course to qualify for the general education requirement in civilization studies, the student must have completed Jewish Civilization I and II. A Jewish Civilization III course, however, may also be taken as an independent elective.

Students may also fulfill the Jewish civilization requirement by participating in one of two Study Abroad programs. In the "Jerusalem in Middle Eastern Civilizations" Study Abroad program, students can earn credit for three courses in Jewish Civilization and one credit in modern Hebrew. In the "Vienna: Jewish Civilization" Study Abroad program (offered biennially), students can earn credit for three courses in Jewish Civilization and one credit in German. For more information about these programs, please see the Study Abroad (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/offcampusstudyprograms/>) page of this catalog.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Advising

Students who have not completed the College's general education requirements before starting the major should do so during their first year as Jewish Studies majors. Students are required to meet with the director of undergraduate studies before declaring a major in Jewish Studies. Each student in the major will have as an adviser a faculty member who is affiliated with the Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies.

MAJOR IN JEWISH STUDIES

The major requires twelve courses distributed according to the guidelines that follow. A full, constantly updated list of courses approved for the major and minor is available on the Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies website (<https://ccjs.uchicago.edu>).

Language

Students must take three quarters of Hebrew (classical or modern) or Yiddish. If the student's research project requires knowledge of a different language, the student may petition the committee to substitute that language in the place of Hebrew or Yiddish.

Jewish Civilization and Electives

Students in the major must take nine additional courses in Jewish Studies for a total of twelve courses.

Jewish Civilization: Students in the major must complete either the first two quarters of the Jewish Civilization sequence, or the "Jerusalem in Middle Eastern Civilizations" or "Vienna: Jewish Civilization" Study Abroad program.

If students take one of these sequences to satisfy the general education requirement in civilization studies, two additional electives must be taken, one of which must come from another civilization studies sequence pertinent to the area and period of the student's primary interest in Jewish Studies.

For students who take a sequence outside Jewish Studies to satisfy the general education requirement in civilization studies, the two- or three-course Jewish Civilization sequence (or three-course sequences offered in Jerusalem and Vienna) will count among the JWSC electives required for the major.

Other Electives: The remaining courses must come from JWSC course offerings. These elective courses should normally focus in a specific area of concentration within Jewish Studies and should be chosen in consultation with the student's Jewish Studies advisor. Students who complete the optional BA thesis (as described under Optional BA Paper) may count JWSC 29900 BA Preparation Course among these courses.

Beyond the requirements for the major, students are encouraged to take at least one course in method or theory pertaining to their area of concentration in Jewish Studies, whether it is a JWSC course that can count in the major or simply a general elective credit.

SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

Three courses in Hebrew (or other language, with approval)	300
Nine total JWSC courses	900
Note: Must include 2–3 Jewish Civilization courses, as described under the Program Requirements	
Total Units	1200

Optional BA Paper

Students who choose this option are to meet with their advisers by May 15 of their third year to determine the focus of the research project, and they are expected to begin reading and research for the BA paper during the summer before their fourth year. After further consultation, students are to continue guided readings and participate in a (formal or informal) tutorial during Autumn Quarter of their fourth year. Credit toward the major is received only for the Winter Quarter tutorial (JWSC 29900 BA Preparation Course), during which the BA paper is finally written and revised. The BA tutorial may count toward one of the courses related to Jewish Studies. The BA paper must be received by the primary reader by the end of fifth week of Spring Quarter. A BA paper is a requirement for consideration for honors.

This program may accept a BA paper or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major if certain conditions are met and with the consent of the other program chair. Approval from both program chairs is required. Students should consult with the chairs by the earliest BA proposal deadline (or by the end of their third year, if neither program publishes a deadline). A consent form, to be signed by both chairs, is available online (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/BA_Double_Major_0.pdf) or from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's year of graduation.

HONORS

Honors are awarded to students who demonstrate excellence in their course work, as well as on the BA paper. Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.25 or higher and a GPA of 3.5 or higher in the major, and the BA paper must be judged to be at least of A- quality.

GRADING

Students take all courses required for the major for quality grades.

MINOR IN JEWISH STUDIES

The minor in Jewish Studies provides a basic introduction to the texts, cultures, languages, and history of the Jews and Judaism. Six courses are required for the minor. Students in the minor must complete either the first two quarters of the Jewish Civilization sequence or the "Jerusalem in Middle Eastern Civilizations" or "Vienna: Jewish Civilization" Study Abroad program. If students take one of these sequences to satisfy the general education requirement in civilization studies, two additional electives must be taken. The other courses may be in any area of Jewish Studies, including languages such as Hebrew and Yiddish; such courses can be identified by their JWSC prefix.

Students can earn credit for three courses in Jewish Civilization and one credit in modern Hebrew by participating in the "Jerusalem in Middle Eastern Civilizations" Study Abroad program; they can earn credit for three courses in Jewish Civilization and one credit in German by participating in the "Vienna: Jewish Civilization" Study Abroad program. For more information about these programs, please see the Study Abroad (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/offcampusstudyprograms/>) page of this catalog.

Students who wish to do a minor in Jewish Studies must meet with the director of undergraduate studies before the end of the Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. The director's approval for the minor program must then be communicated to the student's College adviser on the Consent to Complete a Minor Program (https://humanities-web.s3.us-east-2.amazonaws.com/college-prod/s3fs-public/documents/Consent_Minor_Program.pdf) form.

Courses taken to fulfill the requirements for the minor in Jewish Studies may not be double-counted with courses taken for the student's major(s) or courses taken for other minors. Courses taken for the minor in Jewish Studies must be taken for quality grades.

JEWISH STUDIES COURSES

JWSC 12000, 12001, 12003, 12004, 12006, 12007, 12009, 12011 Jewish Civilization I-II-III

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts—biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary—students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history.

JWSC 12000. Jewish Civilization I: Ancient Beginnings to Medieval Period. 100 Units.

Jewish Civilization I deals with antiquity through the Middle Ages. Its readings will include material from the Bible and writings from the Second Temple, Hellenistic, rabbinic, and medieval periods. All sections of this course share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials.

Instructor(s): Larisa Reznik Terms Offered: Autumn Winter

Equivalent Course(s): MDVL 12000, NEHC 22010, RLST 22010, HIST 11701

JWSC 12001. Jewish Civilization II: Early Modern Period to 21st Century. 100 Units.

Jewish Civilization II begins with the early modern period and continues to the present. It includes discussions of mysticism, the works of Spinoza and Mendelssohn, the nineteenth-century reform, the Holocaust and its reflection in writers such as Primo Levi and Paul Celan, and literary pieces from postwar American Jewish and Israeli authors. All sections of this course share a common core of readings; individual instructors will supplement with other materials.

Instructor(s): Orit Bashkin Larisa Reznik Terms Offered: Spring Winter

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 11702, RLST 22011, NEHC 22011

JWSC 12003. Jewish Civilization III: Language, Creation, and Translation in Jewish Thought and Literature. 100 Units.

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts—biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary—students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. This Jewish Civilization III course will start with two stories from Genesis—the creation story and the story of the Tower of Babel in chapter 11—and consider the intertwined dynamics of language, creation, and translation in Jewish thought and literature. In addition to commentaries on both of these key texts, we will read philosophical and literary texts that illuminate the workings of language as a creative force and the dynamics of multilingualism and translation in the creation of Jewish culture. Through this lens, we will consider topics such as gender and sexuality, Jewish national identity, Zionism, the revival of the Hebrew language, Jewish responses to the Holocaust, and contemporary American Jewish culture.

Instructor(s): Na'ama Rokem Terms Offered: TBD. Not offered in 2025–26

Note(s): Students who wish to take this course for Civilization Studies credit, must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. The course may also be taken as an independent elective.

Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 12003, NEHC 12003, RLST 22012

JWSC 12004. Jewish Civilization III - Mothers and Motherhood in Modern Jewish Culture. 100 Units.

Jewish Civilization is a three-quarter sequence that explores the development of Jewish culture and tradition from its ancient beginnings through its rabbinic and medieval transformations to its modern manifestations. Through investigation of primary texts—biblical, Talmudic, philosophical, mystical, historical, documentary, and literary—students will acquire a broad overview of Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness while reflecting in greater depth on major themes, ideas, and events in Jewish history. This Jewish Civilization III course will focus on mothers and motherhood in modern Jewish culture. From sentimentalized keepers of Jewish tradition to objects of ridicule burdened by stereotypes of overbearing, guilt-inducing behavior, Jewish mothers hold a prominent role in Jewish self-representations. Writing alongside or against these stereotypes, Jewish mothers themselves have struggled with the obligations and expectations of Jewish motherhood. Engaging with a variety of literary, theological, historical, and pop culture texts, this class explores Jewish feminisms in relation to motherhood, Jewish fictions of motherhood, and the role of motherhood in Jewish religious life and thought. This course includes material from a variety of different contexts for modern Jewish life, but places particular emphasis on American Jewish history and culture.

Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered in 2025–26

Note(s): Students who wish to take this course for Civilization Studies credit, must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. The course may also be taken as an independent elective.

Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 16004, RLST 22013, YDDH 21724

JWSC 12006. Jewish Spaces and Places, Imagined and Real. 100 Units.

What makes a ghetto, a ghetto? What defines a Jewish neighborhood? What determined the architectural form of synagogues? Taught in Special Collections in Regenstein Library and making extensive use of the textual and visual sources there, this course will analyze how Jews (in all their diversity) and non-Jews defined Jewish spaces and places. Sources will include: Jewish law and customary practice, cookbooks, etiquette guides, prints, films, novels, maps, memoirs, architectural drawings and photographs, and tourist guides. We may also take a field trip to the Oak Woods Cemetery. The focus will be on Europe in the 19th and 20th centuries, but we will also

venture back into the early modern period and across the Mediterranean to Palestine/Israel and North Africa and the Atlantic to the Caribbean and the Americas. We will study both actually existing structures and texts and visual culture in which Jewish places and spaces are imagined or vilified. Parallel to our work with primary sources we will read in the recent, very rich, scholarly literature on this topic. This is not a survey course; we will undertake a series of intensive case-studies through which we will address the larger issues. Assignments include: presentations (individual or collaborative), short papers, Canvas postings, and there will also be the option of making a digital map or an on-line exhibition. This is a limited-enrollment, discussion-based course. No previous knowledge of Jewish history is expected.

Instructor(s): Leora Auslander Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered in 2025–26

Note(s): In order for a Jewish Civilization III course to qualify as a civilization course for the general education requirement, the student must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. A Jewish Civilization III course, however, may also be taken as an independent elective.

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 11703, RLST 22015, NEHC 12006

JWSC 12007. Jewish Civilization III: Chicago Jewish History and Culture. 100 Units.

In this course, students will explore key moments in Chicago Jewish History and culture. We will read and examine primary source documents from the founding of the city's first Jewish communities, hospitals, and philanthropic institutions to the public performance of Jewish identity at Chicago's World's Fairs to the 2020 Metropolitan Chicago Jewish Population Survey. Drawing upon literary, journalistic, and archival accounts, we will uncover the vibrancy of Chicago's historic Jewish immigrant neighborhoods, Jewish urban politics, and Jewish suburbanization, mapping out a multivocal understanding of Jewish life in the city. The course will have a research project component.

Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered in 2025–26

Note(s): In order for a Jewish Civilization III course to qualify as a civilization course for the general education requirement, the student must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. A Jewish Civilization III course, however, may also be taken as an independent elective.

Equivalent Course(s): CHST 21723, YDDH 21723

JWSC 12009. Jewish Civilization III - Philosophical Responses to the Holocaust. 100 Units.

This course examines a range of philosophical responses to the problem of living and acting in the wake of the Holocaust, which called into question every philosophical, theological, and cultural piety of Western civilization: the existence and goodness of God; the actuality of historical progress; the ability of the modern nation-state and its laws to secure freedom and equality for individuals among religious and cultural differences; the capacity of art, culture, and education to make people good and ethical; the power of human reason to decipher good from evil and to guide human action accordingly. We will explore these questions together with a set of methodological concerns around how to study, represent, and memorialize the Holocaust and other historical atrocities, asking: is the Holocaust best approached as a unique historical event or should it be studied together with the histories of enslavement, imperialism, and colonialism? Is there something about the very nature of modernity that generates fascism? What stories can be told, how should they be told, and who has the right to tell them? What forms of knowledge, institution-building, and culture-making might be called upon to honor the victims of past atrocities and generate resources for resisting present and future ones? Course materials may include film, photography, and texts by Adorno, Levinas, Arendt, Levi, Césaire, Fanon, Kofman and others.

Instructor(s): Larisa Reznik Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): In order for a Jewish Civilization III course to qualify as a civilization course for the general education requirement, the student must also take Jewish Civilization I and II. A Jewish Civilization III course, however, may also be taken as an independent elective.

JWSC 12012. Jewish Civilization III: The Holocaust: Victim's Voices. 100 Units.

This course approaches the history of the Holocaust through the literature of witness produced by its victims. Through an examination of a range of sources, primarily literary art (fiction, memoir, poetry) as well as video testimony and visual art, students will consider major concerns in the study of the Holocaust such as representation, authority, memory, testimony, translation and language. Students are advised that these readings will bear witness to human suffering and human cruelty, and they should be prepared to encounter emotionally taxing material. This course is part of the Jewish Civilization sequence, though the earlier two sections of the sequence are not prerequisites for this course.

Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): RLST 22016, YDDH 21726

JWSC 20120. Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. 100 Units.

The Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) is a complex anthology of disparate texts and reflects a diversity of religious, political, and historical perspectives from ancient Israel and Judah. Because this collection of texts continues to play an important role in modern religions, new significances are often imposed upon this ancient literature. In this course, we will attempt to read biblical texts on their own terms and will also contextualize their ideas and goals with texts and material culture from ancient Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine, and Egypt. In this way, we will discover that the Hebrew Bible is fully part of the cultural milieu of the ancient Near East. We will read a significant portion of the Hebrew Bible in English, along with selections from other ancient Near Eastern texts as well as secondary literature. This course will include discussion sections.

Instructor(s): Jeffrey Stackert Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors. This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 30504, RLST 11004, FNDL 11004, BIBL 31000, HIJD 31004, NEHC 20504

JWSC 20300-20400-20500. Elementary Yiddish I-II-III.

The goal of this sequence is to develop proficiency in Yiddish reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Touchstones of global Yiddish culture are also introduced through song, film, and contemporary Yiddish websites.

JWSC 20300. Elementary Yiddish I. 100 Units.

The goal of this sequence is to develop proficiency in Yiddish reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Touchstones of global Yiddish culture are also introduced through song, film, and contemporary Yiddish websites.

Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): YDDH 10100

JWSC 20400. Elementary Yiddish for Beginners II. 100 Units.

In this course, students will extend basic Yiddish speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. By the end of the course, students should have a basic understanding of regional Yiddish variations in pronunciation and spelling, be able to understand and participate in a conversation in an increasingly comfortable and complex way, read simple texts with ease, have experience tackling more complex texts with the aid of a dictionary, and write short compositions with grammatical complexity. In the course of language study, students will also be exposed to key topics in the history of the Yiddish language and culture.

Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): YDDH 10100

Equivalent Course(s): YDDH 10200, YDDH 37400

JWSC 20500. Elementary Yiddish III. 100 Units.

In this course, students will acquire intermediate Yiddish speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. By the end of the course, students should be able to conduct a conversation on a wide range of topics, be comfortable tackling complex texts with the aid of a dictionary, and write short compositions with grammatical complexity. In the course of language study, students will also be exposed to key topics in the history of the Yiddish language and culture. Students will also be introduced to basic Yiddish research skills.

Equivalent Course(s): YDDH 37500, YDDH 10300

JWSC 20490. The Plagues in Egypt: Tradition and Composition. 100 Units.

This course will pursue an in-depth investigation of the plagues in Egypt as presented at length in Exodus 7-12 and Psalms 78 and 105 and in brief in several other biblical texts. It will focus especially on source-critical and tradition-historical issues in these texts. All texts will be read in their original languages.

Instructor(s): Jeffrey Stackert Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered in 2025–26

Prerequisite(s): Strong biblical Hebrew; those with questions about their Hebrew proficiency should consult with the instructor.

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): RLST 20490, BIBL 40490

JWSC 20510. Early Jewish Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. 100 Units.

Explores Jewish ideas and hermeneutics at Exodus 19-20 and select other biblical texts, in sources from the Septuagint and Dead Sea scrolls through Targumim and Rabbinic literature to Medieval Jewish commentaries.

Instructor(s): Simeon Chavel Terms Offered: Autumn. Not offered in 2025–26

Prerequisite(s): Biblical Hebrew and either Aramaic or Greek (Koiné or Septuagint)

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 53510, BIBL 53510, NELC 30063, NEHC 20513, HIJD 53510, RLST 20510

JWSC 20600. Deuteronomy. 100 Units.

This course is an exegetical study of selected texts from the Deuteronomistic source of the Torah (Deut 1:1-32:47). We will focus on the setting of this text within the larger pentateuchal plot, its legal revision, its historical context, and the purpose of its authors in relation to their source texts. This course will serve as the reading course for students coming out of the first year Hebrew sequence, but all students with facility in biblical Hebrew are welcome. All biblical texts will be read in Hebrew.

Instructor(s): Jeffrey Stackert Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered in 2025–26

Prerequisite(s): At least one year of biblical Hebrew.

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): BIBL 40600, RLST 20600

JWSC 20606. Spinoza and German Thought. 100 Units.

This course provides an introduction to Spinoza's philosophy and his relation to German thought, both prior to and within German idealism. In addition to carefully reading Spinoza's own writings, we will consider rationalist alternatives to Spinoza's metaphysics, the Pantheism controversy, and the acosmism charge. Beyond Spinoza, authors to be read include Leibniz, Moses Mendelssohn, and Hegel.

Instructor(s): Andrea Ray Terms Offered: Winter. Winter 2025. Not offered in AY 2025–26

Prerequisite(s): Undergrads Only

Equivalent Course(s): SETH 30606, SETH 20606, GRMN 24606, FNDL 20606, PHIL 20606

JWSC 20770. In the Beginning: Reading Genesis Now. 100 Units.

How does one begin something new? What accounts for our ability to do things that have not been done before or to create something new? And how can we draw on this fundamental human capacity in moments of crisis? This seminar turns to the Hebrew Bible to think through these timely questions. We will read the book of Genesis in different English translations, think of its reception through the millennia that have passed since it was created, and reflect on its relevance to our current moment of crisis. Featuring museum visits and visiting artists and poets, this seminar will explore human creativity and invites students to mobilize their own capacity to make new beginnings.

Instructor(s): Rokem, Na'ama Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 20770, RLST 21270, CMLT 20770

JWSC 20923. Magic, Miracles, and Medicine: Healthcare in the Bible and the Ancient World. 100 Units.

This course examines the complex issues surrounding the body, disability, and medical care in antiquity. It will be guided by a variety of questions, such as what was the root cause of bodily infirmity and disease in antiquity? How did cultural views of sex, gender, and race influence perceptions of the body and what it meant to be able bodied? Such questions are significant when considering what kind of access to healthcare marginalized groups had. In order to explore these questions, we will examine ancient Mediterranean views of medical care through material remains (e.g., magical amulets and healing shrines) and textual evidence (e.g., Galen and Hippocrates). After considering this wider cultural context, we will examine treatments in the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and early Christianity. We will also explore how Christian concepts of medical care evolved in light of accounts of Jesus as a divine healer. In addition to this ancient evidence, we will engage with modern disability studies and sociological analyses to better orient our readings. At the end of the course, students will be better acquainted with the complex relationship between religion and medicine and how that affects modern healthcare decisions.

Instructor(s): Richard Zaleski Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered 2025–26

Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 20223, HIPS 20223, RLST 20223, HIST 25305, HLTH 20223, CCTS 21021

JWSC 20924. The Bible Throughout History: From the Dead Sea Scrolls to King James. 100 Units.

While the collection of ancient texts found in modern Bibles appears fixed and is read by many people as a source of edification or theological insight, it has not always been this way. Though absent from most Bibles, there is an entire body of literature commonly known as "rewritten bible": early translations, retellings, or entirely new stories with familiar names and faces that update, reton, or subvert their "biblical" sources. How might we understand these ancient forms of fan fiction? The class will introduce this corpus (including some of the Dead Sea Scrolls) and its sources, production, and historical contexts. We will confront significant problems in understanding religious texts: how is it that some texts become authoritative while other very similar texts do not? Who gets to retell foundational religious narratives, and within what social or political constraints? What does it mean to relate to sacred texts as artistic prompts or imperfect points of departure? Can a biblical text be rewritten for an entirely different religious tradition? We will consider similar questions for contemporary religious practice, asking: how did rewriting the Bible get started, and has it stopped?

Instructor(s): Doren Snoek Terms Offered: Winter. Not offered 2025–26

Equivalent Course(s): RLST 20124, FNDL 20124, MDVL 20124, HIST 29908, CMLT 20124

JWSC 21025. Advanced Yiddish: Reading Academic Yiddish Texts. 100 Units.

What is the language of Yiddish Scholarship? Today, we find Yiddish studies largely in English, Polish, German, and Hebrew - and only rarely in Yiddish itself. But it was only a few short decades ago that Yiddish Studies scholarship was regularly produced in Yiddish, both simply because it was the shared language of its scholarly community and as a defiant activist sensibility that Yiddish could and should remain a language of scholarly inquiry. Through this course, students will read articles from late 20th century Yiddish academic journals such as YIVO Bleter, Yidishe Shprakh, Kheshbn, Leket, and Oksfordor Yidish, exploring how academic language activists used Yiddish to express and circulate their research in addition to using it as a language for reading and research. Students will write short response essays and will try their hand at writing their own academically-oriented scholarship in Yiddish. Ultimately, students will be encouraged to produce proposals to give talks in Yiddish about their own scholarship, either for the Farbindungen conference or the Symposium for Yiddish Studies in Germany (Dusseldorf), two contemporary conferences in which presentations in Yiddish are encouraged. Students must have completed intermediate Yiddish or its equivalent to take this course and are encouraged to speak with the instructor if they are unsure about placement.

Instructor(s): Jessica Kirzane Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): YDDH 21004

JWSC 22000-22100-22200. Elementary Classical Hebrew I-II-III.

The purpose of this three-quarter sequence is to enable the student to read biblical Hebrew prose with a high degree of comprehension. The sequence is divided into two segments: (1) the first two quarters are devoted to acquiring the essentials of descriptive and historical grammar (including translation to and from Hebrew, oral exercises, and grammatical analysis); and (2) the third quarter is spent examining prose passages from the Hebrew Bible and includes a review of grammar.

JWSC 22000. Elementary Classical Hebrew I. 100 Units.

The purpose of this three-quarter sequence is to enable the student to acquire a knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of Classical Hebrew sufficient to read prose texts with the occasional assistance of a dictionary.

The first quarter focuses on the inflection of nouns and adjectives and begins the inflection of verbs. It includes written translation to and from Hebrew, oral exercises, and grammatical analysis of forms.

Instructor(s): Aren Wilson-Wright Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This class meets 5 times a week

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 10101

JWSC 22100. Elementary Classical Hebrew II. 100 Units.

The purpose of this three-quarter sequence is to enable the student to acquire a knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of Classical Hebrew sufficient to read prose texts with the occasional assistance of a dictionary.

The second quarter focuses on verb inflection and verbal sequences and includes written translation to and from Hebrew, oral exercises, and grammatical analysis of forms.

Instructor(s): Aren Wilson-Wright Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 10101 or equivalent

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 10102

JWSC 22200. Elementary Classical Hebrew III. 100 Units.

The purpose of this three-quarter sequence is to enable the student to acquire a knowledge of the vocabulary and grammar of Classical Hebrew sufficient to read prose texts with the occasional assistance of a dictionary.

The first half of the third quarter concludes the study of verb inflection and the second half is spent reading prose narrative texts with specific attention to the grammatical analysis of those texts.

Instructor(s): staff Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 10102

Note(s): This class meets 5 times a week

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 10103

JWSC 22300-22400-22500. Intermediate Classical Hebrew I-II-III.

A continuation of Elementary Classical Hebrew. The first quarter consists of reviewing grammar, and of reading and analyzing further prose texts. The last two quarters are devoted to an introduction to Hebrew poetry with readings from Psalms, Proverbs, and the prophets.

JWSC 22300. Intermediate Classical Hebrew I. 100 Units.

Review basic Hebrew grammar, emphasis on morphology and basic syntax - Review/acquire historical morphology - Acquire facility in reading Biblical Hebrew prose

Instructor(s): D. Pardee Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 10103 or equivalent

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 20104

JWSC 22400. Intermediate Classical Hebrew II. 100 Units.

Continue acquisition of basic Biblical Hebrew; Continue acquisition of basic notions of historical grammar; Acquire the rudiments of analysis of Biblical Hebrew poetry.

Instructor(s): D. Pardee Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 20104 or equivalent

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 20105

JWSC 22500. Intermediate Classical Hebrew III. 100 Units.

Continue acquisition of basic Biblical Hebrew, emphasis on syntax; Increase familiarity with Biblical Hebrew poetry, emphasis on prophets; Continue acquisition of basic historical morphology; Reading ancient manuscripts.

Instructor(s): D. Pardee Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 20105 or equivalent

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 20106

JWSC 22906. Book of Ezekiel. 100 Units.

This course introduces the historical world around the Book of Ezekiel, the literary world portrayed within Ezekiel, the book's literary characteristics, and its meaning. The course is geared both to readers of the Bible in English and to readers of the Bible in Hebrew.

Instructor(s): Simeon Chavel Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 22906, RLST 22906, NEHC 32906, FNDL 22906, BIBL 32906, HIJD 32906

JWSC 23203. History of European Civilization III: Medieval and Early Modern Spain. 100 Units.

Students who plan to complete a three-quarter sequence register for HIST 13003 in Spring Quarter after completing HIST 13001-13002. In the third part of the History of European Civilization sequence, students will have the opportunity to explore in greater depth a particular aspect of European history. In this course we will learn about Spanish society and culture from Islamic Al-Andalus to early modern Spain (10th-17th centuries).

We will explore violent conflict (the "Reconquista"), cultural exchange among Muslims, Jews and Christians, and the experience of women and men as they were navigating gendered ideals of knighthood, honor, and Catholic piety. We will also study about the Spanish Inquisition and the forced conversions and later expulsions of Jews and Muslims from the Iberian Peninsula. The course will focus on primary sources and documents from different genres, including letters, inquisitorial testimonies, royal legislation, epic poetry, and more. Students who are interested in the study of medieval culture, religion, and premodern history are warmly invited.

Instructor(s): S. Zamir Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): For the 3-qtr sequence register for HIST 13003 after completing HIST 13001-13002. Only HIST 13001-13002 complete the 2-qtr sequence.

Note(s): Students may not combine HIST 13003 with one other quarter of European Civilization to fulfill the general education requirement.

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 13003, SOSC 28003

JWSC 23405. History of Jews in the Middle East. 100 Units.

This class examines the history of Jews in the Middle East from the early modern period, when many Jewish refugees fleeing Spain and Portugal settled in the Ottoman Empire, to the modern Period, when Jews debated and challenged colonialist, reformist, nationalist, leftist, and secular ideologies. Reading novels, memoirs, and new works in the fields of Jewish and Middle Eastern Studies, we will examine how early modernity and modernity gave birth to new identity formations and new frames of belonging. We will visit the unknown histories of early modern Jews who produced translations and explications of the Hebrew Bible in Arabic, of Jews and Muslims who fought together Christian missionary activities, of Arab Jewish feminists, and of Jewish communists who established anti-Zionist societies in the Middle East.

Instructor(s): Orit Bashkin Terms Offered: Autumn. Not offered in AY 2025–2026

Equivalent Course(s): NEHC 20228, RLST 20228, HIST 25810

JWSC 23413. Seminar: Without a Label: The emergence of modern Jewish self in the 19th century. 100 Units.

How does one come to comprehend and mediate themselves in a society that does not presuppose their existence as autonomous, dignified subjects? As Europe was transitioning from absolutist monarchies to nation-states, Jewish communities were trying to reinvent themselves in a world where their very existence challenged the new premises about a "proper" society. In between, there were individuals who tried to understand their Jewishness in this new, changing reality. The course will concentrate on modernized Jewish individuals, predominantly in Central and Eastern Europe, who fashioned new models of modern Jewish existence in the 19th century. Paradoxically, their literature was written in languages and through literary models that weren't adjusted to convey the story of Jewish modernity. During the course, through detailed analysis of the literature and the existential conditions of the Jews, we will discuss the dynamics of modern self-fashioning and the role of literature in this process.

Instructor(s): S. Natkovich Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): HIST 22213, HIST 32213

JWSC 23480. Law, Rights, and Democracy in Crisis: Israel and Palestine in Comparative Perspective. 100 Units.

How do law and politics interact in contexts of deep national division? What are the limits of international law, human rights, and liberal democracy in addressing violent conflict? And what alternatives arise when conventional approaches—such as territorial partition and a focus on individual rights—fall short? This course explores these questions through the case of Israel-Palestine, examined in comparative perspective alongside other divided societies, including Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Cyprus. Students will analyze how legal frameworks—both domestic and international—shape, constrain, or enable political arrangements in protracted conflicts. Core concepts such as sovereignty, self-determination, and the tension between individual and collective rights will be explored through competing understandings of peace and justice. Drawing on the emerging framework of Collective Equality, the course invites critical reflection on the foundational principles needed to support sustainable models of conflict transformation.

Instructor(s): Limor Yehuda Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 23480, PLSC 33480, DEMS 23480

JWSC 23600. Evil: Myth, Symbol and Reality. 100 Units.

From the horrors of the Shoah to violence suffered by individuals, the question of the origin, meaning, and reality of evil done by humans has vexed thinkers throughout the ages. This seminar is an inquiry into the problem of evil on three registers of reflection: myth, symbol, and reality. We will be exploring important philosophical, Jewish, and Christian texts. These include Martin Buber, Good and Evil, Hannah Arendt, Eichmann in Jerusalem, Immanuel Kant, Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone, Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, Edward Farley, Good and Evil, Hans Jonas, Mortality and Morality and Claudia Card, The Atrocity Paradigm. There will also be a viewing of the movie *Seven* (1995) directed by David Fincher and written by Andrew Kevin Walker. Accordingly, the seminar probes the reality of evil and the symbolic and mythic resources of religious traditions to articulate the meaning and origin of human evil. The question of "theodicy" is then not the primary focus given the seminar's inquiry into the fact and reality of human evil. Each student will submit a 5-7 page critical review of either Jonathan Glover's *Humanity: A Moral History of the 20th Century* or Susan Neiman's, *Evil in Modern Thought*. Each Student also will write a 15 page (double spaced; 12pt font) paper on one or more of the texts read in the course with respect to her or his own research interests.

Instructor(s): William Schweiker Terms Offered: Autumn. Not offered 2025–26

Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): RETH 33600, THEO 33600, FNDL 23600, GRMN 33623, GRMN 23623, RLST 23600

JWSC 23810. The Underground Book. 100 Units.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, there was an explosion in the practice of "underground" publishing— that is, textual objects produced through unofficial, and often illegal, presses. In this undergraduate

seminar, we will investigate this phenomenon across a range of transnational contexts. We will begin by considering the theoretical and practical concerns of underground publication. We will then examine how underground publishing manifested in locations as diverse as the late Soviet Union, 1980s Chicago, and Brazil under military dictatorship. We will conclude the course by considering how the rise of digital media has shaped the nature of underground publishing. Throughout, we will pay particular attention to the book as a material object, questioning the ways in which materiality shapes and determines underground reading practices. As part of this seminar, students will gain hands-on experience with various aspects of bookmaking and printmaking. By reproducing underground publication techniques, we will develop first-hand knowledge of the material challenges and opportunities associated with the self-publishing medium. In the final weeks of the course, students will have the chance to produce their own book object. As a culminating project, students will work alongside the instructor and the Department of Special Collections to assemble an exhibition on underground publishing, which will be displayed in the University of Chicago Library.

Instructor(s): Benjamin Arenstein Terms Offered: Spring

Equivalent Course(s): REES 23710, CMLT 23710, HIST 23806

JWSC 24920. Primo Levi. 100 Units.

Witness, novelist, essayist, translator, linguist, chemist, and even entomologist. Primo Levi is a polyhedral author, and this course revisits his work in all its facets. We will privilege the most hybrid of his texts: *The Search for Roots*, an anthology that collects the author's favorite readings—a book assembled through the books of the others, but which represents Levi's most authentic portrait. By using this work as an entry point into Levi's universe, we will later explore his other texts, addressing issues such as the unsettling relationship between survival and testimony, the "sinful" choice of fiction, the oblique path towards autobiography, and the paradoxes of witnessing by proxy.

Instructor(s): Maria Anna Mariani Terms Offered: Course not taught in 2025-26

Prerequisite(s): Open to advanced undergrads with consent of instructor.

Note(s): Taught in Italian.

Equivalent Course(s): FNDL 24920, ITAL 34920, ITAL 24920

JWSC 25000-25100-25200. Introductory Modern Hebrew I-II-III.

This three-quarter sequence introduces students to reading, writing, and speaking modern Hebrew. All four language skills are emphasized: comprehension of written and oral materials; reading of nondiacritical text; writing of directed sentences, paragraphs, and compositions; and speaking. Students learn the Hebrew root pattern system and the seven basic verb conjugations in both the past and present tenses, as well as simple future. At the end of the year, students can conduct short conversations in Hebrew, read materials designed to their level, and write a short essay.

JWSC 25000. Introductory Modern Hebrew I. 100 Units.

The beginner's course is the first of three sequential courses offered to students at the university. The course aims to introduce students to reading, writing and speaking Modern Hebrew. Toward that end all four-language skills are emphasized: comprehension of written and oral materials; reading of non-diacritical text; writing of directed sentences, paragraphs, and compositions; speaking. You will learn the Hebrew root pattern system, and by the end of the year you will have mastered the five (active) basic verb conjugations in both the past and present tenses (as well as simple future). This grammatical knowledge is complemented by an 800+ word vocabulary, which is presented with an eye toward the major syntactic structures, including the proper use of prepositions. At the end of the year, you will conduct short conversations in Hebrew; read materials designed to this level and write short compositions. The in-class quotient of the course will be heavily based on active listening and speaking practice, with much use of various print, video, and web-based media. This course will require students to commit to undertaking intensive methods of instruction, which require their active participation in class and considerable attention to the language outside of class.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 10501

JWSC 25100. Introductory Modern Hebrew II. 100 Units.

The beginner's course is the first of three sequential courses offered to students at the university. The course aims to introduce students to reading, writing and speaking Modern Hebrew. Toward that end all four-language skills are emphasized: comprehension of written and oral materials; reading of non-diacritical text; writing of directed sentences, paragraphs, and compositions; speaking. You will learn the Hebrew root pattern system, and by the end of the year you will have mastered the five (active) basic verb conjugations in both the past and present tenses (as well as simple future). This grammatical knowledge is complemented by an 800+ word vocabulary, which is presented with an eye toward the major syntactic structures, including the proper use of prepositions. At the end of the year, you will conduct short conversations in Hebrew; read materials designed to this level and write short compositions. The in-class quotient of the course will be heavily based on active listening and speaking practice, with much use of various print, video, and web-based media. This course will require students to commit to undertaking intensive methods of instruction, which require their active participation in class and considerable attention to the language outside of class.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 10501 or equivalent

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 10502

JWSC 25200. Introductory Modern Hebrew III. 100 Units.

The beginner's course is the first of three sequential courses offered to students at the university. The course aims to introduce students to reading, writing and speaking Modern Hebrew. Toward that end all four-language skills are emphasized: comprehension of written and oral materials; reading of non-diacritical text; writing of directed sentences, paragraphs, and compositions; speaking. You will learn the Hebrew root pattern system, and by the end of the year you will have mastered the five (active) basic verb conjugations in both the past and present tenses (as well as simple future). This grammatical knowledge is complemented by an 800+ word vocabulary, which is presented with an eye toward the major syntactic structures, including the proper use of prepositions. At the end of the year, you will conduct short conversations in Hebrew; read materials designed to this level and write short compositions. The in-class quotient of the course will be heavily based on active listening and speaking practice, with much use of various print, video, and web-based media. This course will require students to commit to undertaking intensive methods of instruction, which require their active participation in class and considerable attention to the language outside of class.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): HEBR 10502 or equivalent
Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 10503

JWSC 25300-25400-25500. Intermediate Modern Hebrew I-II-III.

The main objective of this sequence is to provide students with the skills necessary to approach modern Hebrew prose, both fiction and nonfiction. In order to achieve this task, students are provided with a systematic examination of the complete verb structure. Many syntactic structures are introduced (e.g., simple clauses, coordinate and compound sentences). At this level, students not only write and speak extensively but are also required to analyze grammatically and contextually all of material assigned.

JWSC 25300. Intermediate Modern Hebrew I. 100 Units.

The course, which builds upon Introductory Modern Hebrew (first year HEB) focuses on the acquisition of proficiency and communicative skills in Modern Hebrew. The purpose of this class is to expand and strengthen beginners' Hebrew skills so that they become more self-assured, communicative, and versatile when they listen to, read, speak, and write Hebrew. It emphasizes both communicative and cultural themes and focuses on developing a rich and active vocabulary in several language domains.

Instructor(s): Staff
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): HEBR 10503 or equivalent
Note(s): The course is devised for students who have previously taken either modern or biblical Hebrew courses.
Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 20501

JWSC 25400. Intermediate Modern Hebrew II. 100 Units.

This course is designed for students who possess a basic knowledge of modern# #and/or Biblical Hebrew# (#either the first year course or the placement exam# #are prerequisites#). #The main objective is to provide students with the# #skills necessary to approach Modern Hebrew prose#, #both fiction and# #non-fiction#. Students learn to use the dictionary#, #and approach unfamiliar# #texts and vocabulary#. Many syntactic structures are introduced#, #including# #simple clauses#, #coordinate and compound sentences#. #Throughout the year#, #students read#, #write#, #and speak extensively and are required to analyze the# #grammatical structures of assigned materials#.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog
Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): HEBR 20501 or equivalent
Note(s): The course is devised for students who have previously taken either modern or biblical Hebrew courses.
Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 20502

JWSC 25500. Intermediate Modern Hebrew III. 100 Units.

The course, which builds upon Introductory Modern Hebrew (first year HEB) focuses on the acquisition of proficiency and communicative skills in Modern Hebrew. The purpose of this class is to expand and strengthen beginners' Hebrew skills so that they become more self-assured, communicative, and versatile when they listen to, read, speak, and write Hebrew. It emphasizes both communicative and cultural themes and focuses on developing a rich and active vocabulary in several language domains.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): HEBR 20502 or equivalent
Note(s): The course is devised for students who have previously taken either modern or biblical Hebrew courses.
Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 20503

JWSC 25600-25700-25800. Advanced Modern Hebrew I-II-III.

This sequence assumes that students have full mastery of the grammatical and lexical content of the intermediate level. The main objective is literary fluency. The texts used in this sequence include both academic prose and literature. Students are exposed to semantics and morphology in addition to advanced grammar.

JWSC 25600. Advanced Modern Hebrew I. 100 Units.

This course, which builds upon Intermediate Modern Hebrew (second year HEB) assumes that students have full mastery of the grammatical and lexical content of the intermediate level. The focus of instruction is

on further development of intermediate language skills in Modern Israeli Hebrew with special emphasis on oral and written communication. At the end of the course, all students are expected to reach the Advanced level of proficiency, as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) in speaking, reading, and listening comprehension. The acquisition of cultural literacy will be an integral part of the curriculum throughout the semester. The in-class quotient of the course will be heavily based on active listening and speaking practice, with much use of various print, video, and web-based media. This course will require students to commit to undertaking intensive methods of instruction, which require their active participation in class and considerable attention to the language outside of class.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog Terms Offered: Autumn

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 20503 or equivalent

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 30501

JWSC 25700. Advanced Modern Hebrew-II. 100 Units.

This course assumes that students have full mastery of the grammatical and lexical content of the intermediate level (second year Hebrew or the placement exam are prerequisites). The main objective is literary fluency. The texts used in this course include both academic prose, as well as literature. Students are exposed to semantics and morphology in addition to advanced grammar. Requirements include a weekly class presentation, regular essay writing, two take-home exams, and several quizzes per quarter. The in-class quotient of the course will be heavily based on active listening and speaking practice, with much use of various print, video, and web-based media. This course will require students to commit to undertaking intensive methods of instruction, which require their active participation in class and considerable attention to the language outside of class.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog Terms Offered: Winter

Prerequisite(s): HEBR 30501 or consent of instructor

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 30502

JWSC 25800. Advanced Modern Hebrew-III. 100 Units.

This course assumes that students have full mastery of the grammatical and lexical content of the intermediate level (second year Hebrew or the placement exam are prerequisites). The main objective is literary fluency. The texts used in this course include both academic prose, as well as literature. Students are exposed to semantics and morphology in addition to advanced grammar. Requirements include a weekly class presentation, regular essay writing, two take-home exams, and several quizzes per quarter. The in-class quotient of the course will be heavily based on active listening and speaking practice, with much use of various print, video, and web-based media. This course will require students to commit to undertaking intensive methods of instruction, which require their active participation in class and considerable attention to the language outside of class.

Instructor(s): Ari Almog Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): Two years of Modern Hebrew studies

Equivalent Course(s): HEBR 30503

JWSC 26020. Religion and Visual Culture in the Late Antique Mediterranean. 100 Units.

In this seminar, we examine sacred sites and artifacts of early Christians and their neighbors in the regions around the Mediterranean from the third century to about 750 CE. Case studies will illustrate the wealth of religious art and architecture associated with different religions that existed side by side—Christianity, Judaism, polytheism, and emerging Islam. This course has five main objectives: (1) to examine how the designs of religious spaces, buildings, and objects respond to specific spiritual or ritualistic needs; (2) to gain familiarity with typical features characterizing the arts of each religion or sect; (3) to identify elements of a common visual language that result from shared traditions or artistic cross-pollination; (4) to examine different ways in which material artifacts were employed as means of ideological propaganda; and (5) to study art and architecture as evidence of doctrinal competition and conflict. While this course foregrounds the study of material culture, written sources (in translation) complement the analysis of the visual evidence.

Instructor(s): Karin Krause Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered 2025–26

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): HCHR 36001, ARTH 36001, NEHC 26001, RLST 26001, CLAS 36024, CLCV 26024, RLVC 36001, ARTH 26001, MDVL 26001

JWSC 26313. Judaism, Medicine, and the Body. 100 Units.

For centuries the "Jewish doctor" has existed as an archetype, but is there such a thing as Jewish medicine? Does Judaism teach a distinct approach to the body, illness, and healing? And more significantly, why should religion have anything to do with one's health today? In this course we will grapple with our assumptions regarding modern Western medicine by discussing topics in Jewish medical thought and ethics. We will study how Judaism - its texts, history, laws, and traditions - intersect with issues of science, medicine, and the body. In particular we will think about how a Jewish approach to medicine, and more broadly a religious approach, might complicate contemporary assumptions about the body and healing. We will also consider how Jewish bodies have been imagined and stereotyped, and think about how that might affect Jewish approaches to disease and medical ethics. This course will thus offer students a way to think about alternatives to assumptions about medicine, the body, and ethics in the secular West, which will be explored both in class materials and in personal projects. No prior work in Jewish studies, medical ethics, or religious studies necessary.

Instructor(s): Rana Dine Terms Offered: Autumn. Not offered 2025–26

Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 26313, HLTH 26313, CCTS 21022, GNSE 26313, HIPS 26313, RLST 26313

JWSC 26314. Judaism and Science. 100 Units.

tbd

Instructor(s): Yehuda Halper Terms Offered: Autumn

Note(s): This course meets the HS or SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): HIJD 36314, RLST 26314

JWSC 26620. Tradition and Modernity in Jewish Thought and Literature. 100 Units.

The concept of tradition often takes a back seat to modernity but what does it mean to be part of a tradition in the modern world? How does tradition challenge received views and stimulate creativity, against the modern view of tradition as the "dead hand of the past"? How have the concept; ideology; and cultural role of tradition changed in Jewish culture since the Enlightenment? This course explores those questions in three bodies of work: (1) late 18th- to mid-20th-century German-Jewish historians, critics, & theologians; (2) modern Hebrew & Yiddish writers; and (3) their shared biblical, rabbinic, and mystical inspirations. Through close readings of these writers' reflections on their own literary traditions, tradition emerges as both a resource and a problem for Jewish cultural creativity; one that calls for its own theoretical vocabulary and can be set in dialogue with the modern evolution of other traditional cultures.

Instructor(s): James A. Redfield Terms Offered: Winter. Not offered 2025–26

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): RLST 26620, HIJD 36620

JWSC 26677. American Jewish Literature. 100 Units.

Is there an American Jewish literature? At the heart of this question is a reckoning with what constitutes American Jewish experience. Literary expression has played an outsized role in the way that American Jews view themselves, exploring a vocabulary and an idiom of immigration and religion, of ethnic identity and of political consciousness. In this class we will study a selection of the fiction, poetry, essays and films of American Jewish experience with an eye towards the varieties of American-Jewish experience and the role of literature in forging that experience.

Instructor(s): Sheila Jelen Terms Offered: Autumn. Not offered 2025–26

Note(s): This course meets the LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): RLVC 46677, HIJD 46677, AMER 26677, CMLT 46677, CMLT 26677, AMER 46677, RLST 26677

JWSC 26702. Arabic into Hebrew: Translation and Cultural Change during the Middle Ages. 100 Units.

Religions, like all cultural phenomena, are akin to organic beings: they change, grow and adapt, absorb and assimilate what they encounter, become transformed constantly in relation to challenges and opportunities - and sometimes react against them. This course will focus on one example of religious-cultural-philosophical adaptation and change through a study of the medieval translation of Arabic and Judeo-Arabic works into Hebrew during the 12th-15th centuries. We will focus on the translations themselves and translation technique, but principally on what was translated and why, when and where, by whom and for whom. All this with an added emphasis on the result: how did Judaism and Jewish culture change through translation - in all its forms - during the high middle ages.

Instructor(s): James T. Robinson Terms Offered: Autumn. Not offered 2025–26

Note(s): This course meets the HS or CS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): CMLT 26702, HREL 36702, RLST 26702, MDVL 26702, ISLM 36702, RLVC 36702, NEHC 36702, HIJD 36702, NEHC 26702, CMLT 36702

JWSC 26706. Humor and Judaism in the Middle Ages. 100 Units.

We shall examine medieval Jewish humoristic writings of 12-14th Spain and Southern France against the backdrop of the curious fact that the authors of these writings were also some of the most important medieval Jewish philosophers of the period. Is it coincidence that Aristotelian philosophers also wrote lasting works of humor? Did they see their humoristic writings as diversions from their philosophical and scientific activities or part of a larger project? If the latter, what kind of philosophical content could be in these writings? Is such humor a skeptical approach to serious science? Does it reflect deeper ethical questions? Does humor provide a place to question religious tenets? To approach these questions we will read the central writings of these thinkers, beginning with Joseph Ibn Zabara's Book of Delights, then turning to Immanuel of Rome's Canto's, then Qalonimos ben Qalonimos' Eben Bohan and Purim parody, and finally turning to Gersonides's Purim parodies. We shall take into consideration questions of genre such as the influence of the Arabic maqamat, Italian parodies, and French farces.

Instructor(s): Yehuda Halper Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): This course meets the HS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): MDVL 26706, HIJD 36706, RLST 26706

JWSC 27660. Animals and Jewish Literature. 100 Units.

This course explores the representation of animality in Jewish literature and visual art. We will explore questions of animal ethics and ecological entanglement across a range of secular and religious genres, from folklore and poetry to Hasidic tales and rabbinic narrative. Writers will include Kafka, Sholem Aleichem, Celan; artists will include Soutine, Chagall, Sarah Shor, and more. No prerequisites. Open to undergrad and grad students.

Instructor(s): Anna Elena Torres Terms Offered: Winter

Equivalent Course(s): RLVC 37660, CMLT 37660, CMLT 27660, RLST 27660, HIJD 37660

JWSC 27723. Judaism and Ethnography. 100 Units.

Defining ethnography broadly as curiosity about human difference, this course engages close readings in a vast gallery of ethnographic portraits both of and by Jews, from the Bible to the early modern period. Together, we will construct a history of this tradition by tracing patterns in how Jews are represented and how they represent themselves, as well as their own Others, in dialogue with those cultures. While anthropologists and literary theorists will help us to appreciate the diversity and fluidity of Jewish (auto-)ethnography, these thinkers will also turn our critical gaze on Greek, Roman, and European Christian images of Jews and Judaism. This history is not simply a case-study in an overlooked ethnographic tradition but an archive where influential and often oppressive "Western" ways of thinking about human difference have been spawned, cross-fertilized, resisted, and transformed.

Instructor(s): James A. Redfield Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered 2025–26

Note(s): This course meets the LMCS or SCSR Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): ANTH 37653, HIJD 37653, RLST 27653, ANTH 27653

JWSC 27724. Diasporism in Modern Judaism. 100 Units.

This course will consider the fate of arguments for Diasporic Jewish Identity and thought in the 20th and 21st centuries in philosophical and literary sources and will consider the relationship between debates within Jewish thought and correlates in Black Studies and Post-colonial Studies. Thinkers to be read include Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Emmanuel Levinas, Jacob Gordon, Jacques Derrida, Sarah Kofman, Susan Taubes, Philip Roth, Fred Moten, Christina Sharpe and others.

Instructor(s): Sarah Hammerschlag Terms Offered: Spring. Not offered 2025–26

Note(s): This course meets the CS or LMCS Committee distribution requirement for Divinity students.

Equivalent Course(s): RLST 27724, ANTH 37724, HIJD 47724, RLVC 47724, DVPR 47724, ANTH 27724

JWSC 28449. The End is Near: The Bible and Apocalypse. 100 Units.

The rise of nuclear weapons, the global warming crisis, and the Covid-19 pandemic have reignited debates about the fate and meaning of human history. If it is the end of the world as we know it, how should we act, and what-if anything-comes next? For centuries, the Bible has been a source for people thinking about end of time. In this course, we examine how the Bible and other ancient texts portray human catastrophe and the possibility of new beginnings. From national upheavals and the dawn of a final political order, down to the fate of the individual and the destiny of the cosmos at large, this course exposes students to the multiplicity of ways that the End is envisioned throughout the Bible and later interpretation. How do biblical authors interpret the meaning of existence in light of the End? What stands out about ancient literature when we understand it as anticipating the End, and how can these texts help us understand contemporary fears about the End? No background knowledge about the Bible or the ancient world is required for the course.

Instructor(s): Jonathan Wegner Terms Offered: Autumn. Not offered 2025–26

Equivalent Course(s): RLST 28449

JWSC 28995. Queer Love Poetry. 100 Units.

This course examines the long history of queer love poetry, from the ancient world to postmodernism. Its readings are particularly interested in how modernists claimed literary lineages of queer poetics, queered social practices and communal literary spaces, and reinvented verse forms to reflect queer eros. We will study works from Russian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish, Greek, and several other languages. No prerequisites. Open to undergrad and grad students.

Instructor(s): Anna Elena Torres Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 20155, CMLT 38995, RLVC 38995, RLST 28995, CMLT 28995, GNSE 30155

JWSC 29700. Reading and Research Course. 100 Units.

TBD

Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter

Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor and Undergraduate Program Adviser

Note(s): Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form.

JWSC 29900. BA Preparation Course. 100 Units.

Preparation of BA thesis under direction of advisor.

Terms Offered: Autumn Spring Winter

Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor and Undergraduate Program Adviser

Note(s): Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Required of honors candidates.

