

Winter 2024 Courses			
COURSE	COURSE TITLE	INSTRUCTOR	TIME
HEBREW 111-2-20	Hebrew I	R. Alexander	MWF 9:30 – 10:40
HEBREW 121-2-20	Hebrew II	R. Alexander	MWF 11:00 – 12:10
HEBREW 216-2-20	Hebrew III: Between Two Writers: Sayed Kashua and Etgar Keret	H. Seltzer	MW 2:00 – 3:20
HISTORY 203-1-20	Jewish History, 750 - 1492	D. Shyovitz	TTH 11:00 – 12:20
HISTORY 292-0-30	Jewish Refugees in the 20 th Century	S. Ionescu	MW 3:30 – 4:50
HISTORY 349-0-20	The Holocaust	S. Ionescu	MW 9:30 – 10:50
HISTORY 393-0-34 (also HUM 370-4-23)	What is Antisemitism?	D. Shyovitz	TTH 3:30 – 4:50
JWSH_ST 279-0-1 (also GNDR_ST 231-0-1, MENA 290-6-2)	We're Here, We're Queer: Queer Narratives in Israeli Literature and Culture	G. Ehrlich	MW 11:00 – 12:20
JWSH_ST 280-4-1 (also HISTORY 200-0-38, MENA 290-4-1)	The Holocaust and Its Memory in Israel	M. Hilel	MW 12:30 – 1:50
JWSH_ST 280-4-2 (also HISTORY 200-0-40, MENA 290-4-2)	The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Competing Narratives	M. Hilel	TTH 2:00 – 3:20
JWSH_ST 280-6-1 (also MENA 290-6-3, RTVF 351-0-24)	Otherness and Othering in Israeli Film	H. Seltzer	MW 9:30 -10:50
SESP 360-0-20	Magic, Monsters, and the Holocaust	D.M. Cohen	TTH 12:30 – 1:50
SPANISH 397-0-1	Spanish Inquisitions: Crypto-Jews and other Christians in Iberia and America, 1400 - 1700	S. Zamir	TTH 12:30 – 1:50

What is Jewish Studies?

Jewish Studies refers to the study of Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish identity, and Jewish culture over time and around the world. Our professors rely on tools of historical research, textual analysis, ethnography, political science, and more as they seek to understand and teach these topics. Jewish Studies is truly an interdisciplinary way of analyzing and understanding the world.

Jewish Studies courses are open to students of all backgrounds. While some students who take our classes are Jewish, many are not. We offer a major and minor for anyone looking to go deeper into the study of Jewish experience. On the other hand, if you're just looking for something a little different from what you usually study, you'll be glad to know that many of our courses satisfy Weinberg distribution requirements.

Jewish Studies also partners with Middle East and North African (MENA) Languages to provide Hebrew language classes, which are offered at three levels.

For more information: www.jewish-studies.northwestern.edu

Jewish Studies Winter 2024 Course Descriptions

HEBREW

Students with prior knowledge of Hebrew (learned either through school or at home) will need to take the Hebrew placement exam before registering, unless they have previously taken Hebrew at Northwestern or have permission from the instructor. For more information please contact Hanna Seltzer at hanna.seltzer@northwestern.edu

HEBREW 111-2-20: Hebrew I

R. Alexander, MWF 9:30 – 10:40am

Hebrew 111-2 is based on *Hebrew from Scratch*, a comprehensive textbook with grammar and interactive exercises for the beginning adult learner. We will develop all four language skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading comprehension) as well as provide a cultural foundation. After finishing all seven units during the fall quarter (including the aleph bet, fundamental vocabulary and basic sentence structure), we will build on that material and begin the lessons of the book. You will learn the impersonal form widely used in everyday Hebrew, adjectives and more question words, as well as numbers, and the direct object, a unique form in Hebrew. All these new words and structures will be integrated into short texts and lively conversations which are part of the wider context of Israeli culture. As always, students will have ample opportunities to practice and expand all skills. Prerequisites: Hebrew 111-1 or placement in Hebrew 111-2 after taking placement exam.

HEBREW 121-2-20: Hebrew II

R. Alexander, MWF 11:00am – 12:10pm

Second-Year Hebrew is a three-quarter sequence which will cover comprehensive grammar explanations and examples as well as cultural themes. The purpose of this course is to enlarge the students' vocabulary, and to reinforce and expand their knowledge of Hebrew grammar, as well as to deepen their knowledge of Israeli culture. Class will consist of interactive exercises for the intermediate learner, readings in a level-appropriate difficulty with more information on Israeli daily life and reality, and listening in the form of songs and clips in Hebrew.

During Hebrew 121-2, students will expand their vocabulary and will practice words already familiar to them from the previous year. We will continue learning more binyanim of the past tense. Students will also learn conjugations or basic prepositions they were introduced to last year. We will also learn the body parts, colors and more useful concepts, and we will integrate this knowledge into exploration of Israeli artworks. The readings will be in a level-appropriate difficulty with more information on Israeli daily life and reality. Prerequisites: Hebrew 121-1 or equivalent; or instructor consent.

HEBREW 216-2-20: Hebrew III: Between Two Writers: Sayed Kashua and Etgar Keret

H. Seltzer, MW 2:00 – 3:20pm

"I'm still writing to you, maybe because I want you to give me a little hope", wrote Sayed Kashua to Etgar Keret in an exchange of letters between the two, after Kashua left Israel in 2014. Sayed Kashua is an "Israeli Arab", a Palestinian who was born and raised in Israel and studied in the Israeli education system. Kashua writes in Hebrew about his complex identity, and in addition to his novels and columns he has also written scripts for TV shows and movies. Etgar Keret is an Israeli Jewish writer, a son of Holocaust survivors, who wrote several short story collections and childrens books, as well as scrips for movies and TV series. Students in this class will read texts of Kashua and Keret and will also watch films written by the two. Students will be introduced to the stylistics of each of these writers, the unique fingerprints of each one of them, along with the traits they share as writers. A special emphasis will be on the language of each writer, the registers of Hebrew he uses, as well as the grammar structures and vocabulary, including slang and expressions unique to Hebrew. This class is intended for students who completed 2 years of Hebrew learning in NU or the equivalent and for students who passed the placement exams in Hebrew.

HISTORY

HISTORY 203-1-20: Jewish History, 750 - 1492

D. Shyovitz, TTH 11:00 – 12:20

This course surveys the development of Jewish culture and civilization in the medieval period, from roughly 750 (the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad) to 1492 (the expulsion of the Jews of Spain). We will explore the varied, rich, nuanced experiences of Jewish communities in Europe and the Islamic East, and trace the ways in which Jewish culture, thought, and socio-political life developed over a vast chronological and geographical expanse. We will consistently seek to situate Jewish experiences both against the backdrop of earlier Jewish history, as well as in relation to the contemporary Christian and Islamic cultures in which medieval Jews were embedded. The course will also trace some of the ways in which medieval Jewish history has been instrumentalized to further modern social and political agendas. Readings for this course include both primary documents (in English translation) and secondary sources. The goals of the course will include grappling with how historians use primary documents to reconstruct Jewish history, and learning to read works of historical interpretation with a careful and critical eye.

HISTORY 292-0-30: Jewish Refugees in the 20th Century

S. Ionescu, MW 3:30 – 4:50

While migration has been a key feature in the life of Jewish communities throughout the last millennia, the last century - defined by some public intellectuals as "the century of the refugee" (Rabbi Hugo Gryn) - witnessed the displacement of an ever-larger number of Jews as the result of antisemitic persecutions, wars, geocidal policies, or desire to find a national homeland. Despite the relatively small size of their communities on a global scale, the Jews made one of the largest community of refugees in 20th century Europe.

This course will examine the history of the European Jews who became refugees throughout the 20th century, focusing on key moments that represented the peaks of the afflux of refugees, triggered by the rise of modern states and their security and nationalizing policies (borders, citizenship, and demographic engineering), the spread of radical ideologies, the emergence of the Zionist national project, political persecutions, World War I and the collapse of European empires, the antisemitic and genocidal policies of Nazi Germany and its collaborators before and during World War II, and the persecution and violence that took place in communist dictatorships, such as USSR and in its successor states.

HISTORY 349-0-20: The Holocaust

S. Ionescu, MW 9:30 – 10:50

The 20th century was probably the bloodiest era in human history and many people consider the Holocaust to be the climax of mass murder and atrocity in a long history of tragedies. It is therefore hardly surprising that the Holocaust attracted the attention of both the general public and academics, who were especially interested in understanding the reasons for human participation (in point of behavior and motivations) in such a horrendous event.

This course will explore the roots, the development, and the aftermath of the Holocaust, focusing particularly on Eastern Europe, which was the main site of Jewish life in Europe and the main target of Nazi onslaught. During this course we will discuss many of the events from Holocaust history by looking at specific individuals and the choices they willed or were compelled to make. While we will explore primarily the experience of the Jews, we will also consider other victim categories (such as the Roma and Sinti, Slavs, gay men and lesbians, disabled persons, and Jehovah's Witnesses) and the actions of perpetrators and their local collaborators, rescuers, resisters, and bystanders. In the last part of our course we will scrutinize the legacies of the Holocaust during the first postwar years, including the survivors' struggles to rebuild their lives, criminal justice, and restitution and reparations.

Our examination of the Holocaust will be based primarily on historical texts of Holocaust scholars as well as on wartime and postwar documents and autobiographical accounts of gentile and Jewish participants in the Holocaust. In addition to such texts, we will watch excerpts from documentary films, which depict the Nazis and the Holocaust from various perspectives.

HISTORY 393-0-34 (also HUM 370-4-23): What is Antisemitism?

D. Shyovitz, TTH 3:30 – 4:50

In modern political discourse, "anti-Semitism" is frequently invoked and infrequently defined. The imprecision with which the term is deployed leads to broad disagreements about the nature and scope of the phenomenon: Is it anti-Semitic to call a Jewish person a pig? To advocate for boycotts against the State of Israel? To work to criminalize infant circumcision, or kosher slaughter? To accuse George Soros of bankrolling BLM protests, or of conspiring to "steal" the presidential election? What kinds of critiques of Jews or of Judaism are fair game, and which cross the line into hate speech, or foment violence? More broadly, is anti-Semitism a form of racism? Of xenophobia? Of anti-religious animus, akin to Islamophobia? Is it a conspiracy theory? Does anti-Semitism assume that Jews constitute a religion? A nationality? An ethnicity? A "race"?

One reason these questions are so hotly contested is because they are usually discussed ahistorically, in isolation from the extensive academic scholarship on the origins and development of anti-Semitism—both the actual phenomenon and the descriptive term itself. This course traces the historical trajectory of anti-Jewish rhetoric, violence, and discrimination from antiquity through the present. We will pay particular attention to the analytical concepts that historians have developed and deployed—including, but not limited to anti-Semitism, antisemitism, anti-Judaism, and Judeophobia. Rather than seeking to isolate an overarching definition of what is and is not anti-Semitic, we will explore the specific contexts in which anti-Jewish animus and violence developed, and the constantly evolving role "Jews" (as individuals and as a category) have played at key historical junctures.

JEWISH STUDIES

JWSH_ST 279-0-1 (also GNDR_ST 231-0-1/MENA 290-6-2): We're Here, We're Queer: Queer Narratives in Israeli Literature and Culture

G. Ehrlich, MW 11:00 – 12:20

The corpus of Hebrew prose works and Israeli cultural representations that focus on LGBT characters and queer life stories is on the rise. Such texts and films are no longer inherently considered completely marginal, despite not yet being a major part of the Israeli culture and the literary canon. This course presents a broad examination of LGBT/queer Israeli literature and culture – from the new wave of gay and lesbian literature in the 1990s up to some more contemporary works. What stories and questions do Hebrew queer literary texts and films present? Is queerness in the Israeli context being celebrated or is it still fighting for acceptance and tolerance? Throughout the course, we will explore Israeli prose works and films that engage with LGBT/queer identities and topics, and examine questions and themes, such as "coming out of the closet," "queer identity," "the lesbian continuum," "heteronormativity/ homonormativity," and the queer notion of "no future." The literary and cultural texts will be accompanied by theoretical texts from Adrienne Rich, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Lee Edelman, J. Halberstam, and more. No previous knowledge of Hebrew, Israel, or Judaism is required! All the Hebrew texts will be read in translation, and all the films will be accompanied by English subtitles.

JWSH_ST 280-4-1 (also HISTORY 200-0-38/MENA 290-4-1): The Holocaust and Its Memory in Israel

M. Hilel, MW 12:30 – 1:50

This course examines the origins, development, course, and consequences of the most comprehensive genocide in history and the ways it has been remembered by Israeli society. The first part of the course will focus on the persecution of Jews during the first half of the 20th century culminating in their genocide between 1939-1945. We will discuss Nazi ideology; the complex interface between the Nazi regime's espousal of racism and the motivation of perpetrators on the ground; the interface between politics and law; the victims' reactions to persecution; conditions of life in the ghettos and camps; the response of the international community; and the aftermath of the war. In the second part of the course, we will examine Israeli society's different and even contradicting attitudes toward the Holocaust. We will probe how the establishment of the State of Israel, the 1950s mass immigration, and the evolving Arab-Israeli conflict shaped Israelis' understanding and memory of the Holocaust. We will analyze various primary documents and watch videos throughout the course.

JWSH_ST 280-4-2 (also HISTORY 200-0-40/MENA 290-4-2): The Israeli – Palestinian Conflict: Competing Narratives

M. Hilel, TTH 2:00 – 3:20

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the world's most complicated and vexing conflicts. It has fascinated and puzzled scholars, politicians, and the broader public, creating the impression that everyone has an opinion about it. This course explores its roots, its major historical milestones, and the different narratives of the conflict, viewed from the perspective of Palestinians and Israelis. The approach of the course is historical, so emphasis will be placed on understanding the shifting historical local and international contexts in which the conflict has evolved, and the ways it has been interpreted and remembered by both Israelis and Palestinians. The course will combine not only academic writing but also literature, film, posters, and documentaries. Students will engage in historiographical debates as well as in the analyses of primary sources.

JWSH_ST 280-6-1 (also MENA 290-6-3/RTVF 351-0-24): Otherness and Othering in Israeli Literature and Film

H. Seltzer, MW 9:30 – 10:50

Since its inception, Israeli society has been comprised of various and different social groups; immigrants, Arabs, Jews, migrant workers, religious people, secular people, ultra-orthodox Jews, Christians, to name several. In a society where many feel themselves as outsiders, what does Otherness actually mean? Is it a subjective stance or a definite (and "objective") position? Does Otherness exist only when juxtaposed with what is supposedly the social norms of "Israeli society" or can it stand by itself? Is Israeli society othering others to have a false sense of unity? And is there an actual entity of "Israeli society" or is it only imagined by those who seek to be part of it? Film in its nature is an introspective tool, and in the case of Israeli film it has always been a prism through which Israeli directors examine questions of identity, the treatment of "others", and the relationship between the center and the margins. In this class we will watch various Israeli films that relate to the notion of otherness and to the dilemmas that arise from the characters' complex position in Israeli society. Among the movies we will watch are "Baba Joon", "Borrowed Identity", "Sandstorm" and "Gett: The Trial of Viviane Amsalem". We will read texts that will contextualize the movies and will shed light on the stance of otherness in Israeli society. No previous knowledge of Hebrew or Israel or Israeli cinema is required. All the movies will have English subtitles and all the readings will be in English, as well as the lectures and class discussions.

SESP

SESP 360-0-20: Magic, Monsters, and the Holocaust

D. M. Cohen, TTH 12:30 – 1:50

How has the Holocaust come to be represented in popular culture? Through feature films and works of fiction, we will explore how certain tropes and narrative framings affect our perceptions and collective memories of Holocaust history. What lessons from history do popular films and literature attempt to convey? And what unintended lessons do they carry? We will consider how movies and literature about the Holocaust intended for young people may affect their perceptions of atrocities today. And we will ask questions about the gaps and misconceptions that Holocaust film and fiction can leave in their wake. Creative responses to core course texts will be used to assess student learning, and students will have the opportunity to develop an original project connected to the course themes.

SPANISH

SPANISH 397-0-1: The Formation of Sephardic Diaspora and Culture, 1400 - 1800

S. Zamir, TTH 12:30 – 1:50

This class is dedicated to the study of the Inquisition in early modern Spain and colonial Latin America, probably the most famous institution of Iberian history. We will examine its medieval roots during the Middle-Ages, and the beginning of the Spanish Inquisition in response to the mass conversion of Jews during the fifteenth century. We will discuss the problem of religious conversion and heresy, the persecution of New Christians of Jewish, Muslim, or indigenous descent, and the role of the Inquisition in censoring books and creating Catholic conformity during the age of reformations. We will consider methodological questions such as using Inquisitorial records for studying social and cultural history, and historiographical ones concerning religious violence and tolerance, modernity, and state formation. (Taught in English)