

FALL 2025				
COURSE	COURSE TITLE	DISTRO/FD	INSTRUCTOR	TIME
HEBREW 111-1-20	Hebrew I		R. Alexander	MWF 9:30 – 10:50
HEBREW 121-1-20	Hebrew II		R. Alexander	MWF 11:00-12:20
HEBREW 211-0-1	Hebrew III: Language and Culture		H. Seltzer	MW 2:00 – 3:20
HISTORY 101-7-24 (first-year seminar)	Resisting the Nazis		B. Frommer	TTH 3:30 – 4:50
JWSH_ST 279-0-1 (also COMP_LIT 270-0-1, MENA 290-6-2)	Jews and Arabs in Hebrew Literature and Culture (in translation)	VI	G. Ehrlich	TTH 11:00 – 12:20
JWSH_ST 279-0-2 (also GERMAN 246-0-2)	Yiddish, Our Setting Sun: Yiddish Literature and Culture in the 20th Century	VI	H. Seltzer	MW 11:00 – 12:20
LRN_SCI 224-0-20	Holocaust Education Design		D. M. Cohen	TTH 12:30 – 1:50
SESP 360-0-20	Magic, Monsters, and the Holocaust		D. M. Cohen	TTH 2:00 – 3:20

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 Fall 2025 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 111-1-20: Hebrew I

R. Alexander, MWF 9:30 – 10:40am

The three-quarter first-year course in Hebrew is designed to develop all four language skills (listening and reading, comprehension, speaking and writing) as well as provide a cultural foundation. The course is based on *Hebrew From Scratch*, a comprehensive textbook with grammar and interactive exercise for the beginning adult learner. The instructions for the exercises as well as the translations of the vocabulary lists are in English. Otherwise, the course is all in Hebrew, creating an important immersive environment for the students throughout the year.

Hebrew 111-1, taught in the Fall Quarter, is the first quarter of first-year Hebrew. Students will learn to read and write the Alef-Beit (Hebrew alphabet) in both systems - printed letters, *Dfus*, for reading and the writing letters, *Ktav*, for writing. Students will also learn the vowels of Hebrew language. They will learn the fundamentals of Hebrew grammar - pronouns, feminine and masculine grammatical forms - pronunciation, and basic vocabulary.

HEBREW 121-1-20: Hebrew II

H. Seltzer, MWF 11:00am – 12:10pm

Second-year Hebrew is a three-quarter sequence covering comprehensive grammar explanations and examples as well as cultural themes. This course will enlarge students' vocabulary, and reinforce and expand their knowledge of Hebrew grammar, as well as deepen their knowledge of Israeli culture. Class will consist of interactive exercises for the intermediate learner, readings of level-appropriate difficulty with more information on Israeli daily life and reality, and listening to songs and clips in Hebrew. Hebrew 121-1 in the Fall is the first quarter of second-year Hebrew. Students will continue with the textbook they had in the previous year, a familiarity which will ease the return to Hebrew after a long summer. Students will expand their vocabulary and will practice the words already familiar from the previous year. We will begin learning the past tense and its *binyanim* (pa'al, pi'el, hif'il, etc.). Students will also learn conjugations of basic prepositions. We will also learn the body parts, colors and more useful concepts. The readings will be at a level-appropriate difficulty with more information on Israeli daily life and reality.

HEBREW 211-0-1: Hebrew III: Language and Culture

H. Seltzer, MW 2:00 – 3:20pm

Hebrew 211 is meant for students who either completed Hebrew 121-3 or students who wish to expand their Hebrew knowledge and strengthen their grammar foundations. The purpose of this course is to serve as a bridge between Hebrew second year and the advanced classes of Hebrew about literature and culture (Hebrew 216) or about Israeli media (Hebrew 245). In this class students will review previous forms (such as past tense) and will learn the future tense forms, the imperative and the conditional forms, advanced connectors (such as *וכן, וכן, וכן, וכן*), impersonal phrases with infinitive forms, more prepositions, and the condensed form of possessive. This class revolves around themes of leisure and volunteering, and each theme lends itself to certain grammatical forms, so the grammar is intertwined in the contents of these themes. Some of the themes we will engage with are food, music, trips, Israeli non-profit organizations, and more. For students who placed out of Hebrew due to their previous experience with Hebrew, this class can be helpful in reviewing forms and vocabulary they learned long ago, and in practicing active usage of the language (through class discussions, presentations, etc.) so they will be able to transition smoothly to the more advanced Hebrew classes.

HISTORY

HISTORY 101-7-24 (first-year seminar): Resisting the Nazis

B. Frommer, 3:30 – 4:50pm

During the Second World War millions of Europeans made the decision to resist domestic terror and foreign occupation. They acted out of a range of motives, personal and collective, and in a myriad of ways, from armed violence to passive noncompliance. Some resisted from the start; others when they were personally threatened; and many only when Nazi defeat became imaginable and then inevitable. Some who once opposed fascism decided to bend to it, while others later joined the resistance, or played a double game from the start. Many, regardless of their choice, paid the ultimate price for it, while others gained from their decisions. From the Nazi seizure of power to postwar efforts to seek justice for crimes against humanity, this course will examine the dilemmas, ethics, and consequences of resistance against the Nazis and their Axis partners among state officials, soldiers, and civilians. We will read firsthand testimony and secondary scholarship and watch both documentaries and feature films that grapple with the dilemmas of resistance during the Second World War.

JEWISH STUDIES

JWSH_ST 279-0-1 (also COMP_LIT 270-0-1/MENA 290-6-2): Jews and Arabs in Hebrew Literature and Culture (in translation)

G. Ehrlich, TTH 11:00 – 12:20

This course examines representations of Jews and Palestinians in modern Hebrew literature and culture, exploring how literature, film, and other cultural texts engage with questions of identity, coexistence, and conflict. We will read texts from both canonical and lesser-known Hebrew authors – both Jewish and Palestinian – tracing portrayals of Arab-Jewish relations ranging from writers of the “1948 Generation” to contemporary works and films. Throughout the course, we will analyze how literature and cinema reflect and shape social, political, and historical realities, and explore themes such as nationalism, memory, love (including “complicated” love stories), and trauma. The literary texts and films will be accompanied by academic articles and theoretical texts. No previous knowledge of Hebrew is required! All texts will be read in translation, and all films will include English subtitles.

JWSH_ST 279-0-2 (also GERMAN 246-0-2): Yiddish, Our Setting Sun: Yiddish Literature and Culture in the 20th Century

H. Seltzer, MW 11:00 – 12:20

Yiddish, which was developed in the Middle Ages as a Judeo-German language, became the language which most Jews had spoken in Eastern and Western Europe until the Second World War. We will begin the class with learning about the origins of Yiddish and its development into becoming the most widespread Jewish language in Europe. We will then fast forward to the 18th and 19th centuries and the era of secularization among Jewish communities, where Western European Jews saw Yiddish as a degraded language while among Eastern European Jews Yiddish became a language of bursting literary expression and flourishing literature. Persecution, poverty, the dissolution of becoming part of intellectual Europe, and Zionist ideology were all reasons for many young Jewish people to immigrate to the US and Palestine in the first decades of 20th century. While Jewish immigrants in the United States sought connections to Yiddish and clung to it as a remnant of their old world, Yiddish was rejected in Palestine (and later in Israel) as representing the “old and weak Jew” and threatening the status of Hebrew. We will examine the texts of major Yiddish writers from the beginning of the 20th century in the literary centers of Yiddish at the time: Eastern Europe, the United States, and Palestine. An important part of our class will be the geographical move of Yiddish from its “natural” habitat of Eastern Europe to the US and Palestine, and the element of loss and grief which was strongly present in the writing of Yiddish poets and authors, during the upheavals in Europe in the two World Wars, and especially after the Holocaust. Class materials will be comprised of articles and book chapters to provide the historical, cultural, and political context of the eras we will discuss, and of essays, short stories, and poems translated from Yiddish to English. No previous knowledge of Yiddish or of Yiddish culture or history is required. All course materials will be in English, as well as the lectures and class discussions.

LEARNING SCIENCES

LRN_SCI 224-0-20: Holocaust Education Design

D. M. Cohen, TTH 12:30 – 1:50

How can we design engaging and relevant Holocaust education? How has Holocaust education developed over time? What is its purpose? And what is its future? In this course, we consider and debate the complexities and challenges of Holocaust pedagogy, including responding to learners' emotions and misconceptions. We ask how Holocaust pedagogy can be applied more generally to teaching about histories of atrocity and contemporary injustices. We explore the possible goals of educating about the Holocaust, the merits and challenges of addressing all of the Nazis' target groups, and the relationships between Holocaust education, genocide education, and human rights and social justice education. We study the benefits and challenges of prioritizing specific perspectives, including those of victims, survivors, the second and third generations, rescuers, liberators, bystanders, perpetrators, and collaborators. Through theoretical texts, fiction, film, witness testimony, school curricula, and museum and online exhibitions, we explore appropriate and inappropriate teaching methods and consider the design of training for Holocaust educators across formal and informal learning environments. Student learning is assessed through creative responses to course materials, journaling, and open projects, with opportunities for group work.

SESP

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

D. M. Cohen, TTH 2:00 – 3:20

How can we harness the power of collective learning to drive tangible social change? What does the design process look like when our goals include inspiring community engagement, sustained reflection, and deep empathy? Using Holocaust history as an entry point to these questions, we will explore how film and fiction can be vehicles for collective action and healing. We will explore processes, challenges, and possibilities of community program design. We will consider how certain tropes and narrative framings affect our perceptions and collective memories of Holocaust history and of atrocities in the past and present. We will ask: How has the Holocaust come to be represented in popular culture? 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 and how those gaps and misconceptions can stand in the way of justice.