Northwestern | Program in Jewish Studies
WEINBERG COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES

FALL 2026				
COURSE	**COURSE TITLE**	**DISTRO/FD**	**INSTRUCTOR**	**TIME**
HEBREW 111-1-21	Hebrew I		R. Alexander	MWF 12:30 – 1:40
HEBREW 121-1-20	Hebrew II		R. Alexander	MWF 11:00 – 12:20
HEBREW 211-0-1	Hebrew III: Language and Culture	VI	R. Alexander	MW 2:00 – 3:20
HISTORY 203-2-20 (also JWSH_ST 203-2-1)	Jewish History II: Early Modern, 1492-1789	IV	Y. Petrovsky-Shtern	TTH 3:30 – 4:50
JWSH_ST 101-7-1 (first-year seminar)	Daily Life in Israel/Palestine		M. Hilel	MW 11:00 – 12:20
JWSH_ST 280-4-1 (also HISTORY 292-0-26, MENA 290-4-2)	Jews and Arabs in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880-1948	IV	M. Hilel	MW 3:30 – 4:50
LRN_SCI 224-0-20	Holocaust Education Design		D. M. Cohen	TTH 12:30 – 1:50
PSYCH 317-0-1	Psychological Perspectives on the Holocaust	III	B. Gorvine	TTH 2:00 – 3:20
RELIGION 230-0-20 (also JWSH_ST 230-0-1)	Intro to Judaism	V	B. Wimpfheimer	MWF 10:00 – 10:50
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 2026 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 111-1-21: Hebrew I
R. Alexander MWF 12:30 – 1:40pm
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
R. Alexander, MWF 11:00am – 12:20pm
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
R. Alexander, MW 2:00 – 3:20pm
Hebrew 211 is taught in the Fall quarter and 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 ללגב..., ש, וכל, ינפמ), 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

HISTORY

HISTORY 203-2-20 (also JWSH_ST 203-2-1): Jewish History II: Early Modern, 1492-1789
Y. Petrovsky-Shtern, TTH 3:30 – 4:50pm
In 1492, the Spanish Catholic Kings issued a decree banishing the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula allowing converts to stay. Three hundred years later, the French Revolutionary Parliament accepted Jews as legal citizens ushering in the era of Jewish emancipation. This course explores three centuries of radical changes that triggered the rise of new political and religious treatment of and attitude toward Jews. Students will focus on the early modern era of mercantilism that reshaped the Jewish community economically and culturally; on the legalization of the process of readmission of Jews to urban centers from which they were expelled in medieval times; on the spread of Jewish mysticism and the rise of Jewish religious revivalist movements; on the impact of French Enlightenment on the rise of modern Jewish thought; the formation of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish identity; and on the revolutionary upheavals in Netherlands, Britain, and France that triggered the process of emancipation that bolstered Jewish integration into the fabric of European society. Students will look at the early modern European history through the eyes of the previously alienated minority, the attitude to which started to change.

JEWISH STUDIES

JWSH_ST 101-7-1 (first-year seminar): Daily Life in Israel/Palestine
M. Hilel, MW 11:00am – 12:20pm
This course introduces students to the History of Everyday Life, a methodological approach that shifts attention from elites, institutions, and major political events to the daily practices, routines, and social spaces of ordinary people. Applying this lens to Israel/Palestine offers distinctive insights into a region typically understood through conflict-centered narratives. By attending to the daily, the habitual, and the seemingly mundane, this course explores how Jews, Muslims, Christians, and others experienced work, family, religion, fashion, food, leisure, consumption, and sexuality, and how their daily choices and experiences shaped broader social, cultural, and political developments. Through primary sources, ethnographic accounts, visual materials, and scholarly readings, students will investigate how everyday life both reflected and shaped social change and cultural creativity in Palestine and Israel from the late Ottoman period to the present. As a first-year seminar, this course will also guide students through their transition to Northwestern, helping them navigate available resources and develop essential studying skills that will set them up for success in the Humanities and beyond.

JWSH_ST 280-4-1 (also HISTORY 292-0-26, MENA 290-4-2): Jews and Arabs in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880-1948
M. Hilel, MW 3:30 – 4:50pm
This course examines the social, cultural, and everyday interactions between Arabs and Jews in Palestine/the Land of Israel from the late nineteenth century until 1948. Moving beyond dominant narratives centered on rivalry, violence, and political conflict, the course adopts a relational history approach to recover a more nuanced understanding of this highly contested historical period. Focusing on day-to-day encounters and interactions, students explore shared experiences, intersecting identities, cultural exchanges and competitions and frictions that shaped Arab-Jewish reciprocal relations. Course topics include life in mixed cities; education systems; business collaborations; tourism; labor unions and political organizations; leisure spaces; and other sites of intercommunal contact. Drawing on a wide range of primary historical sources, students critically analyze how Arabs and Jews navigated diverse public spaces, illuminating often-overlooked dimensions of their deeply intertwined histories.

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.

PSYCHOLOGY

PSYCH 317-0-1: Psychological Perspectives on the Holocaust
B. Gorvine, TTH 2:00 – 3:20pm
This course will be an exploration of how particular psychological theories and concepts can inform our understanding of the events of the Holocaust at both a group and individual level. Material from the fields of Social and Clinical Psychology will be a particular focus of the course. Six major topics will be explored vis-à-vis literature, historical accounts, film, and psychological theory: (1) Perpetrators and Bystanders; (2) Upstanders/Resisters; (3) Survivors; (4) Children of survivors; (5) Deniers; (6) Modern American Jewish identity, culture, and humor in the wake of the Holocaust. Questions of how to utilize an understanding in the Holocaust in a modern context, and the applicability of the Holocaust as a historical example for understanding current events, will also be explored. Students will be evaluated on the basis of class attendance and participation, essay exams, short writing assignments, and a group project/ presentation. There is no text for the course; readings will either be distributed in class or posted on Canvas throughout the quarter. Note: This course is not open for pre-registration for Psych majors/minors so that interested students from any department have an opportunity to register. The course will be open during the regular registration window.

RELIGION

RELIGION 230-0-20 (also JWSH_ST 230-0-1): Intro to Judaism
B. Wimpfheimer, MWF 10:00 – 10:50am
This course attempts to answer the questions "What is Judaism?" and "Who is a Jew?" by surveying the broad arc of Jewish history, reviewing the practices and beliefs that have defined and continue to define Judaism as a religion, sampling the vast treasure of Jewish literatures, and analyzing the unique social conditions that have made the cultural experience of Jewishness so significant. The class will employ a historical structure to trace the evolutions of Jewish literature, religion, and culture through the ages.

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.