

Jewish Studies Fall 2020 Courses

COURSE	COURSE TITLE	DISTRO	INSTRUCTOR	MODE OF INSTRUCTION	TIME
HEBREW 111-1-20	Hebrew I		H. Seltzer	Remote & Synchronous	MTWTH 10:20 – 10:10
HEBREW 121-1-20	Hebrew II		H. Seltzer	Remote & Synchronous	MTWTH 11:30 – 12:20
HISTORY 300-0-22	Comparative Genocide	IV	S. Ionescu	Remote & Synchronous	TTH 11:20 – 12:40
HISTORY 348-1-20	Jews in Poland, Ukraine and Russia: 1250 - 1917	IV	Y. Petrovsky-Shtern	Remote & Synchronous	TTH 2:40 – 4:00
JWSH_ST 101-6-1 (First-year seminar)	A Rabbi and a Priest walk into a bar... to talk about God		C. Sufrin	Remote & Synchronous	TTH 1:00 – 2:20
JWSH_ST 278-0-1	Tales of Love and Darkness: Eros and Isolation in Modern Hebrew Literature	VI	M. Moseley	Remote & Synchronous	MW 4:10 – 5:30
JWSH_ST 280-4-1 (Hybrid) JWSH_ST 280-4-2 (Remote) (also HISTORY 200-0-22/22B)	Arabs and Jews in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880-1948	IV	M. Hilel	Hybrid or Remote & Synchronous	TTH 1:00 – 2:20
JWSH_ST 280-5-1	Zionism and its Critics	V	S. Hirschhorn	Remote & Synchronous	TTH 4:20 – 5:40
JWSH_ST 390-0-1 (also THEATRE 240-0-20)	Jewishness in Performance		R. Moss	Remote & Synchronous	TTH 9:40 – 11:00
RELIGION 220-0-20	Introduction to Hebrew Bible	V	B. Wimpfheimer	Remote & Synchronous	MW 9:40 – 11:00
RELIGION 339-0-20 (also GNDR_ST 390-0-21)	Gender and Sexuality in Judaism	V	C. Sufrin	Remote & Synchronous	TTH 9:40 – 11:00

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 visit: www.jewish-studies.northwestern.edu, or
email: jewish-studies@northwestern.edu

Jewish Studies Fall 2020 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 for first or second year Hebrew.

HEBREW 111-1-20: Hebrew I

H. Seltzer, MTWTH 10:20 – 11:10am, Remote/Synchronous

First-Year Hebrew is a three-quarter course designed to develop language learning as well as to provide a cultural foundation. The course is based on a communicative-cultural approach weaving together listening, reading, speaking, and writing practice sessions in each lesson. New vocabulary and new grammatical structures are introduced and practiced in context. The students will learn to read and write the Alef-Beit (Hebrew alphabet) in both systems – the printing letters, Dfus, for reading, and the writing letters, Ktav, for writing. Daily homework and occasional presentations are an integral part of class in order to maximize students' successful learning. Course Prerequisite: None.

HEBREW 121-1-20: Hebrew II

H. Seltzer, MTWTH 11:30-12:20pm, Remote/Synchronous

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. Daily homework and occasional presentations are an integral part of class in order to maximize students' successful learning. Course Prerequisite: Hebrew 111-3 or equivalent, or permission of the instructor.

HISTORY

HISTORY 300-0-22: Comparative Genocide

S. Ionescu, TTH 11:20-12:40, Remote/Synchronous

Genocide, considered by some scholars "the crime of crimes," has been the focus of increased attention from diplomats, academics, and the general public since the end of World War II, and it has been a major topic in international law, scholarly studies, and debates. The goal of this course is to give students the opportunity to gain wider theoretical and empirical knowledge about several genocides that took place in different parts of the world (North America, Africa, Europe, and Asia), focusing mostly on the twentieth century cases of the Herero Genocide, the Holocaust, and Cambodia. The course will also examine the precursors of twentieth century genocides, by focusing on the destruction of Native Americans during the centuries of European colonization, which remains an under-researched and much debated topic with major implications for today's American society. For decades, the Holocaust and the terror of the Khmer Rouge regime (Cambodia) have represented examples of mass atrocity that have affected millions of innocent civilians, with the aim of eliminating groups of people in whole or in part. The first genocide of the twentieth century, the destruction of the Herrero and Nama (in present-day Namibia) by the German Imperial Army is a lesser known case of genocide—it was almost forgotten until the boom in mass violence research in the 1990s—and yet it is crucially important to understand the ways in which the colonially driven destruction of indigenous people continued into the twentieth century and how it influenced the emergence of the Holocaust.

HISTORY 348-1-20: Jews in Poland, Ukraine and Russia: 1250 - 1917

Y. Petrovsky-Shtern, TTH 2:40 – 4:00, Remote/Synchronous

Who are the European Jews, how and when did they arrive to East Europe, and why did they seek to move to the United States at the turn of the nineteenth century? Why do Americans consider them too traditional and conservative while Russians and Poles view them as too leftist and liberal? Using contextualization and unique primary sources, this course explores how East European Jews managed to build a robust civilization that lasted over a millennium, how they perceived historical upheavals such as wars, revolutions and pogroms, how they interacted with Christians and Muslims, and how imperial politics in Russia, Poland, and Austria shaped Jewish identities in ways that continue to frame Jewish mentality. This course traces the itinerary of East European Jews from the times of the medieval Kievan Rus to the early twentieth-century revolutionary upheavals, taking a close look at Jews in Poland and the Russian Empire, which includes Lithuania and Ukraine. It challenges cultural myths, provides substantial European context and integrates Jewish history within the framework of a broader imperial and national histories.

JEWISH STUDIES

JWSH_ST 101-6-1 (First-year seminar): A Rabbi and a Priest walk into a bar... to talk about God

C. Sufrin, TTH 1:00 – 2:20, Remote/Synchronous

As the course title suggests, when Jews and Christians get together we expect them to joke around about practices like wearing prayer shawls, not eating pork, or abstaining from sex. But what happens when Jews and Christians try to talk together in a serious way about the Bible? Or what happens when we die? Or even about the nature of God? In this class, we will consider whether it is possible for people from different faith traditions to learn from one another in a way that is constructive and meaningful while still respectful of the differences between their histories, their holy texts, and their belief systems. If it is possible, what is the purpose of such dialogue? And what are the best ways to approach it? While our focus will be on Jews and Christians, our texts will include some Muslim writers as well.

In short: this course is a chance to think about how and why to talk about our highest values and commitments with those who don't share them.

JWSH_ST 278-0-1: Tales of Love and Darkness: Eros and Isolation in Modern Hebrew Literature

M. Moseley, MW 4:10 – 5:30, Remote/Synchronous

The course aims to explore the poetic, the ideological and the gender implications of the interwoven themes of eros and isolation in Hebrew Literature from the turn of the 19th century to the present day. In doing so, we shall study the migration of these themes along with Hebrew Literature itself from Europe to Palestine and ultimately the State of Israel. Has the rebuilding of the national "Home" brought the uprooted man his long lost masculinity? And how did the female writer incorporate/become incorporated by the "Talush" narrative? How do we account for the longevity of this sad and pathetic figure? This course provides an excellent introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature per se: we shall read classic texts by M.Y. Berdichevsky, Y.H. Brenner, S.Y. Agnon, alongside excerpts from contemporary bestselling Israeli novels by Amos Oz, Ya'akov Shabtai and others.

JWSH_ST 280-4-1(Hybrid*)/280-4-2 (Remote): Arabs and Jews in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880-1948**
M. Hilel, TTH 1:00 – 2:20, Hybrid or Remote/Synchronous

This course will explore the historical relations between Jews and Arabs in Palestine/The Land of Israel from the close of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth. According to prevalent assumptions, both inside and outside academia, this relationship was characterized solely by mutual rivalry, violence, and conflict. This course, however, aims to challenge this assumption by looking at shared identities and experiences and by analyzing a wide range of daily connection, interaction, and collaborations that took place between Jews and Arabs. Relying on a “history from below” approach, we will examine planned and voluntary encounters between Jews and Arabs in mixed cities, the education system, business and labor markets, political organizations, leisure spaces and more. Using various primary sources, we will examine the ways in which Jewish and Arab societies constantly imitated, learned from and influenced each other, and how they formed personal and even romantic relationships in the background of the escalating national struggle.

* Hybrid: One day in-person and one day remote.

**also HISTORY 200-0-22/200-0-22B

JWSH_ST 280-5-1: Zionsim and its Critics
S. Hirschhorn, TTH 4:20 – 5:40, Remote/Synchronous

The course opens with a brief discussion of theoretical approaches to the nature of criticism and the character of the critic. This is followed by a summary of the various conceptualizations of the “Jewish Problem” in Eastern and Western Europe, conceptualizations that lay the groundwork for Zionism(s) and its critics. We then turn to the pre-1948 period, focusing on both the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine) and international Jewish community, as well as early exogenous responses to Zionism and the proto-state in Palestine. We will consider cultural Zionism (Ahad Haam), revisionist Zionism (Jabotinsky), and binationalism (Buber), as well as forms of dissent both within (ultra-Orthodox) and outside the pre-state community, including the incipient Palestinian nationalist movement. Particular attention will be paid to the debate over themes such as the “Rejection of the Diaspora” and the “Creation of the New Jew,” the “Arab Question,” and the religious/secular divide.

The second half of the course examines the evolution of Zionist thought in the post 1948 period. We begin by assessing the nature of Zionism and its critics in the post-Holocaust, post-state era. The course then revisits internal dissent, and explores views associated with groups such as the Israeli radical right and settler camp, the Caananites, Mizrachim and the Israeli Black Panther party, women, the post-Zionist coalition and the New Historians movement, and Jewish-Americans. The course will also highlight the growth of external opposition to Zionism, both within the Palestinian and Arab secular and religious nationalist movements as well as the international community. The course will conclude with a discussion of two contemporary debates on “Zionism is Racism” and the relationship between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism.

JWSH_ST 390-0-1 (THEATRE 240-0-20): Jewishness in Performance

R. Moss, TTH 9:40 – 11:00, Remote/Synchronous

This course explores the theatrical and performative legacy of using Jews and Jewishness in performance in the 20th and 21st centuries and asks: What does it mean to play Jewish? We will focus on a set of performances from different historical, geographic, and geopolitical contexts (principally in the US, Britain, and Poland) to investigate and discuss the range of uses of Jewishness in performance. We will look specifically at how Jewishness (either explicitly or implicitly thematized) has been used in performance to (re)define politics, morality, or even universalism in a given historical moment, through examples ranging from the eponymous Shylock to Leon Kruckowski's *Julius and Ethel*, among others. Taking a transhistorical, trans-spatial approach, this course compares different types of Jewish performative uses to broaden understandings of ethnicity on stage and in public performance. This class will engage critically with theatrical and scholarly texts alongside recorded performances to facilitate analysis within specific cultural and political contexts, while also enabling the examination of the boundaries and borders of performed "Jewishness," taken broadly.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELIGION 220-0-20: Introduction to Hebrew Bible

B. Wimpfheimer, MW 9:40 – 11:00am, Remote/Synchronous

There is no understating the significance of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in Western Culture. The Bible is a text that has been repeatedly turned to for spiritual guidance, for explanations of humankind's origins and as the basis of both classical art and contemporary cinema. English idiom is peppered with phrases that originate in the Hebrew Bible and many a modern political clash can be understood as a conflict over the Bible's messages and their implications. This course introduces students to the Hebrew Bible by reading sections of most of the Bible's books. But reading is itself a complicated enterprise. The Bible has been put to many different uses; even within the world of academic scholarship, the Bible is sometimes a source of history, sometimes a religious manual, sometimes a primitive legal code and sometimes a work of classical literature.

This course will introduce students to the various challenges that present themselves within the study of the Hebrew Bible and the varied approaches scholars take when reading the Hebrew Bible. This course is a critical introduction to the Hebrew Bible.

RELIGION 339-0-20(GNDR_ST 390-0-21): Gender, Sexuality and Judaism

C. Sufrin, TTH 9:40 – 11:00 am, Remote/Synchronous

From its most traditional to its most liberal forms, contemporary Judaism has been deeply influenced by feminism and its call to pay attention to the way gender and sexuality shape and are shaped by religious experiences and ideas. In this course, we will use gender and sexuality as lenses for analyzing the sacred texts, rituals, and theology of Judaism. Along the way, we will also consider how attention to gender and sexuality sheds light on the lives of Jewish men and women of the past and present. The course is divided into three sections, each organized around a central category of Jewish thought: Torah, Israel, and God. The first section, Torah, considers two stories from the biblical book of Genesis: first the creation of the world and then the sisters Leah and Rachel, both married to the patriarch Jacob. How does each story define what it is to be a man or a woman? Where is there room for more subversive readings that might question masculinity or femininity? The second section, Israel, turns our focus to the rituals of Niddah, women's monthly immersion in the *mikveh*, ritual bath, following menstruation, and *brit milah*, circumcision. We will consider the origins of these rituals, how they construct notions of gender and personhood, and contemporary views of the practices. We will also consider how these rituals have been adapted for use by Jews who are transgender. The third section, God, examines examples of feminist and queer Jewish theology and, in particular, the use of marriage as a metaphor for the relationship between God and the Jewish people in biblical, rabbinic, and contemporary contexts.

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