

Winter 2021 Courses

| COURSE | COURSE TITLE | DISTRO | INSTRUCTOR | MODE OF INSTRUCTION | TIME |
|--|---|-----------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| GERMAN 234-2-1 | Jews and Germans: An Intercultural History II | IV, V, VI | P. Fenves | Remote & Synchronous | MWF 12:00 – 12:50 |
| HEBREW 111-2-20 | Hebrew I | | R. Alexander | Remote & Synchronous | MTWTH 10:00 – 10:50 |
| HEBREW 121-2-20 | Hebrew II | | H. Seltzer | Remote & Synchronous | MTWTH 11:00 – 11:50 |
| HEBREW 245-0 | Hebrew III: Current Events in Israel: Israeli Society through Online News Media | | H. Seltzer | Remote & Synchronous | TTH 2:00 – 3:20 |
| HISTORY 200-0-20 | Jewish Material Culture | IV | Y. Petrovsky-Shtern | Remote & Synchronous | MW 3:30 – 4:50 |
| HISTORY 348-2-20 | Jews in Poland, Ukraine and Russia: 1917-1991 | IV | Y. Petrovsky-Shtern | Remote & Synchronous | MW 2:00 – 3:20 |
| HISTORY 349-0-20 (also GERMAN 349-0-1) | History of the Holocaust | IV | S. Ionescu | Remote & Synchronous | TTH 11:00 – 12:20 |
| HISTORY 393-0-24 | Antisemitism | IV | D. Shyovitz | Remote & Synchronous | TTH 3:30 – 4:50 |
| JWSH_ST 101-6-1 (First-year seminar) | 1948: History and Memory of the First Arab-Israeli War | | S. Hirschhorn | Remote & Synchronous | MW 5:00 – 6:20 |
| JWSH_ST 280-4-3 (also HISTORY 200-0-28) | Leisure and Popular Culture in 20th Century Palestine/Israel | IV | M. Hilel | Remote & Synchronous | TTH 12:30 – 1:50 |
| RELIGION 230-0-22 | Introduction to Judaism | V | C. Sufrin | Remote & Synchronous | TTH 9:30 – 10:50 |

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.

Jewish Studies Winter 2021 Course Descriptions

GERMAN

GERMAN 234-2: Jews and Germans: An Intercultural History II

P. Fenves, MWF 12:00 – 12:50, Remote/Synchronous

The first three decades of the twentieth century were a particularly significant and creative epoch in the long history of German Jewry. It was also, as only a few could see at the time, the end of this history, for when Hitler took power in 1933 Jews were soon stripped of their citizenship. The aim of the class is to examine a variety of ways in which the anxieties and uncertainties of the period between 1870 and 1933—which range from its political to its scientific contexts—are reflected and transformed in the work of certain exemplary German Jewish writers, thinkers, and scientists. The course is divided into four sections: paying particular attention to Else Lasker-Schüller's Hebrew Ballads, the first section examines writers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who developed innovative forms of writing in response to a political, social, and religious environment in which the traditional locus of Jewish authority had declined in favor of secular counterparts, while a newly racialized movement declaring itself "anti-Semitic" began to form political parties in the newly united Germany and the old Austrian Empire; the second section concerns the renewal of the Jewish messianic tradition in the thought of Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, and Franz Rosenzweig; the third section concentrates on the work of Franz Kafka, where the German Jewish predicament gains a particularly powerful and vastly influential voice that has stamped the imagery of the modern world; finally, the class turns its attention to three revolutionary scientists: Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, and Emmy Noether. Each section of the class includes a short writing assignment; there is no final exam. No pre-requisites. All readings and discussion are in English. The course carries distribution credits in areas IV, V, and VI.

HEBREW

Students with prior knowledge of Hebrew (learned either through school or at home) will need to take the Hebrew placement exam, have previously taken Hebrew at Northwestern or have permission from the instructor before registering for first, second or third year Hebrew.

HEBREW 111-2-20: Hebrew I

R. Alexander, MTWTH 10:00 – 10:50am, 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. Prerequisite: Hebrew 111-1, or permission of the instructor.

HEBREW 121-2-20: Hebrew II

H. Seltzer, MTWTH 11:00-11:50pm, Remote/Synchronous

Second-year Hebrew is a three-quarter sequence covering 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. Prerequisite: Hebrew 121-1 or equivalent, or permission of the instructor.

HEBREW 245-0: Hebrew III: Current Events in Israel: Israeli Society through Online News Media

H. Seltzer, TTH 2:00 – 3:20pm, Remote/Synchronous

This course focuses on current events in Israel through in-depth exploration of online news media sources such as foreign newspaper articles and videos. Students will gain respect for a diversity of views while learning how news and public opinions are chosen and shared. The course focuses on reading, listening, and discussion and on building a comprehensive Hebrew vocabulary. Prerequisite: Hebrew II or permission of the instructor.

HISTORY

HISTORY 200-0-20: Jewish Material Culture

Y. Petrovsky-Shtern , MW 3:30 – 4:50, Remote/Synchronous

Judaic material artifacts (“things”) have transcended their traditional usage, acquiring religious, political, and cultural significance, and they have shaped visual aspects of modern Jewish life. Yet their origins, modifications, shape and meaning, ritual function and artistic transformation still remain a mystery for the majority of those who are interested in Jewish culture broadly conceived. By exploring various artifacts from European libraries, museums, and archival depositories, this course connects the material world of modern Jews to Judaic antiquities, demonstrates deep meaning of Jewish ritual artifacts, traces parallels between Judaic material objects and the material culture of the surrounding Christians, and emphasizes spiritual/textual underpinnings of the material worlds of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews.

HISTORY 348-2-20: Jews in Poland, Ukraine and Russia: 1917-1991

Y. Petrovsky-Shtern, MW 2:00 – 3:20, Remote/Synchronous

The 1917 February revolution emancipated the Jews of the Russian Empire; in 1991, the collapse of communism triggered a mass emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union. Based on multi-media power-point presentations, this lecture course illuminates the encounter of Jews as a national minority with the communist state in general and leftist ideology in particular. It explores Jewish responses to communism seeking to answer a number of pertinent questions: Who were the Jews living in the USSR between 1917 and 1991? Why were they so remarkably visible among the ruling and elite under Stalin and why did Stalin make them targets of his xenophobic campaign? Why did the communist regime suppress the memorialization of the Holocaust in the USSR? Ultimately, what made Russians call the Soviet citizens of Jewish origin “Jews” and what makes Americans call former Soviet Jews “Russians”? The course integrates the Soviet Jews into the transformation of the Soviet empire and questions the role of Jews in this process. Explore the political, social, religious, cultural, literary, and artistic aspects of the interaction of East European Jews with communism.

HISTORY 349-0-20 (also GERMAN 349-0-1): History of the Holocaust

S. Ionescu, TTH 11:00 – 12:20, Remote/Synchronous

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 has attracted the attention of both the general public and academics, who have been 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 categories of victims (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 historiographical texts by 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 393-0-24: Antisemitism

D. Shyovitz, TTH 3:30 – 4:50, Remote/Synchronous

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 101-6-1 (First-year seminar): 1948: History and Memory of the First Arab-Israeli War

S. Hirschhorn, MW 5:00 – 6:20, Remote/Synchronous

War of Independence or Nakba? This course will examine how the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948 from the perspective of both history and memory, drawing primarily on a wide variety of primary sources.

JWSH_ST 280-4 (HISTORY 200-0-28): Culture and Leisure in 20th Century Israel/Palestine

M. Hilel, TTH 12:30 – 1:50, Remote/Synchronous

This course focuses on leisure and popular culture in Palestine and later Israel during the 20th century. Looking at both Jewish and Arab societies, this course examines how cultural changes unfolded in various cultural arenas such as: cafes, cinemas, beaches, nightlife, theatre, sports, radio, drug and alcohol consumption and more. Using leisure as a useful lens for historical analysis, the course sheds new light on local and global events which shaped the daily lives of ordinary people. We will examine how leisure and popular culture were influenced by broad processes of modernization, urbanization, the emergence of national identities and the evolving conflict between the Arab and Jewish communities. The course combines a wide range of primary sources with the cultural production of Jewish and Arab writers, moviemakers, and artists.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELIGION 230-0-22: Introduction to Judaism

C. Sufrin, TTH 9:30 – 10:50, Remote/Synchronous

This course will examine core aspects of Judaism and their development from the religion's biblical beginnings through today. Against the background of Jewish and world history, we will seek to understand the roots and evolution of Jewish rituals, literature, traditions, and beliefs in different places around the world. Judaism and Jewishness have changed so much over the centuries that sometimes this might seem like a course in comparative religion. Our challenge will be to understand why these changes occurred while also identifying the continuities that connect Jews across time and space.