

SPRING 2026 COURSES

COURSE	COURSE TITLE	DISTRO/FD	INSTRUCTOR	TIME/DAY
ECON 315-0-30	Economic History of Israel		O. Loewenthal	TTH 11:00 – 12:20
HEBREW 111-3-20	Hebrew I		D. Rubin	MWF 9:30 – 10:50
HEBREW 121-3-20	Hebrew II		H. Seltzer	MWF 11:00 – 12:20
HEBREW 216-3-1	Hebrew III: Love Stories in Modern Hebrew Literature	VI	G. Ehrlich	MW 11:00 – 12:20
HEBREW 316-0-1	Hebrew IV: Biblical Stories and Poems; Canonical Biblical Texts through The Lens of Modern Hebrew Poetry	VI	H. Seltzer	MW 2:00 – 3:20
HISTORY 300-0-22	Jewish Environmental History	IV	D. Shyovitz	MW 11:00 – 12:20
HISTORY 349-0-20	History of the Holocaust	IV	Westermann	MW 3:30 – 4:50
HISTORY 393-0-26	Gender, Race, and the Holocaust	IV	S. Cushman	MW 12:30 – 1:50
JWSH_ST 279-0-1 (also MENA 290-6-2)	A Short History of the Jewish Short Story	VI	G. Ehrlich	TTH 11:00 – 12:20
JWSH_ST 280-4-1 (also MENA 290-4-1/ HISTORY292-0-22)	Arabs and Jews in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880-1948	IV	M. Hilel	MW 3:30 – 4:50
JWSH_ST 280-4-2 (also HISTORY 292-0-24/ MENA 290-4-2)	Leisure & Popular Culture in 20 th Century Palestine/Israel	IV	M. Hilel	MW 11:00 – 12:20
JWSH_ST 280-4-3 (also MENA 290-4-3/ HISTORY 292-0-26)	Fossil Fuels and Climate Change in Palestine/Israel: A Global Perspective	IV	S. Pinhas	TTH 12:30 – 1:50
JWSH_ST 390-0-1 (also CIV_ENV 395-0-2/ ENVR_POL 390-0-28)	Water in Arid Lands: Technology, Innovation and Transboundary Management in the Middle East		E. Rekhess & A. Packman	W 4:00 – 7:00
LRN_SCI 224-0-20	Holocaust Education Design		D. M. Cohen	TTH 12:30 – 1:50
PSYCH 317-0-1	The Holocaust: Psychological Themes and Perspectives	III	B. Gorrive	MW 3:30 – 4:50

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COURSE	COURSE TITLE	DISTRO/FD	INSTRUCTOR	TIME/DAY
RELIGION 339-0-21 (also JWSH_ST 339-0-1)	Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism	V	B. Wimpfheimer	TTH 9:30 – 10:50
RELIGION 339-0-22 (also JWSH_ST 339-0-2)	Kabbalah	V	B. Wimpfheimer	TTH 2:00 – 3:20
SESP 323-0-20	Holocaust Memory, Memorials and Museums		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 Spring 2026 Course Descriptions

ECONOMICS

ECON 315-0-30: Economic History of Israel

O. Loewenthal, TTH 11:00am – 12:20pm

The course provides an overall analysis of the Israeli Economy, its development in the 70 years since the establishment of the state of Israel, and how it coped with various crises during those years. The course will focus on economic growth, the effects of the Israeli-Arab conflict, the inflation crisis and stabilization policy, and on inequality in Israel. We will study those issues by applying fundamental concepts in economic analysis.

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 111-3-20: Hebrew I

D. Rubin, MWF 9:30 – 10:40am

The three-quarter first-year course in Hebrew is designed to develop all four language skills (speaking, writing, listening, and reading comprehension) as well as provide a cultural foundation. The course is based on Hebrew From Scratch, a comprehensive textbook with grammar and interactive exercises 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 taught in Hebrew, creating an important immersive environment for the students throughout the year. Hebrew 111-3, taught in the Spring Quarter, builds on material learned in the first two quarters. 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.

HEBREW 121-3-20: 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. 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 of a level-appropriate difficulty with more information on Israeli daily life and reality and listening to form of songs and clips in Hebrew. In Hebrew 121-3, taught in the Spring quarter, we will expand our knowledge of past tense verbs to forms of פועל ל"ה (לרצה, לעשות) and פעל שלמים (לכתב, לאכול, לركוד) and פועל (לזרז, להרגיש) and פועל הצעיף (לזמין, להתלבש). This variety of forms will allow us to develop our self-expression and to include writing and conversations about childhood memories, everyday situations like a visit to the doctor, volunteering in organizations, and more. We will learn more prepositions and their conjugations (like צויר, יכול, אפשר) and more useful grammar structures like (שלוי, שלך) We will have a fun unit about family and childhood (prepare your pictures!) and we will also learn about the Jerusalemitic Zoo. As always, grammar and new vocabulary will be woven into the content.

HEBREW 216-3-1: Hebrew III: Love Stories in Modern Hebrew Literature

G. Ehrlich, MW 11:00am – 12:20pm

This advanced Hebrew course explores Hebrew and literature, television, and film through the broad prism of "love stories." What stories do Hebrew literature and culture tell us about love? What kinds of love do they portray? And why does it seem that even the greatest love stories must also be complicated? The course will focus on advancing all linguistic skills – including conversation and discussion, writing, listening comprehension, and reading – while developing students' vocabulary and expressive tools related to themes in Hebrew literature and culture. Increased proficiency in reading and communication will be supported through class discussions, presentations, and written assignments in Hebrew. While focusing on the concept of love, the course will also provide a broad introduction to Hebrew literature and culture.

HEBREW 316-0-1: Hebrew IV: Biblical Stories and Poems; Canonical Biblical Texts through The Lens of Modern Hebrew Poetry
H. Seltzer, MW 2:00 – 3:20pm

In this class we will read a selection of biblical stories in their original language, biblical Hebrew, a reading which will enable us to see the immense influence of biblical Hebrew on Modern Hebrew language. We will then read Contemporary Hebrew poems that are based on the stories we have read. We will analyze both the biblical stories, the Hebrew poems, and the connections between them. The modern poems we will read in class are interpretations of the biblical stories, and we will examine the political, ideological, social, or personal critique as well as the dialogue these poems have with the biblical stories. All class materials and class discussions will be in Hebrew.

HISTORY

HISTORY 300-0-22: Jewish Environmental History
D. Shyovitz, MW 11:00am – 12:20pm

From biblical times until the present day, Jewish and non-Jewish theologians, worshipers, politicians, dissidents, scientists, and ethicists have vigorously debated the relationship between the Jewish tradition and the natural world. Indeed, they have frequently used Jewish texts as means of interrogating just what "nature" consists of in the first place. This course will undertake a thematic exploration of how Jews have thought about and interacted with the environment, the animal kingdom, shifts in climate, and the miraculous or "unnatural" elements of the Jewish tradition that might seem incompatible with the regular "laws of nature." We will pay particular attention to the interreligious settings in which Jewish texts and ideas were produced, and to the concrete political ends for which religious beliefs and scientific knowledge were often deployed. The course will begin by exploring the Hebrew Bible and its reception, and will proceed roughly chronologically, concluding in the modern era. As we shall see, an understanding of this long term history is vital for making sense of contemporary debates and innovations in Jewish religiosity, environmental activism, and various political movements in the United States and the State of Israel.

HISTORY 349-0-20 History of the Holocaust
Westermann, MW 3:30 – 4:50pm

The purpose of the course is to stimulate a better understanding of the Holocaust in all its ramifications. In pursuing this goal, the course will examine the history of Jewish life and Jewish experience in Europe and Germany. This course also will examine the specific circumstances and historical events that led to the rise of Nazism in the interwar period (1919-1938) as well as the National Socialist seizure of power and the gradual intensification of antisemitic policy. The course stresses the relationship of Nazi policies and actions regarding Jews to their broader aims of domination, conquest, and subjugation of the whole of Europe. It traces the changes in policy throughout the period from 1933 to 1945 and focuses on the ultimate inauguration of the practice of total annihilation after the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. The course provides insights into how and why these changes occurred when they did, and why those who were victimized by the unfolding disaster were caught unaware. In dealing with the wartime period, the behavior of three key groups is examined: the perpetrators, the victims, and witnesses. An attempt is made to analyze the action or inaction of all three of these groups in the light of the knowledge available to them at the time, rather than to pass judgment with the benefit of post-Holocaust hindsight. Special attention is given to the types and varieties of resistance manifested by the victims in the face of increasing persecution as well as the issues and problems associated with rescuing the European Jews. At the conclusion of the course, you will have an understanding of the social, cultural, political, economic, and military developments that led to and shaped the events of the destruction of the European Jews and other racial and political target groups. The quality and depth of intellectual rigor that you bring into the classroom each day will determine the value that you receive from the course and the benefits that accrue to you today and in the future. I look forward to our journey together.

HISTORY 393-0-26: Gender, Race, and the Holocaust

S. Cushman, MW 12:30 – 1:50pm

The aim of this seminar is to introduce students to the history and historiography of race and gender during the Holocaust. As in many historical contexts, race and gender interacted dynamically and created the particular context of Nazi-occupied Europe, which was a place where Jewish men and women suffered in particular ways, German men and women participated in particular ways, and other racial groups - men and women alike - were targeted, collaborated, resisted and rescued. We will read a variety of texts that explore the influences that shaped the behavior and response of an array of people during the Holocaust. Racism sat directly in the center of the Nazi world view. Once the Nazis got into power, they sought to translate ideology into policy. Still, their racial policies evolved over time, spurred by opportunism, innovation, and war. And too, Jewish men and women responded in ways similar and divergent to the Nazi onslaught. Sexism was also seemingly an important aspect of the Nazi perspective. While they indeed embraced an anti-feminist stance, the Nazis nevertheless sought to incorporate "German" women into the national community and women participated actively in the implementation of Nazi racism.

JEWISH STUDIES

JWSH_ST 279-0-1 (also MENA 290-6-2): A Short History of the Jewish Short Story

G. Ehrlich, TTH 11:00 – 12:20

This course explores short stories written by Jewish writers across different languages, countries, periods, and contexts. Is there such a thing as a "Jewish short story"? How do different writers explore and portray Jewish identity and life? What does the short form enable that longer literary works cannot? Throughout the course, we will explore these questions – as well as themes related to social and historical shifts, identity formation, and gender and sexuality – by reading works by Shmuel Yosef Agnon, Franz Kafka, Grace Paley, Etgar Keret, Ida Fink, Isaac Bashevis Singer, J. D. Salinger, Orly Castel-Bloom, and others. All literary texts will be read in English translation.

JWSH_ST 280-4-1 (also HISTORY 292-0-22/MENA 290-4-1): Arabs and Jews in Palestine/The Land of Israel, 1880-1948

M. Hilel, MW 3:30 – 4:50

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. The course adopts a relational history approach to recover a more nuanced understanding of this highly contested period. Focusing on encounters, interactions, and forms of cooperation and frictions, students explore shared experiences, intersecting identities, cultural exchanges and competitions that shaped Arab–Jewish reciprocal relations in daily life. 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 and social spaces, illuminating often-overlooked dimensions of their intertwined histories.

JWSH_ST 280-4-2 (also HISTORY 292-0-24/MENA 290-4-2: Leisure and Popular Culture in 20th Century Palestine/Israel)
M. Hilel, MW 11:00am – 12:20pm

The history of Palestine/Israel is often narrated through wars, political events, and struggles for self-determination, offering limited insight into the cultural lives of ordinary people. This course shifts the focus from state-centered and political histories to the realms of leisure, pleasure, and entertainment in twentieth-century Palestine/Israel. By examining cafés, cinemas, beaches, nightlife, theaters, and sports venues, the course explores how leisure spaces emerged as essential arenas for individual expression, social interaction, and collective identity. Situating leisure within broader historical processes such as modernization, urbanization, and the formation of national identities, the course analyzes how everyday cultural practices both shaped and were shaped by larger social transformations. Particular attention is given to the ways ethnicity, gender, and class structured leisure institutions and experiences, as well as to the intersections between leisure and work, family life, community, and nationhood. Drawing on primary sources and cultural works by Jewish and Arab writers, filmmakers, and artists, the course highlights the central role of leisure in shaping the daily lives and cultural worlds of people in Palestine/Israel.

JWSH_ST 280-4-3 (also HISTORY 292-0-26/MENA 290-4-3): Fossil Fuels and Climate Change in Palestine/Israel: A Global Perspective
S. Pinhas, TTH 12:30 – 1:50pm

With a warming rate double the global average and half of the world's oil reserves, the Middle East is a pivotal site for understanding the history, present, and future of climate change. Although Israel/Palestine is not today an oil-producing country, historically it was imagined differently: in the 19th and 20th centuries it was considered a promising frontier for oil exploration and became a regional hub of fossil fuel infrastructures, channeling Middle Eastern oil and North African gas to Europe. This seminar examines how the rise of fossil fuels and the dynamics of climate change played out in Palestine/Israel and shaped both the Zionist-Palestinian struggle and Palestine's place within the Middle East. We will consider how the Middle East became "Middle" through the interplay between energy sources, infrastructures, and colonial powers. We will explore how carbonization in the region gave rise to new forms of political rule, reshaping identities and altering environments, and how seemingly mundane infrastructures – from coaling depots to automobility – enabled and managed colonial power as well as resistance to it. Drawing on archival materials alongside fiction, poetry, and film in Arabic and Hebrew (all provided in English translation), we will analyze the intimate, everyday, and affective dimensions of carbonization and warming, exploring how these forces shaped subjectivities and societies. Finally, we will consider how different notions of heat and cooling technologies were tied to specific constructions of gender, race, and class.

JWSH_ST 390-0-1 (also CIV_ENV 395-0-2/ENVR_POL 390-0-28) Water in Arid Lands: Technology and Transboundary Management in the Middle East
E. Rekhess and A. Packman, W 4:00 – 6:50pm

This seminar will explore how the availability of water in the Middle East has shaped the development of civilizations, influenced political stability in the region, and driven innovation in water technologies. The course will investigate the historical dimensions of water in the Middle East, focusing on ancient civilizations and the water infrastructures that are essential tools in aiding the development of water-poor societies. We will use this historical context as a stepping-stone to transition into a more recent history of the Middle East, including the technological challenges that Israel faced after 1948, due to water scarcity. We will then examine efforts to develop the necessary water resources needed to support the burgeoning population as well as the irrigation projects designed to convert barren desert land into cultivated agriculture. This more recent history will help to set the stage for discussions regarding geopolitical conflicts over land and water that continue to this day. We will evaluate regional climate and water in the context of current and future geopolitical conflicts, reviewing recent advances in water technologies spurred by these limitations as well as the potential development of combined social and technological solutions for long-term water sustainability in Israel and the Middle East. We will also examine transboundary water conflicts in the region and their impact on the enhancement of water technologies. We will end the course with discussions regarding opportunities for the global translation of innovative water technologies and water-management solutions developed in Israel to other water-poor regions. In addition, the course will host a symposium featuring international experts. It will explore recent developments in water technologies and innovations, as well as water transboundary issues in the Middle East. We will begin each class with a survey of news items published recently in world and Middle East media, which discuss water-related topics.

LEARNING SCIENCE

LRN_SCI 224-0-20: Holocaust Education Design
D. M. Cohen, TTH 12:30 – 1:50pm

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 will consider and debate the complexities and challenges of Holocaust pedagogy, including responding to learners' emotions and misconceptions. We will ask how Holocaust pedagogy can be applied more generally to teaching about histories of atrocity and contemporary injustices. We will 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 and educating about atrocities more broadly. We will 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 will explore appropriate and inappropriate teaching methods and we will consider the design of training for Holocaust educators across formal and informal learning environments. Student learning will be assessed through creative responses to course materials, journaling, and open projects, including group work.

PSYCHOLOGY

PSYCH 317-0-1: The Holocaust: Psychological Themes and Perspectives

B. Gorvine, MW 3:30 – 4:50pm

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.

RELIGION

RELIGION 339-0-21 (also JWSH_ST 339-0-1): Anti-Judaism and Anit-Semitism

B. Wimpfheimer, TTH 9:30 – 10:50am

For over two thousand years, Jews have engendered antagonism and hatred from some of their neighbors and erstwhile friends. This course will overview the history of anti-Jewish ideologies and episodes seeking to taxonomize and analyze this metahistorical phenomenon. The course will engage both primary and secondary sources covering over two millennia of world history while attending to diversity in time, place, political reality, and majority religion. Much of the course will be devoted to theorizing anti-Judaism and antisemitism, engaging different paradigms that look to history, theology, psychoanalysis, race and power to consider and reconsider this long-lasting set of hatreds.

RELIGION 339-0-22 (also JWSH_ST 339-0-2): Kabbalah

B. Wimpfheimer, TTH 2:00 – 3:20pm

Kabbalah, or Jewish mysticism, is an esoteric (secret) tradition of deliberating about and experiencing the mysteries of those spaces that are inaccessible to the five senses. Though for much of its history Jewish mysticism has been the province of a select few devotees, at times Kabbalah has flourished as a popular religious movement. Recent years have seen a rise in the popularity of Kabbalah as various celebrities (including Madonna and Ariana Grande) have become affiliated with The Kabbalah Center. This course will introduce the discourse of Kabbalah, think about mysticism as both an experiential and an intellectual tradition and consider why Kabbalah has become so popular today.

SESP

SESP 323-0-20: Holocaust Memory, Memorials, and Museums

D. M. Cohen, TTH 2:00 – 3:20

What is Holocaust memory? How has Holocaust memory changed over time, and how does the Holocaust continue to affect our understanding of trauma, atrocity, and human rights today? This course addresses individual memory, including survivor and witness testimony, memory and trauma, and the impact of the Holocaust on survivors' families and communities. We also explore collective Holocaust memory and the development of mainstream framings of Holocaust history. We consider Jewish, Roma, and other victim narratives, including national memorialization, rituals of commemoration, and the development of Holocaust memorials, museums, and institutions in the United States and around the world. And we study how we have come to remember the Nazi perpetrators and their collaborators. We draw on course texts, including film and fiction, to ask questions about the relationships between individual and collective memories, as well as between commemoration and education.