

SUMMER 2026				
COURSE	COURSE TITLE	DISTRO/FD	INSTRUCTOR	TIME
RELIGION 230-0-26 (also JWSH_ST 230-0-1)	Introduction to Judaism	V	B. Wimpfheimer	June 22 – July 12 Asynchronous
RELIGION 339-0-26 (also JWSH_ST 339-0-1)	Rabbinic Sex Stories	V	S. Schwartz	August 3 - 23 MWF 10:00am – 1:20pm

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 Summer 2026 Course Descriptions

RELIGION/JEWISH STUDIES

RELIGION 230-0-26 (also JWSH_ST 230-0-1): Intro to Judaism

B. Wimpfheimer, Asynchronous/Online

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.

RELIGION 339-0-26 (also JWSH_ST 339-0-1): Rabbinic Sex Stories

S. Schwartz, MWF 10:00 – 1:20pm, Synchronous/Online or In-Person

Do rabbis have sex? Is Jewish knowledge erotic? And what is "the Talmud"? This course will explore these questions in relation to the original rabbis of late antiquity (3rd-7th centuries CE) through narratives, myths, and ethnographic accounts about rabbinic sex, gender and sexuality in the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds. You will learn to expand the definition of what constitutes "sex" or "desire," "kinship" or "connection," "body" or "text," by examining ancient rabbinic forms of gendered, textual, and bodily transmission. Students will learn to become curious about bodily norms that are quite removed from the worlds that we inhabit no matter one's starting point and will learn to make connections across the ancient and contemporary.