JEWISH STUDIES*

*Jewish Studies is offered exclusively as a concentration.

Program Office: Institute for Israel and Jewish Studies, 617 Kent Hall; 212-654-2581; http://www.iijs.columbia.edu/

Program Director: Dr. Isabelle Levy, icl2001@columbia.edu

The academic discipline of Jewish studies is an interdisciplinary field centered on the analysis and investigation of Jewish history, religion, language, and literature. The discipline ranges from the study of Jews and Judaism in antiquity to the present day. It explores Judaism not only as a religion, but as a civilization and culture.

A special concentration in Jewish studies is available for undergraduates and allows students to draw upon classes in a wide range of departments across the University, including History; Sociology; Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies; Germanic Languages and Literature; and Religion. The requirements for the special concentration are designed to provide students with the interdisciplinary knowledge necessary to study Jewish civilization both broadly and deeply.

The roots of Judaism lie deeper than one region, gender, language, or culture; and by studying the interconnectedness of these areas, the depth of understanding across a range of spheres and disciplines greatly increases. The special concentration in Jewish studies enhances the current scholarly programs, adding to current Jewish studies courses' vitality as students come to each course with a deeper understanding and background based on their complementary coursework.

Students wishing to complete a special concentration in Jewish studies work with a program adviser to decide upon course selection and sequencing. The program office provides and keeps on record a planning form to track the fulfillment of requirements for the special concentration.

Affiliated Faculty
Beth Berkwowitz (Religion, Barnard)
Clemence Boulouque (Religion)
Elishava Carlebach (History)
Yinon Cohen (Sociology)
Jeremy Dauber (Germanic Languages)
Ofer Dyens (Slavic Languages and Literatures)
Rebecca Kobrin (History)
Agieszka Legutko (Germanic Languages)
Seth Schwartz (History)
Michael Stanislawski (History)

Special Concentration in Jewish Studies

In addition to the requirements of the special concentration, students must complete a major or a full concentration.

In addition to the requirements of the special concentration, students must complete a major.

For a special concentration in Jewish studies, students are required to complete a minimum of 21 points. Please note:

• At least one course must be taken from each of three of the focus areas listed below.
• Credits for language courses may constitute at most 10 points, and one year of Hebrew or Yiddish language is strongly recommended.

• A minimum of 18 points must be taken at Columbia or as part of an approved study abroad program (unless equivalent courses are not offered at Columbia, as determined by the faculty adviser).

The focus areas and courses listed below are examples and do not include all the potential courses which may count. Additionally, as new courses are introduced, new focus areas may develop. Some courses may fall under multiple headings. Determination of a course's focus area is at the discretion of the faculty adviser.

Focus Areas

Bible and Rabbinics/Ancient Judaism
RELI V3512 The Bible and its Interpreters
RELI GU4537 Talmudic Narrative
RELI W4520 Patriarchal and Rabbinic Authority in Antiquity
RELI V3501 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
RELI V3508 Origins of Judaism
RELI V3561 Classics fo Judaism: Ethics of the Fathers
RELI V2510 Jews and Judaism in Antiquity

Medieval Judaism
HIST UN2657 Medieval Jewish Cultures
HIST W3616 Jews and Christians in the Medieval World
RELI W4510 The Thought of Maimonides
RELI V3870 Inquisitions, New Christians, and Empire
RELI GU4515 Reincarnation and Technology
HIST UN3180 RELIGIOUS CONVERSION IN HIST

Modern Judaism
HIST W3630 American Jewish History
RELI V3571 Judaism, Jewishness, and Modernity
MDES UN3542 Introduction to Israeli Literature

Israeli Society
MDES UN3541 Zionism: A Cultural Perspective
MDES UN3542 Introduction to Israeli Literature

Gender and Judaism
HIST W3640 Jewish Women and Family, 1000-1800
RELI V3570 Women and Judaism: Folklore or Religion?
RELI W4504 Reading the Patriarchal and Matriarchal Stories in Genesis

Jewish History and Culture
MUSI G4125 Jewish Music: Uniqueness and Diversity
RELI V3585 The Sephardic Experience
RELI W4503 Readings from the Sephardic Diaspora
RELI UN2306 Intro to Judaism
RELI W4511 Jewish Ethics
HIST UN2657 Medieval Jewish Cultures
HIST UN3645 Jews in Early Modern Europe, 1492-1750

Jewish Literature
CLYD UN3500 READINGS IN JEWISH LITERATURE: American Jewish Literature: A survey
YIDD UN3800 Readings in Yiddish Literature: The Family Singer (in English)
RELI V3561 Classics fo Judaism: Ethics of the Fathers
Jewish Studies courses are housed in a number of departments throughout the University. For a full list of courses for the 2023-2024 academic year please visit the Institute website.

Fall 2023 Courses of Interest

Jewish Studies

JWST GU4145 Topics in Israeli Cinema. 3.00 points.
Israel has a unique and constantly-evolving national cinema, the product of its diverse immigrant population, influences from neighboring nations, and dramatic national history. Beginning with artistic influences from abroad and culminating with native self-examinations, this course will provide a survey of Israeli film history, recurring foci of Israeli cinema, and introductions to influential filmmakers from early director and impresario Menahem Golan to Orthodox writer/director Rama Burshtein. Each class meeting will include a complete screening of an Israeli feature film, as well as clips of related works. Readings will include critical essays and histories which elaborate on in-class screenings and cover additional topics and films. Written assignments will be three analytical essays which will encourage critical thinking, close analysis of films, and independent research beyond the materials presented in class. All readings are in English. All feature films and film clips are in Hebrew (some include Arabic), and will be presented with English subtitles. Students fluent in Hebrew and Arabic are encouraged to interpret the dialogue for additional meaning that may not be translated in the subtitles.

Spring 2023: JWST GU4145

JWST GU4148 Jewish Histories of the Modern Middle East. 4.00 points.
This seminar explores the many ways in which Jews participated in the social, cultural, political, and economic life of the modern Middle East. Together we will seek to nuance narratives of Jewish histories as we move both chronologically and thematically to trace transformations in daily life, popular culture, political belonging, education, religious practice, and more. We will examine Jewish history in conjunction with global and interregional processes in the Middle East and beyond, such as colonialism, imperialism, nationalism, the formation of modern nation states in the Middle East, and the Israeli-Arab conflict. Through reading scholarly literature and analyzing primary documents—including letters and petitions, newspapers and state records, literature, music, and photography—this course guides students in thinking like historians, reading texts, and formulating interpretations. By centering a wide range of historical voices, we will examine how Jews' historical experiences were shaped by gender, class, race, religious practice, and regionality. In taking our guiding frameworks and approaches from various disciplines and fields, including history, anthropology, visual culture, and postcolonial studies, we will work to better understand the many historical trajectories of Jewish life in the modern Middle East.

Fall 2023: JWST GU4148

JWST GU4151 Readings in Hasidic Literature. 4.00 points.
One of the most enduring contributions of the Hasidic movement to the Judaism and Jewish culture is its rich literary tradition. Revered by the Hasidim as divinely inspired and reviled as obscurantist or heretical by the movement's opponents, Hasidic writings have fascinated generations of readers and remain the subject of intensive investigation by modern scholars. This class will introduce students to the Hasidic literary tradition by engaging in a close readings of a representative selection of eighteenth and nineteenth century Hasidic texts composed in a variety of genres. We will explore the literary and ideological contents of these works as well as the historical and philological complexities created by the transition from oral to written discourse, from manuscript to the print medium and from the Yiddish to the Hebrew language. We will also reflect on the challenges of cultural translation and the consequences of reading traditional texts in the light of modern critical scholarship. This course is open to graduate students and advanced undergraduates may register with permission from the instructor. A working knowledge of Rabbinic Hebrew is required

Fall 2023: JWST GU4151

JWST GU4152 Antisemitism in U.S. History. 4.00 points.
What is antisemitism? How and in what contexts has it appeared in the United States? How, if at all, does it resemble other forms of white nationalism? This course addresses these questions through analysis of anti-Jewish discrimination in the United States between the colonial period and the present, exploring different thematic dimensions of anti-Jewish bigotry, discrimination, and violence. Probing anti-Jewish practices and discourses, you will learn to identify representations of Jews as "others;" determine the origins and sources of anti-Jewish sentiments and policies; analyze similarities and differences between anti-Jewish bigotry and racism and xenophobia; and consider how, if at all, expressions of antisemitism have changed over time in the United States

Fall 2023: JWST GU4152

JWST GU4990 Topics in Jewish Studies. 4.00 points.
This course approaches Jewish Studies from theoretical and pedagogical standpoints. In addition to looking back at ancient, medieval and Early Modern approaches to the study of Jewish topics and examining the theoretical, historical and religious underpinnings of Jewish Studies as a modern discipline, we will also read theoretical writings from related disciplines. The course will balance these materials with pedagogical approaches and strategies from various disciplines and fields, including history, anthropology, visual culture, and postcolonial studies, we will work to better understand the many historical trajectories of Jewish life in the modern Middle East.

Fall 2023: JWST GU4990
Comparative Literature - Yiddish

CLYD UN3500 READINGS IN JEWISH LITERATURE: American Jewish Literature: A survey. 3.00 points.

This year has been designated the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Jewish life in America. In examining the work of some of the greatest Jewish writers to live in America – writers in English, Hebrew, and Yiddish, some well known, some less so – this course hopes to answer several related questions. How are the changing fortunes of American Jews reflected in their literary creativity? How does Jewish multilingualism – not only seen in different works, but within the same work – affect modes and styles of Jewish writing? And, perhaps most importantly, how does one define American Jewish writing in an age of increasingly complex affiliations and identifications among American Jews?

Fall 2023: CLYD UN3500

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CLYD GU4250 Memory and Trauma in Yiddish Literature (in English). 3 points.

Trauma has become a defining aspect of the modern Jewish experience, while the recently emerged memory studies shed a new light on how we remember the past, and understand memory. As Cathy Caruth observes in Trauma: Explorations of Memory (1995), “The traumatized, we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess.” This course examines how memory, especially memory of trauma, is explored in Yiddish literature, film, and beyond. It focuses predominantly on the works relating to the Holocaust and its impact on the first, second, and third generations, but it also engages with other kinds of memory and other kinds of trauma (pogroms, Chmielnitsky massacres, loss, death, etc.). It approaches the questions of memory and trauma from the perspective of gender, body, and identity, as well as postmemory. The course aims for students to discuss and critically engage with the works listed on the syllabus, in order to develop the skills of analytical, and abstract thinking, as well as the ability to express that critical thinking in writing. Texts will be offered in English translation, no knowledge of Yiddish required.

Fall 2023: CLYD GU4250

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<td>Agnieszka Legutko</td>
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History

HIST GU4525 Immigrant New York. 4.00 points.

This seminar explores the intersection of immigration, race, and politics in New York City, both from the perspective of history and in relation to contemporary realities. In this course we will discuss the ways in which immigration has reshaped the cultural, economic, and political life of New York City both in the past as well as the present. Readings will focus on the divergent groups who have settled in New York City, paying close attention to issues of gender, class, race, the role of labor markets, the law, and urban development. At several points during the semester, the class will relocate to various locations in New York City, so that the class can meet those shaping the image of immigrant life in New York [in places such as the Tenement Museum] as well as leaders shaping immigrants’ lived experience of the city today.

Fall 2023: HIST GU4525

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<td>Rebecca</td>
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Hebrew

MDES UN1501 1ST YR MOD HEBREW:ELEM I. 5.00 points.

This is an introductory course for which no prior knowledge is required. Equal emphasis is given to listening, speaking, reading, writing and grammar. Daily homework includes grammar exercises, short answers, reading, or paragraph writing. Frequent vocabulary and grammar quizzes. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Fall 2023: MDES UN1501

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<td>MDES 1501</td>
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MDES UN2501 2ND YR MOD HEBREW:INTER I. 5.00 points.

Prerequisites: 1st Year Modern Hebrew II or the equivalent and instructor’s permission.

Prerequisites: 1st Year Modern Hebrew II or the equivalent and instructor’s permission. Equal emphasis is given to listening, speaking, reading and writing. Regular categories of the Hebrew verb, prepositions, and basic syntax are taught systematically. Vocabulary building. Daily homework includes grammar exercises, short answers, reading, or short compositions. Frequent vocabulary and grammar quizzes. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Fall 2023: MDES UN2501

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<td>Danielle Katz-Shenhar</td>
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MDES UN2516 INT HEBREW: INTENSIVE GRAMMAR REV. 4.00 points.
This course focuses on Modern Hebrew grammar, and verb conjugation in particular. It is designed for students with substantial knowledge of Modern Hebrew. Over the semester, students will systematically review the grammatical patterns of regular verbs (shlemim), and learn the grammatical patterns of the irregular verbs (gzarot), as well as several other grammatical topics. After successful completion of this course, the foreign language requirement will be fulfilled (for students of Columbia College and other academic units that require a 4th-semester proficiency). Successful completion of this course also allows students to register in third-year Modern Hebrew.

Fee: Language Resource Center Fee - 15.00

MDES UN2517 HEBREW FOR HERITAGE SPEAKERS I. 4.00 points.
Prerequisites: Permission of instructor.
Prerequisites: Permission of instructor. Hebrew for Heritage Speakers I forms part of a year-long sequence with Hebrew for Heritage Speakers II. The course is intended for those who have developed basic speaking and listening skills through exposure to Hebrew at home or in day-school programs but do not use Hebrew as their dominant language and have not reached the level required for exemption from the Columbia language requirement. Heritage speakers differ in the degree of their fluency, but their vocabulary is often limited to topics in daily life and many lack skills in reading and writing to match their ability to converse. The course focuses on grammar and vocabulary enrichment, exposing students to a variety of cultural and social topics in daily life and beyond. By the end of the semester students are able to read and discuss simple texts and write about a variety of topics. Successful completion of the year-long sequence prepares students to enroll in third-year modern Hebrew. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4501 READINGS IN HEBREW TEXTS I. 4.00 points.
Prerequisites: (MDES GU4510) and (MDES GU4511) 3RD Year Modern Hebrew or the instructor’s permission.
Prerequisites: (MDES GU4510) and (MDES GU4511) 3RD Year Modern Hebrew or the instructor’s permission. This course focuses on central identities shaping Israeli society and is designed to give students extensive experience in reading Hebrew. Through selected readings of contemporary literary works and media texts, students will increase their proficiency in Hebrew and enhance their understanding of Israeli culture and society. All readings, written assignments, and class discussions are in Hebrew. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

MDES GU4510 3RD YR MODERN HEBREW I. 4.00 points.
Prerequisites: 2nd Year Modern Hebrew II, Hebrew for Heritage Speakers II, or the instructor’s permission.
Prerequisites: 2nd Year Modern Hebrew II, Hebrew for Heritage Speakers II, or the instructor’s permission. This course is designed to take students from the intermediate to advanced level. Students will further develop their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in Hebrew through an examination of a wide range of sources, including short stories, poems, visual arts, popular music, television shows and films. All readings, written assignments, and class discussions are in Hebrew. No P/D/F or R credit is allowed for this class.

Music
MUSI UN2030 JEWISH MUSIC IN NEW YORK. 3.00 points.
Prerequisites: Music Humanities (Columbia University) or An Introduction to Music (Barnard).
Prerequisites: Music Humanities (Columbia University) or An Introduction to Music (Barnard). With the arrival of the first Jewish immigrants in New York in the mid-1600s until today, Jewish music in the City has oscillated between preserving traditions and introducing innovative ideas. This course explores the variety of ways people have used music to describe, inscribe, symbolize, and editorialize their Jewish experience. Along these lines, it draws upon genres of art music, popular music, and non-Western traditions, as well as practices that synthesize various styles and genres, from hazzanut to hiphop. Diverse musical experiences will serve as a window to address wider questions of identity, memory, and dislocation. We will also experience the Jewish soundscape of New York’s dynamic and eclectic music culture by visiting various venues and meeting key players in today’s music scene, and thus engage in the ongoing dialogues that define Jewishness in New York. A basic familiarity with Judaism and Jewish culture is helpful for this course, but it is by no means required. You do not need to know Jewish history to take this class, nor do you need to be able to read music. Translations from Hebrew and Yiddish will be provided, and musical analysis will be well explained.

Religion
RELI UN2306 INTRO TO JUDAISM. 3.00 points.
A historical overview of Jewish belief and practice as these have crystallized and changed over the centuries. Special attention to ritual and worship, the forms of religious literature, central concepts, religious leadership and institutions, Israel among the nations.

RELI GU4807 DIVINE HUMAN ANIMAL. 4.00 points.
This course focuses on thinking with animals (Levi-Strauss) through the lens of the religious imagination. The concentration will be primarily on Western religious cultures, especially Judaism and the question of Jewishness.
Sociology
SOCI GU4801 Israel and the Palestinians. 4.00 points.
The seminar will examine the main political, economic, and social processes that have been shaping contemporary Israel. The underlying assumption in this seminar is that much of these processes have been shaped by the 100-year Israeli-Arab/Palestinian conflict. The first part of the course will accordingly focus on the historical background informing the conflict and leading to the Palestinian refugee problem and establishment of a Jewish, but not Palestinian, state in 1948. The second part of the seminar focuses on Israel’s occupation of the West Bank (and Gaza) and the settlement project, as well as on USA’s role and its impact on the conflict, the occupation, and Israel. These topics did not get much academic attention until recently, but as researchers began to realize that the Occupation and the West Bank settlements are among the most permanent institutions in Israel, they have come under the scrutiny of academic research. The third part of the seminar will concentrate on the development of the conflict after the establishment of Israel and its effects on sociological processes and institutions in contemporary Israel. Analyzing patterns of continuity and change in the past seven decades, we will discuss immigration and emigration patterns, as well as issue relating to ethnicity, gender, religion and politics, and the Israeli military.

Yiddish
YIDD UN1101 ELEMENTARY YIDDISH I. 4.00 points.
This course offers an introduction to the language that has been spoken by the Ashkenazi Jews for more than a millennium, and an opportunity to discover a fabulous world of Yiddish literature, language and culture in a fun way. Using games, new media, and music, we will learn how to speak, read, listen and write in a language that is considered one of the richest languages in the world (in some aspects of vocabulary). We will also venture outside the classroom to explore the Yiddish world today: through field trips to Yiddish theater, Yiddish-speaking neighborhoods, Yiddish organizations, such as YIVO or Yiddish farm, and so on. We will also have Yiddish-speaking guests and do a few digital projects. At the end of the two-semester course, you will be able to converse in Yiddish on a variety of everyday topics and read most Yiddish literary and non-literary texts. Welcome to Yiddishland!

YIDD UN1102 ELEMENTARY YIDDISH II. 4.00 points.
This course offers an introduction to the language that has been spoken by the Ashkenazi Jews for more than a millennium, and an opportunity to discover a fabulous world of Yiddish literature, language and culture in a fun way. Using games, new media, and music, we will learn how to speak, read, listen and write in a language that is considered one of the richest languages in the world (in some aspects of vocabulary). We will also venture outside the classroom to explore the Yiddish world today: through field trips to Yiddish theater, Yiddish-speaking neighborhoods, Yiddish organizations, such as YIVO or Yiddish farm, and so on. We will also have Yiddish-speaking guests and do a few digital projects. At the end of the two-semester course, you will be able to converse in Yiddish on a variety of everyday topics and read most Yiddish literary and non-literary texts. Welcome to Yiddishland!

YIDD UN2101 INTERMEDIATE YIDDISH I. 4.00 points.
This year-long course is a continuation of Elementary Yiddish II. As part of the New Media in Jewish Studies Collaborative, this class will be using new media in order to explore and research the fabulous world of Yiddish literature, language, and culture, and to engage in project-oriented activities that will result in creating lasting multi-media online presentations. In addition to expanding the command of the language that has been spoken by the Ashkenazi Jews for more than a millennium, i.e. focusing on developing speaking, reading, writing and listening skills, and on the acquisition of more advanced grammatical concepts, students will also get some video and film editing training, and tutorials on archival research. The class will continue to read works of Yiddish literature in the original and will venture outside of the classroom to explore the Yiddish world today through exciting field trips to Yiddish theater, Yiddish-speaking neighborhoods, YIVO, Yiddish Farm, and so on. And we will also have the Yiddish native-speaker guest series. Welcome back to Yiddishland!
YIDD UN2102 INTERMEDIATE YIDDISH II. 4.00 points.
Prerequisites: YIDD UN1101-UN1102 or the instructor’s permission. 
Prerequisites: YIDD UN1101-UN1102 or the instructor’s permission. 
This year-long course is a continuation of Elementary Yiddish II. As part of 
the New Media in Jewish Studies Collaborative, this class will be 
using new media in order to explore and research the fabulous world 
of Yiddish literature, language, and culture, and to engage in project-
oriented activities that will result in creating lasting multi-media online 
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And we will also have the Yiddish native-speaker guest series. Welcome 
back to Yiddishland!

Spring 2023 Courses of Interest

YIDD UN3333 ADVANCED YIDDISH. 3.00 points.
May be repeated for credit.
Prerequisites: YIDD UN2101-YIDD UN2102 or the instructor’s permission. 
Prerequisites: YIDD UN2101-YIDD UN2102 or the instructor’s permission. 
Reading of contemporary authors. Stress on word usage and idiomatic 
expression, discussion

Spring 2023 Courses of Interest

Comparative Literature Slavic
CLSL GU4012 Holocaust Literature: Critical Thinking
FREN UN3730 Jewish Identities in France (FRENCH)

French
HIST UN2611 JEWS # JUDAISM IN ANTIQUITY
HIST GR8132 THE JEWISH BOOK IN EARLY MOD WORLD
HIST UN3180 RELIGIOUS CONVERSION IN HIST
HIST GU4622 A Global History of Jewish Migration and the State
JWST GU4600 History of Modern Israel

Jewish Studies
SPJS UN3303 JEWS # JUDAISM IN ANTIQUITY
JWST GU4145 Topics in Israeli Cinema

Journalism
Journalist as Historian (J6002)
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<td>SOCI W3930</td>
<td>Immigration and Ethnicity in Israel</td>
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<td>WOMEN'S STUDIES</td>
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<td>Contemporary American-Jewish Women Writers: 1990 to the Present</td>
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<td>The Second Wave and Jewish Women's Artistic Responses: 1939-1990</td>
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