

# Jewish Studies

*Committee Chairman: Paul Mendes-Flohr, S 306E, 702-5084,  
prmmendes@uchicago.edu*

*Administrative Assistant: Rose Watson, Cl 116A, 702-1029,  
orwatson@uchicago.edu*

*Undergraduate Program Adviser: Ariela Finkelstein, C 223, 702-7022,  
afinkels@uchicago.edu*

## Program of Study

The B.A. program in Jewish Studies provides a context in which College students may examine the texts, cultures, languages, and histories of Jews and Judaism over three millennia. The perspective is contextual, comparative, and interdisciplinary. The long and diverse history of Jews and Judaism affords unique opportunities to study modes of continuity and change, interpretation and innovation, and isolation and integration of a world historical civilization. Students are encouraged to develop appropriate skills (in texts, languages, history, and culture) for independent work.

## Program Requirements

**Courses.** The major requires twelve courses distributed according to the guidelines that follow.

**Language.** The twelve courses required for the major typically include three quarters of Hebrew. Students with no AP or placement credit may register for first-year modern Hebrew (or Yiddish or Biblical Hebrew).

If the student's research project requires knowledge of a language other than Hebrew, the student may petition the committee to substitute that language for Hebrew.

**Judaic Civilization.** The major requires four to six courses in Judaic civilization, including two or three quarters of JWSC 20001-20002-20003 (Jewish History and Society) and two or three quarters of JWSC 20004-20005-20006 (Jewish Thought and Literature). Each of these sequences includes ancient, medieval, and modern components. Students who meet the general education requirement in civilization studies in an area outside of Jewish Studies must also take the courses in Judaic civilization prescribed above. Students who meet the general education requirement in civilization studies with one of the Judaic civilization sequences are required to take, as an elective, one quarter of another civilization sequence pertinent to the area and period of their primary interest in Jewish Studies. These students make their choice in consultation with the Undergraduate Program Adviser.

**Other Requirements.** A minimum of two and a maximum of six courses in Judaic civilization are counted for the major, depending on whether the student uses one of the Judaic civilization sequences to meet the general education requirement in civilization studies. Three courses in Hebrew (or another language, by petition) are also required. Three to six elective courses related to Jewish Studies are also needed to meet the requirement of twelve courses for the major. These elective courses would, in part, constitute a specific area of concentration for each student, and are chosen by the student in consultation with the Undergraduate Program Adviser. Students are encouraged to take at least one method or theory course in the College in the area pertaining to their area of special interest.

It is expected that the general education requirements in the humanities or social sciences be completed before students enter the program, typically at the end of their second year. Students who have not completed the general education requirements before admission to the program should do so during their first year of the program.

Each student in the program has an adviser who is a member of the program's faculty (see Faculty section).

### Summary of Requirements

3	courses in Hebrew or other approved language as described in Language section*
2-3	JWSC 20001-20002-20003 (if not used to meet general education requirement)
2-3	JWSC 20004-20005-20006 (if not used to meet general education requirement)
<u>3-6</u>	elective courses related to Jewish Studies**
12***	

\* *Credit may not be granted by examination.*

\*\* *Courses to be chosen in consultation with the student's adviser in Jewish Studies.*

\*\*\* *Students who wish to be considered for honors must also register for JWSC 29999 (B.A. Paper) for a total of 13 courses.*

**Optional B.A. Paper.** Students who choose this option are to meet with their advisers by May 15 of their third year to determine the focus of the research project, and they are expected to begin reading and research for the B.A. paper during the summer before their fourth year. After further consultation, students are to do guided readings and participate in a (formal or informal) tutorial during Autumn Quarter of their fourth year. Credit toward the major is received only for the Winter Quarter tutorial during which the B.A. paper is finally written and revised. The B.A. tutorial may count toward one of the courses related to Judaic Studies. The B.A. paper must be received by the primary reader by the end of fifth week of Spring Quarter. A B.A. paper is a requirement for consideration for honors.

This program may accept a B.A. paper or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major if certain conditions are met and with the consent of the other program chair. Approval from both program chairs is required. Students should consult with the chairs by the earliest B.A. proposal deadline (or by the end of their third year, if neither program publishes a deadline). A consent form, to be signed by both chairs, is available from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's year of graduation.

**Honors.** Honors are awarded to students who demonstrate excellence in their course work, as well as on the B.A. paper. To qualify for honors, students must register for JWSC 29900 in addition to the twelve courses required in the general program of study, bringing the total number of courses required to thirteen. They will be required to maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher and a GPA of 3.5 or higher in the major. An oral defense of the B.A. paper must also be given to three members of the Jewish Studies faculty.

**Grading.** Students take all courses required for the major for quality grades. However, students who qualify for honors may take JWSC 29900 for *P/F* grading during the second quarter of their fourth year. Requirements for this *P/F* course will be agreed upon by the student and the instructor.

## Minor in Jewish Studies

The Minor in Jewish Studies offers a basic introduction to the texts, cultures, languages, and history of the Jews and Judaism. The minor requires a total of seven courses in two variant sequences: a language variant that includes three courses in Hebrew or Yiddish at the 20000 or higher level or the sequences on Jewish History and Society (JWSC 20001-20002-20003) and Jewish Thought and Literature (JWSC 20004-20005-20006).

Students who elect the minor program in Jewish Studies must meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies before the end of Spring Quarter of their third year to declare their intention to complete the minor. (The deadline for students graduating in 2008–09 is the end of Autumn Quarter 2008.) The director's approval for the minor program should be submitted to a student's College adviser by this deadline on a form obtained from the adviser.

Courses in the minor (1) may not be double counted with the student's major(s) or with other minors and (2) may not be counted toward general education requirements. Courses in the minor must be taken for quality grades, and at least four of the requirements for the minor must be met by registering for courses bearing University of Chicago course numbers.

## Summary of Requirements

<i>Language Variant</i>	3	courses in (Biblical or Modern) Hebrew or Yiddish at the 20000 or higher level
	2	two courses in Jewish History and Society (JWSC 20001-20002-20003) <i>or</i> two courses in Jewish Thought and Literature (JWSC 20004-20005-20006)
	$\frac{2}{7}$	additional courses in Jewish Studies
<i>Civilization Variant</i>	3	Jewish History and Society (JWSC20001-20002-20003) <i>or</i> (Jewish Thought and Literature (JWSC 20004-20005-20006)
	2	two courses, one in each of two of the following three periods: (1) Ancient or Biblical Israel, (2) Rabbinic and Medieval Judaism and Jewish history and culture, <i>or</i> (3) Modern Judaism and Jewish history and culture
	$\frac{2}{7}$	additional courses in Jewish Studies

## Faculty

L. Auslander, O. Bashkin, P. Bohlman, A. Finkelstein, M. Fishbane, M. Geyer, Y. Melamed, P. Mendes-Flohr, M. Postone, J. Robinson, M. Roth, J. Sadock, E. Santner, D. Schloen, J. Stern, B. Wasserstein

## Courses: Jewish Studies (jwsc)

*Visit timeschedules.uchicago.edu for updated information and additional course listings in Hebrew Bible, Hebrew literature and history, and Jewish thought.*

**20001-20002-20003. Jewish History and Society I, II, III.** (=JWSG 30001-30002-30003, NEHC 20401-20402-20403/30401-30402-30403) *May be taken in sequence or individually. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.* This sequence surveys Jewish history and society from the era of the ancient Israelites until the present day. Students explore the ancient, medieval, and modern phases of Jewish culture(s) by means of documents and artifacts that illuminate the rhythms of daily life in changing economic, social, and political contexts. *This course is offered in alternate years. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**20001. Jewish History and Society I: Ancient Israel from the Iron Age to the Roman Era.** (=JWSG 30001, NEHC 20401/30401) *D. Schloen. Autumn.*

**20002. Jewish History and Society II: Medieval Jewish Society.** (=HIJD 30601, JWVG 30002, NEHC 20402/30402, RLST 20602) *J. Robinson. Winter.*

**20003. Jewish History and Society III: European Judaism as Minority Diasporic Culture.** (=HIST 22202, JWVG 30003, NEHC 20403/30403) *L. Auslander. Spring.*

**20004-20005-20006. Jewish Thought and Literature I, II, III.** (=JWVG 30004-30005-30006, NEHC 20404-20405-20406/30404-30405-30406) *May be taken in sequence or individually. This sequence meets the general education requirement in civilization studies.* Students in this sequence explore Jewish thought and literature from ancient times until the modern era through a close reading of original sources. A wide variety of works is discussed, including the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and texts representative of rabbinic Judaism, medieval Jewish philosophy, and modern Jewish culture in its diverse manifestations. Texts in English. *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**20004. Jewish Thought and Literature I: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible.** (=NEHC 20404/30404) *Autumn.*

**20005. Jewish Thought and Literature II: Rabbinic Judaism from the Mishnah to Maimonides.** (=NEHC 20405/30405) *Winter.*

**20006. Jewish Thought and Literature III: The Intellectual Worlds of the Modern Jew.** (=NEHC 20406/30406) *Spring.*

**21800. Contemporary Hebrew Poetry.** (=CMLT 25201, NEHC 20463) *PQ:* Knowledge of Hebrew. This course examines the works of major contemporary Hebrew poets (e.g., Yehuda Amichai, Nathan Zach, David Avidan, Dalia Rabikovitch, Yona Wollach, Maya Bejerano, Yitzhak Laor). These works are read against the background of previous poets (e.g., H. N. Bialik, Avraham Shlonsky, Natan Alterman, Shaul Tchernihovsky) to uncover changes in style, themes, and aesthetic. Through close reading of the poems, the course traces the unique style and aesthetic of each poet and views a wide picture of contemporary Hebrew poetry. Texts in Hebrew. *N. Stahl. Autumn.*

**21900. Realism and Anti-Realism in Post-Holocaust Hebrew Literature.** (=CMLT 26001, NEHC 20467) This course seeks to trace the narrative dynamics and literary means of post-Holocaust Hebrew literature. The course focuses on works that break with the conventions of realism, and we study the specific forms and means by which each work does so. We discuss questions such as: what are the constraints of the literary discourse on the Holocaust, what is the role of anti-realist depiction of the Holocaust, and in what ways does the fantastic threaten the collective memory. Writers include: S. Y. Agnon, Aharon Appelfeld, David Grossman, Itamar Levi, Yoel Hoffmann, and Michal Govrin. Classes conducted in English; students with knowledge of Hebrew are encouraged to read texts in the original. *N. Stahl. Spring.*

**22000-22100-22200. Elementary Classical Hebrew I, II, III.** (=HEBR 10101-10102-10103, JWSG 30100-30200-30300) The purpose of this three-quarter sequence is to enable the student to read biblical Hebrew prose with a high degree of comprehension. The course is divided into two segments: (1) the first two quarters are devoted to acquiring the essentials of descriptive and historical grammar (e.g., translation to and from Hebrew, oral exercises, grammatical analysis); and (2) the third quarter is spent examining prose passages from the Hebrew Bible and includes a review of grammar. *The class meets five times a week.* S. Creason. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

**22300-22400-22500. Intermediate Classical Hebrew I, II, III.** (=HEBR 20104-20105-20106, JWSG 30400-30500-30600) PQ: JWSC 22200 or equivalent. This course is a continuation of HEBR 10103. The first quarter consists of reviewing grammar and of reading and analyzing further prose texts. The last two quarters introduce Hebrew poetry, with readings from Psalms, Proverbs, and the prophets. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

**23000-23100-23200. Medieval Jewish History I, II, III.** (=HUMA 23000-23100-23200, JWSG 38100-38200-38300, NEHC 20411-20412-20413) PQ: Consent of instructor. *This sequence does not meet the general education requirement in civilization studies.* This three-quarter sequence deals with the history of the Jews over a wide geographical and historical range. First-quarter work is concerned with the rise of early rabbinic Judaism and development of the Jewish communities in Palestine and the Eastern and Western diasporas during the first several centuries CE. Topics include the legal status of the Jews in the Roman world, the rise of rabbinic Judaism, the rabbinic literature of Palestine in that context, the spread of rabbinic Judaism, the rise and decline of competing centers of Jewish hegemony, the introduction of Hebrew language and culture beyond the confines of their original home, and the impact of the birth of Islam on the political and cultural status of the Jews. An attempt is made to evaluate the main characteristics of Jewish belief and social concepts in the formative periods of Judaism as it developed beyond its original geographical boundaries. Second-quarter work is concerned with the Jews under Islam, both in Eastern and Western Caliphates. Third-quarter work is concerned with the Jews of Western Europe from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. N. Golb. Autumn, Winter, Spring.

**24800. The Representation of Jesus in Modern Jewish Literature.** (=CMLT 25800, NEHC 20457, RLST 26601) This course examines the Jewish literary world's relation to the figure of Jesus from the end of the nineteenth century to the present. We study the transformations of Jesus through close readings of major works, both prose fiction and poetry, by Yiddish and Hebrew writers (e.g., Uri Zvi Greenberg, H. Leivick, Jacob Glatstein, S. Y. Agnon, Avraham Shlonsky, Natan Bistritzki, A. A. Kabak, Haim Hazaz, Zalman Shneior, Yigal Mosenzon, Avot Yeshurun, Nathan Zach, Yona Wallach, Yoel Hoffmann). Classes conducted in English; students with knowledge of Hebrew are encouraged to read texts in the original. N. Stahl. Autumn.

**25000-25100-25200. Introductory Modern Hebrew I, II, III.** (=HEBR 10501-10502-10503, JWSG 35000-35100-35200, LGLN 20100-20200-20300/30100-30200-30300) This course introduces students to reading, writing, and speaking modern Hebrew. All four language skills are emphasized: comprehension of written and oral materials; reading of nondiacritical text; writing of directed sentences, paragraphs, and compositions; and speaking. Students learn the Hebrew root pattern system and the seven basic verb conjugations in both the past and present tenses, as well as simple future. At the end of the year, students can conduct short conversations in Hebrew, read materials at their level, and write short essays. *A. Finkelstein. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**25300-25400-25500. Intermediate Modern Hebrew I, II, III.** (=HEBR 20501-20502-20503, JWSG 35300-35400-35500, LGLN 20400-20500-20600/30400-30500-30600) *PQ: JWSC 25200 or equivalent.* The main objective of this course is to provide students with the skills necessary to approach modern Hebrew prose, both fiction and nonfiction. In order to achieve this task, students are provided with a systematic examination of the complete verb structure. Many syntactic structures are introduced (e.g., simple clauses, coordinate and compound sentences). At this level, students not only write and speak extensively but are also required to analyze grammatically and contextually all of the material assigned. *A. Finkelstein. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**25600-25700-25800. Advanced Modern Hebrew I, II, III.** (=HEBR 30501-30502-30503, JWSG 35600-35700-35800, LGLN 22900-23000-23100/32900-33000-33100) *PQ: JWSC 25500 or equivalent.* Although this course assumes that students have full mastery of the grammatical and lexical content at the intermediate level, there is a shift from a reliance on the cognitive approach to an emphasis on the expansion of various grammatical and vocabulary-related subjects. After being introduced to sophisticated and more complex syntactic constructions, students learn how to transform simple sentences into more complicated ones. The exercises address the creative effort on the part of the student, and the reading segments are longer and more challenging in both style and content. The language of the texts reflects the literary written medium rather than the more informal spoken style, which often dominates the introductory and intermediate texts. *A. Finkelstein. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**29700. Reading and Research Course.** *PQ: Consent of instructor and Undergraduate Program Adviser. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

**29900. B.A. Paper Preparation Course.** *PQ: Consent of instructor and Undergraduate Program Adviser. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Required of honors candidates. May be taken for P/F grading with consent of instructor. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*