

Jewish Studies

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Program of Study

The BA 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.

Students in other fields of study may also complete a minor in Jewish Studies. Information follows the description of the major.

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. 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 Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students are encouraged to take at least one method or theory course in the College in the area pertaining to their area of interest.

Students are encouraged to meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies before declaring the major. Students who have not completed the general education requirements before starting the major should do so during their first year in the program. Each student in the program has an adviser who is a member of the program's faculty (see following 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)
3–6	elective courses related to Jewish Studies*
12**	

* 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 29900 (BA Paper) for a total of 13 courses.

Optional BA 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 BA 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 BA paper is finally written and revised. The BA tutorial may count toward one of the courses related to Judaic Studies. The BA paper must be received by the primary reader by the end of fifth week of Spring Quarter. A BA paper is a requirement for consideration for honors.

This program may accept a BA 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 BA 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 BA 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. Students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher and a GPA of 3.5 or higher in the major, and the BA paper must be judged to be at least of A-quality.

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 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 (JWSC 20001-20002-20003) or 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, 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.

11000. Biblical Aramaic. (=ARAM 10101) *PQ: Second-year standing and knowledge of Classical Hebrew. This course is offered in alternate years. S. Creason. Autumn.*

11100. Old Aramaic Inscriptions. (=ARAM 10102) *PQ: Second-year standing and ARAM 10101. This course is offered in alternate years. S. Creason. Spring.*

11200. Imperial Aramaic. (=ARAM 10103) *PQ: Second-year standing and ARAM 10101. This course is offered in alternate years. S. Creason. Winter.*

20001-20002-20003. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice I, II, III. *Taking these courses in sequence is not required. 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. Texts in English. *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

20001. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice I: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible. (=BIBL 30800, NEHC 20404/30404, RLST 11004) This course explores 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). Texts in English. *S. Chavel. Autumn.*

20002. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice II: European Judaism as Minority Diasporic Culture. (=HIST 22406, NEHC 20003) This course is both an introduction to European Jewish history from the eighteenth century to the present and a case study in the history of diasporic, minority cultures. Key topics such as Hassidism; the Jewish Enlightenment; emancipation; nineteenth-century reform of religious practice; assimilation; Jewish cultural productions particularly in the visual arts; Zionism; and post-war Jewish life are analyzed as sites of interaction between the politics and cultures within which Jews lived and Jewish practices. *L. Auslander. Winter.*

20003. Jewish History and Society: Between Text and Practice III: Biblical Archaeology. (=NEHC 20403/30402) This course examines the relationship between the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the discoveries made by archaeological excavations in the Middle East over the past 150 years. The results of modern biblical criticism are discussed in light of the constantly growing body of nonbiblical evidence concerning ancient Israel and the wider cultural context in which the Bible was composed. Students are introduced to the methods and conclusions of scholars who synthesize biblical texts and archaeological data (including ancient inscriptions, as well as architecture and artifacts) to reconstruct the history, society, and religion of ancient Israel and early Judaism. No prior background in archaeology or biblical studies is required, although it will be helpful for students to have taken JWSC 20001 (Introduction to the Hebrew Bible) in the Autumn Quarter. *D. Schloen. Spring.*

20004-20005-20006. Jewish Thought and Literature I, II, III. (=NEHC 20404-20405-20406/30404-30405-30406) *Taking these courses in sequence is not required. 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. Not offered in 2010–11; will be offered in 2011–12.*

20300-20400-20500. Elementary Yiddish for Beginners I, II, III. (=LGLN 27200-27300-27400, YDDH 10100-10200-10300) The goal of this sequence is to develop proficiency in reading, writing, listening, and speaking for use in

everyday communication. These courses introduce the main features of Yiddish culture through websites, songs, films, and folklore. *J. Schwarz. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

20902. Outsiders II: Italo Svevo. (=ITAL 24903/34903) Jewish and Triestine, Italo Svevo was an “outsider” in many ways: culturally, geographically, and linguistically. Now included as one of the twentieth-century’s canonical writers, he is emblematic of those writers whose works move from the margins to the center, and it is to this fascinating process that we devote much attention, as we read and analyze Svevo’s novels and short stories. We also consider the intellectual and cultural milieu of early twentieth-century Trieste, itself an “outsider” city vis-à-vis the nation of Italy. The importance of Freudian thought to Svevo’s art is discussed, as well as his creative rapport with James Joyce. All work in English. *R. West. Autumn.*

21003. Archaeology of the Ancient Near East III: Levant. (=NEAA 20003) *This course is offered in alternate years. D. Schloen. Spring.*

21100. Modern Antiquities: Semitic Cultures, Languages, and History in the Modern Middle East. (=NEHC 20418) This course studies how various groups in the Middle East imagined the ancient Semitic heritage of the region. We examine how Semitic languages (in particular, Arabic and Hebrew) came to be regarded as the national markers of the peoples of the Middle East. We likewise explore the ways in which archeologists, historians, novelists, and artists emphasized the connectivity between past and present, and the channels through which their new ideas were transmitted. Highlights include such phenomena as nationalism, reform, and literary and print capitalism (in both Hebrew and Arabic) as experienced in the Middle East. *O. Bashkin. Spring.*

22000-22100-22200. Elementary Classical Hebrew I, II, III. (=HEBR 10101-10102-10103) The purpose of this three-quarter sequence is to enable students to read biblical Hebrew prose with a high degree of comprehension. This sequence 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. *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

22201-22202. Tannaitic Hebrew Texts I, II. (=HEBR 20301-20302) *PQ: Some basic knowledge of biblical and/or modern Hebrew, and consent of instructor.* This course consists of readings in the Mishnah and Tosefta, the main corpus of legal and juridical texts assembled by the Palestinian academic masters during the second and early third centuries. Goals are to introduce: (1) views and opinions of early rabbinic scholars who flourished in the period immediately following that of the writers of the Dead Sea Scrolls; (2) aspects of the material culture of the Palestinian Jews during that same period; and (3) grammar and vocabulary of what is generally called “early rabbinic Hebrew,” thereby facilitating the ability to read and understand unvocalized Hebrew texts. *N. Golb. Autumn, Winter.*

22300-22400-22500. Intermediate Classical Hebrew I, II, III. (=HEBR 20104-20105-20106) *PQ: HEBR 10103 or equivalent.* 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.*

22902. The Thought of Hannah Arendt. (=HUMA 23801) *H. Sinaiko. Winter.*

23000-23100-23200. Medieval Jewish History I, II, III. (=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.*

25000-25100-25200. Introductory Modern Hebrew I, II, III. (=HEBR 10501-10502-10503, 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, LGLN 20400-20500-20600/30400-30500-30600) *PQ: HEBR 10503 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 material assigned. *A. Finkelstein. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

25600-25700-25800. Advanced Readings in Modern Hebrew I, II, III. (=HEBR 30601-30602-30603, LGLN 23001-23101-23201/33001-33101-33201) *PQ: HEBR 20503 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 efforts of students, 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.*

25903. The Arab-Israeli Conflict in Literature and Film. (=HIST 26004/36004, NEHC 20906/30906) How do historical processes find their expression in culture? What is the relationship between the two? What can we learn about the Arab-Israeli conflict from novels, short stories, poems, and films? Covering texts written by Palestinians and Israelis, as well as works produced in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and the United States, this course attempts to discover the ways in which intellectuals defined their relationship to the “conflict” and how the sociopolitical realities in the Middle East affected their constructions of such terms as nation and colonialism. *O. Bashkin. Winter.*

26100. Maimonides and Hume on Religion. (=PHIL 25110/35110) This course studies in alternation chapters from Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* and David Hume’s *Dialogues concerning Natural Religion*, two major philosophical works whose literary forms are at least as important as their contents. Topics include human knowledge of the existence and nature of God, anthropomorphism and idolatry, religious language, and the problem of evil. Time permitting, we read other short works by these two authors on related themes. *J. Stern. Winter.*

26400. Race in the Twentieth-Century Atlantic World. (=CRES 28704, HIST 28704/38704, LLSO 28313) This lecture course introduces the workings of race on both sides of the Atlantic from the turn of the twentieth century to the present. Topics include the very definition of the term “race”; policies on the naming, gathering, and use of statistics on racial categories; the changing uses of race in advertising; how race figures in the politics and practices of reproduction; representations of race in children’s books; race in sports and the media. We explore both relatively autonomous developments within the nation-states composing the Atlantic world, but our main focus is on transfer, connections, and influence across that body of water. Most of the materials assigned are primary sources from films, fiction, poetry, political interventions, posters, advertisements, music, and material culture. Key theoretical essays from the Caribbean, France, England, and the United States are also assigned. *L. Auslander, T. Holt. Spring.*

26500. African American and Jewish Political Thought. (=CRES 28202, PLSC 28201/38201) This course is a comparative exploration of African

American and Jewish political thought with reference to the themes of authority, prophecy, membership, solidarity, liberalism, the politics of diaspora, and the politics of identity. We pay attention both to canonical texts and to contemporary debates. *J. Cooper, R. Gooding-Williams. Spring.*

26602. Human Rights II: History and Theory. (=CRES 29302, HIST 29302/39302, HMRT 20200/30200, INRE 31700, LAWS 41301, LLSO 27100) This course is concerned with the theory and the historical evolution of the modern human rights regime. It discusses the emergence of a modern “human rights” culture as a product of the formation and expansion of the system of nation-states and the concurrent rise of value-driven social mobilizations. It juxtaposes these Western origins with competing non-Western systems of thought and practices on rights. The course proceeds to discuss human rights in two prevailing modalities. First, it explores rights as protection of the body and personhood and the modern, Western notion of individualism. Second, it inquires into rights as they affect groups (e.g., ethnicities and, potentially, transnational corporations) or states. *M. Geyer. Winter.*

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. BA 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.*