

JEWISH STUDIES (Div II)

Chair: Professor Edan Dekel

Advisory Committee

- Edan Dekel, Chair of Classics and Garfield Professor of Ancient Languages, Chair of Jewish Studies Program; affiliated with: Classics, Jewish Studies, Religion
- Alexandra Garbarini, Hans W. Gatzke '38 Professor of Modern European History
- Jeffrey I. Israel, Associate Professor of Religion; on leave Spring 2025

THE PROGRAM IN JEWISH STUDIES

Jewish Studies is an interdisciplinary field that encompasses the texts, history, languages, philosophy, and culture of Jews and Judaism as they have changed over three millennia and throughout the world. The program offers courses in multiple disciplines including but not limited to Religion, Classics, History, Philosophy, Anthropology, Sociology, and Comparative Literature. Across these disciplines, the program examines topics such as religious belief and practice, textual interpretation, the development of Zionism, life in the Diaspora, the historicization and memorialization of the Holocaust, and historical, political and philosophical questions surrounding Jewish identity. Investigating the foundations and development of these various Jewish topics, as well as their interaction with and influence on other traditions, provides an opportunity to explore the continuities and diversity of Jewish life and thought. Students will gain exposure to a common body of knowledge and scholarly approaches through which to engage in their own rich and varied intellectual explorations of Jewish and related topics.

CONCENTRATION IN JEWISH STUDIES

The concentration in Jewish Studies requires five courses with at least two different prefixes: one gateway course, two core courses, one elective, and one capstone course. Senior concentrators should consult with the chair about arrangements for a capstone course, if one is not listed below.

Gateway Courses (can also count as core courses):

[REL 201 / COMP 201 / JWST 201\(F\) LEC The Hebrew Bible](#)

Taught by: [Edan Dekel](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[REL 203 / JWST 101 SEM Judaism: Before The Law](#)

Taught by: [Jeffrey Israel](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[REL 222 / JWST 222 SEM The Jewish Art of Interpretation](#)

Taught by: [Jeffrey Israel](#)

[Catalog details](#)

Core Courses

[ANTH 334 / COMP 334 / JWST 334 / REL 334\(S\) SEM Imagining Joseph](#)

Taught by: [Peter Just](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[ARAB 363 / JWST 268 / REL 268 / COMP 363 SEM Where are all the Jews?](#)

Taught by: [Brahim El Guabli](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[HIST 230 / JWST 230\(F\) LEC Modern European Jewish History, 1789-1948](#)

Taught by: [Alexandra Garbarini](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[HIST 434 / REL 335 / JWST 434\(S\) SEM Humanitarianism and Jewish History](#)

Taught by: [Alexandra Garbarini](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[REL 206 / COMP 206 / JWST 206\(S\) SEM The Book of Job and Joban Literature](#)

Taught by: [Edan Dekel](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[REL 222 / JWST 222 SEM The Jewish Art of Interpretation](#)

Taught by: [Jeffrey Israel](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[REL 249 / JWST 249\(F\) SEM Antisemitism](#)

Taught by: [Jeffrey Israel](#)

[Catalog details](#)

[REL 299 / JWST 299 SEM Shakespeare's Torah](#)

Taught by: [Jeffrey Israel](#)
[Catalog details](#)

[REL 330 / PSCI 375 / JWST 492 SEM Modern Jewish Political Theory](#)

Taught by: [Jeffrey Israel](#)
[Catalog details](#)

Elective Courses

Students may meet the elective requirement with a course partially related to Jewish Studies or another core course. In an elective course partially related to Jewish Studies, a student will normally focus at least one of the major writing assignments on a topic relevant to Jewish Studies or approximately one-third of the course will be devoted to Jewish subjects. The list of relevant electives changes regularly, so the course catalog should be checked for details. Listed below are examples of courses partially related to Jewish Studies. Students may meet the elective requirement with a course not listed here, subject to the approval of the Chair of Jewish Studies.

[HIST 207 / GBST 102 / ARAB 207 / LEAD 207 / JWST 217 / REL 239 LEC The Modern Middle East](#)

Taught by: [Magnús Bernhardsson](#)
[Catalog details](#)

[SILP 101\(F\) LEC Elementary Hebrew](#)

Taught by: [Shaina Adams-El Guabli](#)
[Catalog details](#)

[SILP 102\(S\) LEC Elementary Hebrew](#)

Taught by: [Shaina Adams-El Guabli](#)
[Catalog details](#)

Capstone Course

[HIST 433 / JWST 433 SEM Colonialism and the Jews](#)

Taught by: [Maud Mandel](#)
[Catalog details](#)

[HIST 434 / REL 335 / JWST 434\(S\) SEM Humanitarianism and Jewish History](#)

Taught by: [Alexandra Garbarini](#)
[Catalog details](#)

[REL 330 / PSCI 375 / JWST 492 SEM Modern Jewish Political Theory](#)

Taught by: [Jeffrey Israel](#)
[Catalog details](#)

THE DEGREE WITH HONORS IN JEWISH STUDIES

The degree with honors offers students the opportunity to undertake advanced research under the supervision of one or more of the faculty members in Jewish Studies. Students normally must have at least a 3.5 GPA in the concentration and secure a faculty sponsor to be eligible. In addition to completing the five courses required for the concentration, candidates must enroll in either JWST 493 and a Winter Study course or a Winter Study course and JWST 494 in their senior year, and prepare a substantial written thesis. Honors in Jewish Studies may be granted to concentrators after an approved candidate completes an honors thesis and is awarded an honors grade by her/his advisor and one other faculty reader. Students interested in becoming candidates for honors should consult with the program in the spring of the junior year.

Croghan Professorship

Each year, in addition to the regular course offerings listed above, Williams sponsors the Croghan Bicentennial Visiting Professor in Religion who offers one course in Judaism and/or Christianity

OVERSEAS STUDIES

Studying in Israel is highly recommended for students interested in Jewish Studies. Many students have spent a semester or year at Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University, or the University of Haifa. With the approval of the Jewish Studies program chair, students may count a study-abroad program towards up to two core requirements.

FAQ

Students MUST contact departments/programs BEFORE assuming study away credit will be granted toward the major or concentration.

Can your department or program typically pre-approve courses for major/concentration credit?

Yes, in some cases, if appropriate course information is available in advance (e.g. syllabi and/or course descriptions), though students should be sure to contact the department.

What criteria will typically be used/required to determine whether a student may receive major/concentration credit for a course taken while on study away?

Course title and description.

Does your department/program place restrictions on the number of major/concentration credits that a student might earn through study away?

No.

Does your department/program place restrictions on the types of courses that can be awarded credit towards your major?

No.

Are there specific major requirements that cannot be fulfilled while on study away?

Yes. Gateway course and Capstone course.

Are there specific major requirements in your department/program that students should be particularly aware of when weighing study away options? (Some examples might include a required course that is always taught in one semester, laboratory requirements.)

No.

Give examples in which students thought or assumed that courses taken away would count toward the major or concentration and then learned they wouldn't:

None to date.

FUNDING

The Bronfman Fund for Judaic Studies was established in 1980 by Edgar M. Bronfman '50, Samuel Bronfman II '75, and Matthew Bronfman '80. The Bronfman Fund provides opportunities for the Williams community to learn about Jewish history and culture, both within the College's formal curriculum and through the planning of major events on Jewish themes.

The Morris Wiener and Stephen R. Wiener '56 Fund for Jewish Studies was established in 1997 through the estate of Stephen R. Wiener '56. The Wiener gifts have provided an endowment to support a faculty position in modern Jewish thought, and are used to underwrite an annual lecture, forum or event relevant to contemporary Jewish life.

JWST 101 (F) Judaism: Before The Law

Cross-listings: REL 203

Secondary Cross-listing

This course introduces the academic study of Judaism through a humanistic exploration of "the Law" as a concept in Jewish thought and practice. Coverage will include the Law of Moses in the Hebrew Bible, the rabbinic distinction between "Oral Law" and "Written Law," medieval philosophical justifications for the Law, modern interpretations of the Law as Moral Law, Hasidic challenges to the centrality of the Law, and twentieth-century Jewish fiction that is haunted by a felt absence of the Law. Topics may also include the nature of rabbinic authority, methods of Jewish legal interpretation and innovation, and Jewish law as it pertains specifically to women, gentiles, idolaters, food consumption, and the Land of Israel. Course materials will include classical sources such as the Talmud and Midrash, modern philosophical texts, Franz Kafka's *The Trial* with his parable "Before The Law," ethnographic accounts of contemporary Jewish observance, and much else. *All readings will be in translation.*

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, three short papers, and a final longer paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 30

Enrollment Preferences: Jewish Studies concentrators, Religion majors and students who are considering these options

Expected Class Size: 15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

REL 203(D2) JWST 101(D2)

Attributes: JLST Interdepartmental Electives JWST Gateway Courses

Not offered current academic year

JWST 201 (F) The Hebrew Bible

Cross-listings: COMP 201 / REL 201

Secondary Cross-listing

The Hebrew Bible is perhaps the single most influential work in the history of Western philosophy, literature, and art. But the overwhelming presence of the text in nearly every aspect of modern culture often obscures the sheer brilliance of its narrative technique as well as the complex interplay between law, history, prophecy, and poetry. This course offers a comprehensive introduction to the literary, historical, and theological aspects of the Hebrew Bible with an eye towards developing a sophisticated understanding of the text in its ancient context. Through the close reading of substantial portions of the Hebrew Scripture in translation and the application of various modern critical approaches to culture and literature, students will explore fundamental questions about the social, ritual, and philosophical history of ancient Israel, as well as the fundamental power of storytelling that has resonated across two millennia.

Requirements/Evaluation: Class participation, short written assignments, midterm and final exams.

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 40

Enrollment Preferences: If the course is overenrolled, preference will be given to Jewish Studies concentrators and Religion and Comparative Literature majors.

Expected Class Size: 40

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

JWST 201(D2) COMP 201(D1) REL 201(D2)

Attributes: JWST Gateway Courses

Fall 2024

LEC Section: 01 TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am Edan Dekel

JWST 206 (S) The Book of Job and Joban Literature

Cross-listings: COMP 206 / REL 206

Secondary Cross-listing

The Book of Job has often been described as the most philosophical book of the Hebrew Bible. The story of one man's struggle to understand the cause of his suffering and his relationship to God represents the finest flowering of the Near Eastern wisdom literature tradition. Through its exploration of fundamental issues concerning human suffering, fate and divinity, and the nature of philosophical self-examination, Job has served as a touchstone for the entire history of existential literature. At the same time, the sheer poetic force of the story has inspired some of the greatest artistic and literary meditations in the Western tradition. This course will engage in a close reading of the Book of Job in its full cultural, religious, and historical context with special attention to its literary, philosophical, and psychological dimensions. We will then proceed to investigate key modern works in several genres that involve Joban motifs, themes, and text both explicitly and implicitly. These texts will include Franz Kafka's *The Trial*, Archibald MacLeish's *J.B.*, Robert Frost's "Masque of Reason," Carl Jung's *Answer to Job*, and William Blake's *Illustrations to the Book of Job*. *All readings are in translation.*

Requirements/Evaluation: Evaluation will be based on class participation, short written assignments, and midterm and final exams.

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 18

Enrollment Preferences: If the course is overenrolled, preference will be given to students who have already taken a course in biblical literature.

Expected Class Size: 18

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

COMP 206(D1) REL 206(D2) JWST 206(D2)

Attributes: JWST Core Electives

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 TR 9:55 am - 11:10 am Edan Dekel

JWST 217 (F) The Modern Middle East (DPE)

Cross-listings: REL 239 / ARAB 207 / HIST 207 / GBST 102 / LEAD 207

Secondary Cross-listing

This survey course addresses the main economic, religious, political and cultural trends in the modern Middle East. Topics to be covered include the cultural diversity of the Middle East, relations with Great Powers, the impact of imperialism, the challenge of modernity, the creation of nation states and nationalist ideologies, the discovery of oil, radical religious groups, and war and peace. Throughout the course these significant changes will be evaluated in light of their impact on the lives of a variety of individuals in the region and especially how they have grappled differently with increasing Western political and economic domination.

Requirements/Evaluation: participation, online responses, quizzes, midterm, and final exam

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 40

Enrollment Preferences: History & Arabic majors, and Jewish studies concentrators; completion of course admission survey if overenrolled

Expected Class Size: 30-40

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (DPE)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

REL 239(D2) ARAB 207(D2) HIST 207(D2) JWST 217(D2) GBST 102(D2) LEAD 207(D2)

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: This course introduces students to the incredible diversity of the Middle East. It will explore how people of different backgrounds and in different situations have responded in diverse ways to the problems of the day. Students will acquire the critical tools to assess a number of interpretations of the past and how to understand and appreciate the many narratives in the Middle East today that have profound political and cultural implications.

Attributes: GBST Middle Eastern Studies HIST Group E Electives - Middle East JWST Elective Courses LEAD Facets or Domains of Leadership

Not offered current academic year

JWST 222 (F) The Jewish Art of Interpretation

Cross-listings: REL 222

Secondary Cross-listing

Turn it and turn it, for everything is in it. This famous rabbinic dictum offers an enigmatic yet comprehensive account of the principles that have defined the Jewish practice of interpretation for over two millennia. The imperative to keep a text, word, image, or concept in constant motion, in order to generate as many meanings and cross-meanings as possible, challenges us to transform the act of interpretation itself into a virtuosic craft or art that can engage the human imagination as diversely and powerfully as the creation of the works being interpreted. At the same time, emphasis on the dynamism between text and interpreter should dispel the notion that only expansive works have expansive meanings. If interpretation itself is an art, then even the shortest text can contain "everything" within it when it participates in that art. This course will engage students in a radical experiment in the art of interpretation. Through a deep encounter with a selection of miniature texts, ranging from ancient rabbinic proverbs and medieval fables to the modern parables and fragments of Franz Kafka, as well as folklore and jokelore from every period in Jewish history up to the present, we will develop an interpretive practice that combines analytic, critical, and creative principles in both written and oral contexts. The goal throughout is to explore interactively how the making of meaning is an integral part of the human experience.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, regular short written and oral assignments, and a final project

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 18

Enrollment Preferences: If the class is overenrolled, preference will be given to Jewish Studies concentrators and Religion majors.

Expected Class Size: 18

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

REL 222(D2) JWST 222(D2)

Attributes: JWST Core Electives JWST Gateway Courses

Not offered current academic year

JWST 230 (F) Modern European Jewish History, 1789-1948

Cross-listings: HIST 230

Secondary Cross-listing

What does it mean to be Jewish? The question of Jewish identity emerged anew at the end of the eighteenth century in Europe and has dominated Jewish history throughout the modern period. Although Jewish emancipation and citizenship followed different paths in different parts of Europe, in general Jews were confronted by unprecedented opportunities for integration into non-Jewish society and unprecedented challenges to Jewish communal life. Focusing primarily on France and Germany, and to a lesser extent on the Polish lands, this course will introduce students to the major social, cultural, religious, and political transformations that shaped the lives of European Jews from the outbreak of the French Revolution to the aftermath of World War II. We will explore such topics as emancipation, Jewish diversity, the reform of Judaism, competing political ideologies, Jewish-gentile relations, the rise of modern antisemitism, gender roles in Jewish society, interwar Jewish culture, Jewish responses to Nazism and the Holocaust, and the situation of Jews in the immediate post-WWII period. In addition to broad historical treatments, course materials will include exposure to different kinds of primary sources, from philosophical and political treatises, to memoirs, diaries, and fiction.

Class Format: discussion

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, weekly comments on readings, two 6- to 8-page papers, and a final exam

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 40

Enrollment Preferences: Jewish studies concentrators, first-years, sophomores

Expected Class Size: 10-20

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

JWST 230(D2) HIST 230(D2)

Attributes: HIST Group C Electives - Europe and Russia JWST Core Electives

Fall 2024

LEC Section: 01 MWF 8:30 am - 9:45 am Alexandra Garbarini

JWST 249 (F) Antisemitism (DPE)

Cross-listings: REL 249

Secondary Cross-listing

In this course students will investigate intellectual traditions, political movements, and cultural objects that construct Jews, Jewishness, or Judaism as a negative principle. Where is Judaism portrayed as the darkness by contrast to the light? When are Jews depicted as a pernicious force that explains the presence of evil in the world? How is Jewishness used as a critical category to identify what is retrograde, deracinating, or base? We will interpret materials from a variety of times and places, including the ancient world, the medieval period, and the present day. We will also explore prominent theoretical approaches to the interpretation of these materials. Is there a continuous phenomenon that connects every assertion of Jewish malevolence for over two thousand years of human history? Or should claims about Jewish malevolence be presumed to have an entirely distinct meaning, origin, and purpose in each historical context? Which particular threats are Jews, Judaism, and Jewishness typically alleged to pose? How does the idea of a Jewish threat fit with ideas about race, gender, ethnicity, religion, class, sexuality, and nationality? This is a course about *negative meaning-making*. Our primary goal throughout the course is to study how shadows of thought, symbolism, and story are cast. It is a course about how language, images, structures, and institutions are used to constitute an antagonist: villainy, the demonic, the enemy, the conspiratorial cabal, the

exploitative interloper, "the Jew." And it is a course about the tragic consequences for real people -- for Jews and for all humanity -- when negative principles and fantasies are not contained by realism, reasonableness, and compassion.

Requirements/Evaluation: Class participation, regular in-class writing assignments, midterm exam, final exam

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 18

Enrollment Preferences: Jewish Studies concentrators, Religion majors, and students who have taken JWST 203

Expected Class Size: 18

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (DPE)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

REL 249(D2) JWST 249(D2)

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: This course will introduce students to discursive, institutional, and social formations that have organized the stigmatization, domination, and persecution of Jews in various geographic locations for over two thousand years. An understanding of these structures is crucial to understanding contemporary dynamics of difference and power. Students will also consider how constructions of Jewish malevolence intersect with ideas about race, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, and nation.

Attributes: JWST Core Electives

Fall 2024

SEM Section: 01 TF 2:35 pm - 3:50 pm Jeffrey I. Israel

JWST 268 (S) Where are all the Jews? (DPE) (WS)

Cross-listings: COMP 363 / REL 268 / ARAB 363

Secondary Cross-listing

Until four decades ago, many Maghrebi and Middle Eastern cities and villages teemed with Jewish populations. However, the creation of the Alliance Israelite Universelle's schools (1830s), the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the decolonization process in the Maghreb and the Middle East, and the Arab defeat in the Six-Day War accelerated the departure of Arab and Berber Jews from their homelands to other destinations, including France, Israel, Canada, the United States, and different Latin American countries. Arab and Berber Jews' departure from their ancestral lands left a socioeconomic and cultural void that Maghrebi and Middle Eastern cultural production has finally started to address, albeit shyly. The course will help students understand the depth of Jewish life in the Maghreb and the Middle East, and interrogate the local and global factors that led to their disappearance from both social and cultural memories for a long time. Reading fiction, autobiographies, ethnographies, historiographical works, and anthropological texts alongside documentaries films, the students will understand how literature and film have become a locus in which amnesia about Arab/Berber Jews is actively contested by recreating a bygone world. Resisting both conflict and nostalgia as the primary determinants of Jewish-Muslim relations, the course will help students think about multiple ways in which Jews and Muslims formed communities of citizens despite their differences and disagreements.

Requirements/Evaluation: 400-word weekly, focused responses on Glow; a book review (600 words); two five-page papers as mid-terms; one ten-page final paper; one presentation.

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 14

Enrollment Preferences: students interested in critical and comparative literary, religious or historical studies.

Expected Class Size: 14

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (DPE) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

COMP 363(D1) REL 268(D2) JWST 268(D2) ARAB 363(D1)

Writing Skills Notes: Students are required to present an outline of their papers before submitting a draft paper. The professor will give feedback on each written work to improve students' writing skills. Students are required to incorporate the feedback to improve their drafts before they become final. Students will receive detailed and consistent feedback about their writing. Students will receive from the instructor timely comments on their writing

skills, with suggestions for improvement.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: Students in this course will understand the historical process that led to the disappearance of Arab/Berber Jews. Students also will work out alternative ways to grasp Jewish-Muslim relations beyond nostalgia and conflict. Finally, students enrolled in the course will grapple with and try to disentangle the complexity of Jewish-Muslim citizenship in both pre-colonial and postcolonial contexts.

Attributes: JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

JWST 299 (S) Shakespeare's Torah

Cross-listings: REL 299

Secondary Cross-listing

For readers and speakers of the English language over the past five centuries, no literary body of work has been more central than the writings of William Shakespeare. His plays and poems have shaped the linguistic, philosophical, and artistic representation of human experience in ways that permeate every aspect of our lives. Shakespeare's capacious work and its central preoccupation with the essential questions of humanity have also inspired an extensive tradition of commentary, interpretation, and performance. In this regard, his work occupies a position similar to the one held by the collection of writings known in the Jewish tradition as *Torah*. This term refers both to the set of books contained in the Hebrew Bible and to the rabbinic tradition that emerged from reading those books, which in turn has provided the core principles for over two millennia of Jewish interpretive practice. This course invites students to read Shakespeare as Torah by applying the essential features of that practice to his extraordinary work. Through a deep and sustained encounter with four plays in four different genres (*Hamlet*, *Henry IV*, *Twelfth Night*, and *The Tempest*), we will combine analytic, critical, and creative principles to make meaning in and out of these texts. The goal throughout is to explore how the Jewish art of interpretation can illuminate our experience of Shakespeare's humanity.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, regular short written and oral assignments, and a final project

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 18

Enrollment Preferences: If the class is overenrolled, preference will be given to Jewish Studies concentrators, Religion majors, and students who have taken REL/JWST 222.

Expected Class Size: 18

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

REL 299(D2) JWST 299(D2)

Attributes: JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

JWST 334 (S) Imagining Joseph

Cross-listings: REL 334 / ANTH 334 / COMP 334

Secondary Cross-listing

Beloved son, rival brother, faithful servant, dreamer, seer, object of desire, lover, husband, bureaucrat, Joseph is one of the most fully-limned and compelling figures in the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim scriptural traditions. The story of Joseph unfolds over fourteen chapters in the Hebrew Bible, and is the subject of the fourth longest sura in the Qur'an. Through millennia, the story of Joseph has inspired a wealth of interpretations, commentary, apocrypha, re-tellings, and back-story, including an apocryphal book of scripture about Joseph and his wife, Asenath, Sufi poetry about Joseph and Zuleikha (Potiphar's wife), a trilogy by the 20th century German novelist Thomas Mann, a musical by Andrew Lloyd Weber, and many expressions in Western visual art. The course will explore these various expressions, looking to them for the ways in which Joseph has captured the imaginations of peoples and cultures across time and space. The course will be organized as a collaborative seminar in which the class will read the foundational scriptures together, followed by thematic discussions to which students will contribute insights from their own readings of particular peripheral texts. Students will learn the pleasures of close and intense exegetical reading in approaching the Hebrew Bible and Qur'an, as well as the more expansive pleasures of linking post-scriptural expressions together.

Requirements/Evaluation: occasional response papers; substantial final project and paper; class participation

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 12

Enrollment Preferences: based on responses to a questionnaire

Expected Class Size: 12

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

REL 334(D2) ANTH 334(D2) COMP 334(D1) JWST 334(D2)

Attributes: JWST Core Electives

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 W 1:10 pm - 3:50 pm Peter Just

JWST 430 (S) Postcolonial Reparations: Trauma, History, and Memory after European Imperialism (DPE) (WS)

Cross-listings: HIST 430

Secondary Cross-listing

How have European states responded to calls to acknowledge and atone for the crimes of Empire? This course places recent calls for reparations in a historical context. Weaving together a wide-range of historical and contemporary case studies -- including the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (1951), Germany's official recognition of the Herero Genocide (2021), and ongoing debates in France about the restitution of colonial-era looted art, this course investigates how the language and mechanisms of restorative justice have historically developed, evaluates which past efforts of restorative justice were successful and why, and examines what role historical memory and historians-as-activists should play in campaigns that seek reparations for colonial injustices. In doing so, it evaluates how activists have deployed scholarly vocabularies on memory, justice, and violence in a number of national and international contexts.

Requirements/Evaluation: Class participation, weekly 500-word discussion posts and a 20-page research paper

Prerequisites: None

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: History majors, seniors, and then juniors

Expected Class Size: 10-15

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (DPE) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

HIST 430(D2) JWST 430(D2)

Writing Skills Notes: This is an intensive writing seminar for advanced history majors. We focus on how to write a journal-length piece of original historical research, while evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of other scholarly pieces. Students receive feedback on multiple drafts of their final research papers and participate in two workshop seminars in which they provide feedback on the papers of their peers.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: This course asks how contemporary political and social justice movements can -- or ought to -- address political and economic inequities between the Global South and North, introduces students to how questions of race and national belonging have informed contemporary debates on restorative justice, and exposes the persistence of some global and historically-situated inequities.

Attributes: HIST Group C Electives - Europe and Russia

Not offered current academic year

JWST 433 (F) Colonialism and the Jews (DPE) (WS)

Cross-listings: HIST 433

Secondary Cross-listing

Where are Jews in colonial history? Where is colonialism in Jewish history? In many ways, these questions haunt contemporary Jewish and often world politics. Indeed, in the twenty-first century, the relationship between Jews and colonialism has been present in debates about Zionism, the history of capitalism, Jewish-Muslim relations, the wider Middle East, the future of European identity, the aims and roots of American empire, and the

intersections of race and religion in colonial domination. And yet, typically, the subject of Jews and colonialism is more polemicized or avoided than probed. This course will seek to address this lacunae by introducing students to new historical scholarship that has begun tracing these questions. Students will consider the ways in which imperial legal forms, economic structures, and cultural and intellectual underpinnings shaped Jewish lives from the British antipodes to French North Africa, and throughout the Russian and Ottoman Empires, as well as in metropolitan Europe. Among other issues, we will ask: How did Jews become defined and define themselves in the colonial venture? In their various roles in colonial empires, are Jews best understood as subjects or agents of empire or are there more fruitful ways to conceptualize their engagement? What was the impact of anti-colonial struggles on modern Jewish politics and historical development? The course will approach this topic thematically rather than as a comprehensive survey. By introducing students to some of the key debates in this emerging field, we will consider what it takes to construct a successful historical argument and how to engage critically with works in an emerging field. A semester-long writing project will expand students capacities to pose thoughtful historical questions; conduct research and gather compelling evidence; read deeply and critically; carefully assess evidence; and write inquiry-based essays.

Requirements/Evaluation: Class participation; brief weekly writing on the readings; a final research paper written in stages, including two "research updates" ; an analysis of a source; a research proposal; a rough draft of one paper section; a rough draft of the paper; and a final 25-page paper.

Prerequisites: None; open to all students (however, a background in European history and/or Jewish Studies will be helpful).

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: Junior and Senior History Majors and Jewish Studies Concentrators

Expected Class Size: 15

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (DPE) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

HIST 433(D2) JWST 433(D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Before each course, students will submit a 2-3 paragraph critique and a list of 3 questions for discussion. The final assignment will be a research paper (approximately 25 pages) or historiographical essay. Assignments en route to the final deadline, include: 1) two early "research updates" to document process and progress; 2) analysis of a source; 3) research proposal; 4) rough draft of a section; 5) draft of paper; 6) final paper. Only some work will graded, but all will receive feedback.

Difference, Power, and Equity Notes: This course considers the complex ways that religion, ethnicity and national identities shaped the colonial and post-colonial world. Never controlling or collectively representing a European power, Jews were also rarely situated at the bottom of any colonial hierarchy, sometimes occupying more than one social or political role in a single colonial territory. This course provides insight into the many ways hierarchies of power could operate in colonial and post-colonial settings.

Attributes: HIST Group C Electives - Europe and Russia JWST Capstone Course

Not offered current academic year

JWST 434 (S) Humanitarianism and Jewish History (WS)

Cross-listings: REL 335 / HIST 434

Secondary Cross-listing

In the twentieth century, Jewish history and humanitarian history became deeply intertwined. As the victims of persecution and expulsion, mass violence and genocide, Jews repeatedly figured as the recipients of aid and humanitarian intervention. At the same time, Jewish political figures, legal thinkers, intellectuals and scholars, social activists, and aid workers played central roles in the establishment of humanitarian organizations and in debates about the moral, political, and legal frameworks that have shaped approaches to humanitarianism across the decades since World War I. This research seminar is designed to open up big questions about the history of humanitarianism and to carve out space for students to conduct research on a particular place, time, and aspect of that larger history in conversation with other students working on related topics. In the first half of the semester, in discussions of common readings, we will examine various works of scholarship that connect to the history of humanitarianism from the nineteenth century to the present. Beginning in the first half of the semester and with greater intensity in the second half of the semester, you will conduct independent archival research on some aspect of the history of humanitarianism using the digitized archives of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, culminating in a twenty-plus-page paper. In the final weeks of the semester, the seminar will continue to meet weekly as a research colloquium, to provide a forum for you to present your research and drafts in progress and to give feedback on fellow students' work. In this seminar, we are not merely studying history; you are actually doing history. Over the semester, you will learn how to pose historical questions; to engage critically with readings beyond summarizing them; to synthesize an enormous amount of source material; and to learn how to write more clearly. The goal is for each student to produce a polished research paper based on engagement with archival sources and relevant secondary

literature that will serve as a capstone to your coursework at Williams or as a potential jumping-off point for future research projects, including a senior thesis in History or Jewish Studies.

Requirements/Evaluation: class participation, several short papers, oral presentations, and a 20-page research paper

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 15

Enrollment Preferences: History majors and Jewish Studies concentrators

Expected Class Size: 10

Grading: no pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2) (WS)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

JWST 434(D2) REL 335(D2) HIST 434(D2)

Writing Skills Notes: Students will write two drafts of their research paper before submitting the final paper for a grade. They will receive timely comments on drafts from professor and peers, to be incorporated into their final paper.

Attributes: GBST Borders, Exiles + Diaspora Studies HIST Group C Electives - Europe and Russia JWST Capstone Course JWST Core Electives

Spring 2025

SEM Section: 01 W 7:00 pm - 9:40 pm Alexandra Garbarini

JWST 492 (S) Modern Jewish Political Theory

Cross-listings: REL 330 / PSCI 375

Secondary Cross-listing

By the late 19th century, Jews across Europe were faced with an urgent political problem. Amidst burgeoning national self-consciousness throughout the continent, despite the liberatory promises of the Enlightenment, Jews remained a vulnerable, segregated, and stigmatized minority population. Jews had to decide where to pin their hopes. Should they ally themselves with the liberals or the communists? Should they embrace nationalism or cosmopolitanism? Should they, perhaps, abandon Europe altogether and re-constitute themselves elsewhere? If so, should they focus their efforts on relocation to the historical land of Israel? Or could they go anywhere? Wherever they might go, should they aspire to build a modern Jewish nation-state, a semi-autonomous Jewish community, or some other arrangement? Should this coincide with the cultivation of a distinctively Jewish modern language? If so, should it be Hebrew or Yiddish? In this course we will assess various answers to these questions proffered by Jewish political thinkers in the modern period. We will pay particular attention to the construction of "Jews" and "Judaism" in these arguments. And we will ask persistently: what constitutes a "Jewish justification" for a political claim in modern Jewish political theory? Coverage will include: Jewish liberalism, political Zionism, Yiddishist autonomism, messianic quietism, and other views. We will read mostly primary sources, including texts by: Hermann Cohen, Theodore Herzl, Chaim Zhitlowsky, Franz Rosenzweig, Leo Strauss, Hannah Arendt, and many others.

Requirements/Evaluation: six short (1-2 pages) response papers; two 6- to 8-page papers, each analyzing a different view in depth; a final 18- to 20-page paper that incorporates the two previously submitted 6-8 page papers, but also compares the two views and adjudicates between them

Prerequisites: none

Enrollment Limit: 19

Enrollment Preferences: Religion majors, Jewish Studies concentrators, and Political Science students on the "Theory" track

Expected Class Size: 18

Grading: no pass/fail option, no fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

This course is cross-listed and the prefixes carry the following divisional credit:

REL 330(D2) PSCI 375(D2) JWST 492(D2)

Attributes: JWST Capstone Course JWST Core Electives

Not offered current academic year

JWST 493 (F) Senior Thesis: Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies thesis.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2024

HON Section: 01 TBA Edan Dekel

JWST 494 (S) Senior Thesis: Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies thesis.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2025

HON Section: 01 TBA Edan Dekel

JWST 497 (F) Independent Study: Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies independent study.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Fall 2024

IND Section: 01 TBA Edan Dekel

JWST 498 (S) Independent Study: Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies independent study.

Grading: yes pass/fail option, yes fifth course option

Distributions: (D2)

Spring 2025

IND Section: 01 TBA Edan Dekel

Winter Study -----

JWST 31 (W) Senior Thesis: Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies senior thesis.

Class Format: thesis

Grading: pass/fail only

Not offered current academic year

JWST 99 (W) Independent Study: Jewish Studies

Open to upperclass students. Students interested in doing an independent project (99) during Winter Study must make prior arrangements with a faculty sponsor. The student and professor then complete the independent study proposal form available online. The deadline is typically in late September. Proposals are reviewed by the pertinent department and the Winter Study Committee. Students will be notified if their proposal is approved prior to the Winter Study registration period.

Class Format: independent study

Grading: pass/fail only

Not offered current academic year