

Jewish Studies

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Program Administrator

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MAJOR

A major in Jewish studies has as a prerequisite one year of Modern Hebrew (HBRW 101 and 102, or the equivalent). The major consists of at least 30 credits in Jewish Studies courses, Hebrew courses, or courses in related fields. The major must include JWST 201 Introduction to Judaism, as well as one course in each of the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. At least one course should be at the 400 level or above. Courses taken to fulfill Tulane's foreign language proficiency requirement cannot be counted toward the major.

MINOR

A minor in Jewish Studies consists of 21 credits in Jewish Studies courses and must include JWST 201 Introduction to Judaism, as well as one course in each of the ancient, medieval, and modern periods. The minor does not require courses in Hebrew Language.

JWST 201 Introduction to Judaism (3)

Staff. This course will introduce the student to the variety of religious expression and understanding in the Jewish tradition. The focus of the course is the biblical texts and their interpretations which are relevant to Jewish understandings of issues such as creation, revelation, redemption and community. We will also study the social, literary, historical and cultural influences that helped shape the varieties of Jewish traditions throughout the ages.

JWST 210 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible - Old Testament (3)

Mr. Brady. In this course we will attempt to understand the Hebrew Bible better by examining samples of each of the major genres represented while at the same time placing each within its historical context. We will also focus upon questions of interpretation. By taking a general survey of the ways in which the Hebrew Bible has been read and interpreted in the past we will begin to understand how these ancient texts continue to live and speak to so many. Same as CLAS 210.

JWST 310 Select Topics in Jewish Studies (3)

Staff. This course will cover special offerings in Jewish history, religious thought and literature. It will be taught by various permanent and visiting Jewish Studies instructors.

JWST 314 Select Readings in the Hebrew Bible (3)

Mr. Brady. In this course we will read specific books from the Hebrew Bible (in translation). The books read will rotate within three topics: Genesis; The Five Scrolls: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther; The Prophets. The aim of this course is to provide the student with the opportunity to read portions of the Hebrew Bible in detail and how they have been read, interpreted, and explained throughout the centuries. The student will also learn to read the texts critically and begin to form his/her own understanding of the text. Same as CLAS 314

JWST 315 Second Temple Judaisms (3)

Mr. Brady. Starting with the return from Babylonia up until the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 C.E., Judaism was transformed from a local ethnic religious cult to a broad-based, diverse, and often fragmented sectarian religion. Many outside cultures and civilizations, from the ancient Persians to the Imperial Romans, influenced the Jews and Judaism through language, culture, and political contacts. We will study these cultural contracts and conflicts that caused Jews in the Second Commonwealth to develop competing understandings of Judaism. Same as CLAS 315.

JWST 320 Modern Judaism (3)

Staff. Analysis and interpretation of Judaism in modern times. The meanings of religiosity and secularity are explored through analysis of several Jewish responses to modernity: religious reform, Jewish socialism, political and cultural Zionism, assimilationism. Integration of these diverse responses produces a coherent picture of how a religion is transformed through interaction with modern culture.

JWST 321 American Judaism (3)

Staff. The course examines the nature of religion in modern and contemporary times, using Judaism in America as an example. How did the American Jewish community come into being? What is American about it? What is Judaic, that is, carrying forward aspects of classical Judaism? What is the meaning of the ethnic, social, and cultural traits emergent in contemporary Jewish life? Answers to these questions provide a picture of the character of American Judaism and of the complexities of contemporary religious life.

JWST 324 Early American Jewish History (3)

Mr. Latner. This class focuses on the period from the earliest Jewish settlers in mid-seventeenth century colonial America through the establishment of viable Jewish communities and institutions by the latter part of the nineteenth century. It covers the so-called “Sephardic” and “Germanic” periods of American-Jewish history, prior to the wave of Eastern European immigration. Among the themes explored are the tension between Jewish identity and the pressures of assimilation; the transformation of the synagogue; the emergence of Jewish social and cultural institutions; changing religious practices and the rise of Reform Judaism. Events and themes are placed within the broader context of American history. Same as HISU 334.

JWST 350 The Golden Age of Spanish Jewry I: Moslem Spain (3)

Mr. Goldstein. An examination of the cultural, political, and intellectual history of Spanish Jewry from the beginnings of Jewish settlement through the early reconquest. Special attention is given to the contributions of Hasdai ibn Shaprut and Samuel Ha-Nagid.

JWST 352 The Golden Age of Spanish Jewry II: Christian Spain (3)

Mr. Goldstein. A study of the transition of Spanish Jewry from Moslem rule to Christian rule. The course includes an analysis of the several disputations of this period as well as the impact of the inquisition and expulsion. Special attention is given to the literature and philosophy of Maimonides, Crescas, and Solomon ibn Adret.

JWST 353 Jewish Life and Thought in the High Middle Ages (3)

Mr. Goldstein. The medieval period was perhaps the most prolific age for Jewish exploration and interpretation of Jewish religious texts and sources. We will examine a number of these—philosophical, mystical, poetic, liturgic, and juridical—in order to better appreciate the context and content of medieval concerns and solutions.

JWST 354 Jewish Life and Thought from the Renaissance to the Age of Reason (3)

Mr. Goldstein. The world of Jewish martyrs, mystics, dreamers, and heretics, as seen through an analysis of selected sources, including Zohar, the correspondence of Menasseh ben Israel, and various Hasidic legends. Attention will be given to the rise of centers of Jewish culture, such as Cromwell’s England, Florence, Vilna, Prague, and Spinoza’s Amsterdam.

JWST 360 Women in the Hebrew Bible (3)

Mr. Brady. Women play a significant role in the Bible, one that is often at best misunderstood and at worst ignored. In this class we will examine the biblical stories and their historical context in order to understand the role of women in the biblical period as well as the role of the figures within the biblical text. We will also examine modern interpretations of these texts (including feminist readings and creative fiction based upon the biblical text) to see how modern scholars have understood these ancient texts in modern times. Same as CLAS 360.

JWST 388 Writing Practicum (1)

Staff. Prerequisite: successful completion of the First-Year Writing Requirement. Corequisite: three-credit departmental course. Fulfills the college intensive-writing requirement.

JWST 411 Rabbinic Judaism (3)

Mr. Brady. Recommended prerequisite: JWST 315. This course will focus on the literature and culture of the Rabbinic period (c. 200-600 C.E.). We will concentrate on reading and analyzing primary texts (Midrash, Mishnah and Talmud) as well as studying the historical context and methodological issues. This course will discuss the various literatures' styles, methods and contents as well as their internal and external cultural influences. Same as CLAS 411.

JWST 415 Women, Judaism, and Jewish Culture (3)

Staff. Women's roles in Judaism and Jewish life have been defined by the religious precepts and civil laws described in the Bible and interpreted by the rabbis in a patriarchal age. Nevertheless, throughout the ages, women have carved out areas for themselves within the Jewish religious, social, and political systems as well as fulfilled the roles prescribed to them. This course will study the women of Jewish history and how they have participated in, developed and shaped Jewish religious, social, and cultural life.

JWST 425 The Dead Sea Scrolls (3)

Mr. Brady. Prerequisites: JWST 210 and JWST 315 or approval of instructor. It has been just over 50 years since a group of Bedouin shepherds found several clay jars containing ancient scrolls. The documents include copies of the Hebrew Bible, apocryphal works, and sectarian works written to provide order and meaning to the readers lives. But who wrote the scrolls and who were they writing for? This course will investigate these questions and others by focusing on the texts themselves and the archaeological evidence from the site of Khirbet Qumran. Secondary sources will also be consulted and read critically. Same as CLAS 425

JWST 430 The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict in Culture and Literature (3)

Staff. This course will focus on the literary and cultural response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict since the beginning of the Zionist settlement to our time. We will ask questions such as how each culture, the Israeli and Palestinian, has represented the other? Has each depiction been a unified cultural portraiture or can we identify multifarious delineations? What constitutes national identity and what role have national, religious, racial and gender perspectives played in the construction of the Israeli and Palestinian identities? How the various formation of the other have contributed to the identity creation of each culture? And finally, can we point out significant historical changes in these representations? We will examination of both Palestinian and Israeli experiences as reflected in various texts including fiction, poetry, philosophical and historical treatises, editorials, caricatures, film and the like, all in English translation. Last be not least, we will try to understand both the stable and the changing parameters of national identity on the background of universal intellectual and political movements such as nationalism, multiculturalism, and globalization.

JWST 481 Special Topics in Jewish Studies (3)

Staff. This course will cover special offerings in Jewish history, religious thought, and literature.

JWST H491, H492 Independent Studies (1-3, 1-3)**JWST H499-H500 Honors Thesis (3, 4)****COURSES OFFERED BY OTHER DEPARTMENTS****History**

HISE 642 Readings in the Holocaust

HISM 120 The Contemporary Middle East

HISM 320 History of Islam

HISM 321 Modern Middle East

HISM 322 History of Arab-Israeli Conflict

Music

MUSC 333 Jewish Music

Political Science

POLI 459 The Holocaust System: A Political Analysis

Hebrew

HBRW 101 Elementary Hebrew I (4)

Staff.

HBRW 102 Elementary Hebrew II (4)

Staff. Prerequisite: HBRW 101 or equivalent.

HBRW 203 Intermediate Hebrew I (4)

Staff. Prerequisite: HBRW 102 or equivalent. An introduction to Hebrew prose and poetry. A continuation of 102 with emphasis on reading and Hebrew conversation.

HBRW 213 Intermediate Hebrew II (3)

Staff. Prerequisite: HBRW 203 or equivalent. A continuation of Hebrew 203 with an emphasis of reading and discussion of texts in Hebrew.

HBRW 223 Biblical Hebrew I (3)

Mr. Brady. Prerequisite: HBRW 102 or approval of instructor. This course will involve reading various texts of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the study of biblical Hebrew.

HBRW 310 Advanced Hebrew Literature and Language (3)

Staff. Prerequisite: HBRW 213 or approval of instructor. An advanced class for students interested in pursuing further Hebrew studies. Class will read and discuss modern Hebrew literature as well as study advanced grammar and syntax. May be repeated for credit.

HBRW 323 Biblical Hebrew II (3)

Mr. Brady, Mr. Goldstein. Prerequisite: HBRW 223. This course is a continuation of Hebrew 223 Biblical Hebrew I and involves reading various texts from the Hebrew Bible. Biblical Hebrew grammar will be reviewed as appropriate.

HBRW H491, H492 Independent Studies (1-3, 1-3)

Staff.