# Jewish Studies

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Williams Hall, 31 Williams Drive

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## Core Faculty

- Jodi Eichler-Levine, Ph.D. (Department of Religion Studies); Hartley Lachter, Ph.D. (Department of Religion Studies); Nitzan Lebovic, Ph.D. (Department of History); Roslyn Weiss, Ph.D. (Department of Philosophy); Ben Wright, Ph.D. (Department of Religion Studies)

## The Jewish studies minor, coordinated by the Philip and Muriel Berman Center for Jewish Studies, provides students with the opportunity to explore the history, literature, religion, and social institutions of the Jewish people from its inception to the present.

The diverse selection of courses highlights the interaction of Judaism with other cultures and societies in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. Students will discover that courses in Jewish studies enhance their understanding of individual and group identity and the dynamics of religious-cultural pluralism. The program is designed to appeal to students with varied interests in any field of concentration.

The flexible requirements of the minor in Jewish Studies make it an ideal compliment to any major or minor in Arts and Sciences, Business and Economics, Engineering, or Education. Students should coordinate their minor program in Jewish studies with the director.

The Berman Center for Jewish Studies supplements formal course offerings through an extensive program of lectures, colloquia, films, field trips, and other cultural events. The Center also provides funding to students to help them pursue study abroad experiences or other enhancements to their academic work in the field of Jewish Studies.

Students pursuing a minor in Jewish studies must fulfill 16 credit hours.

### Four (4) courses from the approved course list or in consultation with the program director.  

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<th>COURSES</th>
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**Courses**

**JST 073 (REL 073) The Jewish Tradition 4 Credits**

Judaism is both a textual tradition and a lived religion. Students read basic Jewish texts—Bible, Talmud, Midrash—and study the ways Jews sanctify the life cycle through rites of passage, and the round of the year through the festival cycle.  

**Attribute/Distribution:** HU

**JST 081 (REL 081) Jewish Mysticism 4 Credits**

This course will examine both the history and the central texts and ideas of the Jewish mystical tradition. We will read a broad range of texts, including the ancient Sefer Yetzirah or Book of Creation, the Zohar, the works of Isaac Luria and his disciples, and the writings of some of the 18th and 19th century Hasidic rabbis. We will also explore the contemporary emergence of Kabbalah and the activities of the Kabbalah Center in contemporary America.  

**Attribute/Distribution:** HU

**JST 086 (IR 086) The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict 4 Credits**


**Attribute/Distribution:** SS

**JST 102 (AAS 102, ENGL 102, REL 102) Promised Lands: Jewish and African American Children’s Literature 4 Credits**

In the Hebrew Bible, Psalm 137 asks, “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” For Jews, blacks, and black Jews, this was and is a poignant question. This course examines how these two rich, often overlapping and interacting groups tell their stories in literature for children and young adults, with a particular focus on the mediation of traumatic pasts. What does it mean to imagine promised lands beyond such pasts—and can they be reached?  

**Attribute/Distribution:** HU

**JST 111 (REL 111) Jewish Scriptures/Old Testament 4 Credits**

The religious expression of the Hebrews, Israelites, and Jews as found in the Jewish Scriptures (TANAK/Christian Old Testament). Near Eastern context of Hebrew religion, the Patriarchs, the Exodus, the monarchy, prophecy, Exile and Return. Emphasis on historical, literary, critical problems, and newer socio-historical methods.  

**Attribute/Distribution:** HU

**JST 112 (REL 112) The Beginnings of Judaism and Jewish Origins: Jewish Diversity in the Greco-Roman World 4 Credits**

The variety of approaches to Judaism in the period following the Babylonian exile through the second century C.E. The literature studied will include Apocrypha, Pseudepigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.  

**Attribute/Distribution:** HU
Early Christianity from its beginnings until the end of the second century. Coverage includes the Jewish and Hellenistic matrices of Christianity, traditions about the life of Jesus and his significance, and the variety of belief and practice of early Christians. Emphasis on encountering primary texts.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 116 (GS 116, SOC 116) Jewish Community and Identity 4 Credits
A century ago, large Jewish communities existed throughout the world, including North Africa, Europe, the Middle East, and South America. Today, over 80% of all Jews live in North America or Israel. This course focuses on these historical changes in Jewish communities and the transformation of Jewish identities and social life in recent years, particularly in the U.S. and in Israel.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 121 (REL 121) Sources for the Life of Jesus: the Jewish and Christian Context 4 Credits
Ancient sources that claim to provide information about Jesus of Nazareth. Approaches taken to Jesus’ life and career; early Christian interpretations of the significance of Jesus; methodology in assessing evidence for the historical Jesus and his message.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 129 (PHIL 129, REL 129) Jewish Philosophy 4 Credits
Consideration of how major Jewish thinkers from the first to 21st centuries confronted questions at the intersection of religion and philosophy: the existence and nature of God, free will, evil, divine providence, miracles, creation, revelation, and religious obligation.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 138 (REL 138, WGSS 138) Sex, Gender, Jews 4 Credits
How do Jews of all genders tell their stories? What are the varied Jewish approaches to sexuality? How have feminist movements affected Jewish rituals? In this course, we will consider how religion, gender, sexuality, race, and class intersect in the lives of Jews, with a particular focus on North America. Topics and will include: Jewish women’s memoirs; the voices of LGBTQ Jews; recent innovations in Jewish ritual and leadership; Jewish masculinities; and the gendering of Jewish children’s literature, among others.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 139 (ANTH 139, REL 139) Jewish Folklore 4 Credits
Examines the transformation of folk and popular Judaism from the Old World, through the period of immigration to America, to ethnic and later forms of American Jewish culture. Attention paid to concept of folklore revivals and their meanings. Four case studies: folk tales and storytelling, klezmer music, life-cycle rituals, and food.
Attribute/Distribution: SS

JST 152 (REL 152) American Judaism 4 Credits
Diverse cultural and social forms through which American Jews express their distinct identity. Is American Jewry an example of assimilation and decline or creative transformation? What, if anything, do American Jews share in common? Compatibility of Judaism with individualism, pluralism, and voluntarism. How have the Holocaust and the State of Israel shaped the self-understanding of American Jewry?
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 154 (HIST 154, REL 154) The Holocaust: History and Meaning 4 Credits
The Nazi Holocaust in its historical, political and religious setting. Emphasis upon the moral, cultural and theological issues raised by the Holocaust.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 156 (REL 156) Judaism and Comic Books 4 Credits
Is The Thing Jewish? What does Superman have to do with the bible? Do Orthodox Jewish girls fight trolls? In this course, we will closely examine comic books and graphic novels in order to expand our understanding of what Jewishness might mean. With a POW! and a BAM!, we will consider many topics “from Krakow to Krypton,” including American Jewish history, how representations of Jews are gendered, global Jewish traditions, monsters and mutations, biblical adaptations, and more!
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 174 (REL 174) Contemporary Theology 4 Credits
Major 20th century movements within Christian and Jewish theology understood as responses to the problems of modern times. May be repeated for credit as the subject matter varies.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 180 Independent Study in Jewish Studies 1-4 Credits
Directed readings or research on a Jewish Studies related topic under the direction of a Jewish Studies faculty member. May be repeated for credit up to eight credits. Must have consent of the program director.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.
Attribute/Distribution: HU, SS

JST 181 Special Topics in Jewish Studies 4 Credits
Study of a subject or issue in Jewish Studies not covered in other courses. May be repeated for credit as subtitle varies.
Repeat Status: Course may be repeated.

JST 185 (HIST 185, REL 185) Modern Jewish History 1800-2000 4 Credits
This course examines the emergence of distinct forms of Jewish culture in the modern age that challenge or depart from traditional Jewish sources and authority. Included are an examination of Freud’s psychology, Chagall’s paintings and Woody Allen’s films.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 230 (REL 230) Kabbalah: Jewish Mystical Tradition 4 Credits
Explores the history of the quest to know God, through mystical experience or theosophical speculation, as found in Jewish tradition. Examines such issues as the tensions between institutional religion and personal religious experience, between views of God as immanent in the world or transcending it, and between imagery for God and religious experience of God.
Attribute/Distribution: HU

JST 231 (REL 231) Classic Jewish Texts 4 Credits
Many people know that the Hebrew Bible (“Old Testament”) is a foundational scripture for Judaism. Fewer are familiar with the post-biblical Jewish classics. Yet these works shaped the understanding of God, the identity of the Jewish people, and the vision of history and of the ethical life that inform Judaism today. As students read the Talmud, Midrash, and traditional prayer-book, they will become familiar with the wisdom of the rabbinc sages, and the central concepts of Judaism.
Attribute/Distribution: HU