Judaic Studies offers an interdisciplinary approach to the critical study of the culture, history, languages, literature, religion, and thought of the Jews. Jewish institutions, philosophies, societies, and texts are studied critically and in comparative historical perspective in relation to the surrounding societies and cultures.

Graduate-level programs are available through the following departments: Comparative Literature (Hebrew and Comparative Literature), History (Ancient, Medieval, and Modern Jewish History), Religious Studies (History and Literature of Ancient Judaism, Medieval and Modern Jewish History, Philosophy of Religion), Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (Northwest Semitic, Hebrew Language and Literature), and Philosophy. Applications are made to a specific department, and programs of study are governed by the degree requirements of that department.

Other resources include the Judaica collection of Sterling Memorial Library and its Judaica bibliographer, the Fortunoff Archive for Holocaust Testimonies, the biweekly faculty/graduate student Judaic Studies Seminar, several lecture series, postdoctoral fellowships, and graduate fellowships in Judaic Studies.

Additional information is available on request to the director of graduate studies of the department of intended specialization, or to the Chair, Program of Judaic Studies, Yale University, PO Box 208282, New Haven CT 06520-8282, and at http://judaicstudies.yale.edu.

Courses

For course offerings in the Hebrew language and in Israeli society and culture, see Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

JDST 651a / GMAN 649a / PHIL 617a, Critical Theory and the Frankfurt School  Asaf Angermann
This course is an introduction to the thought and writings of the philosophers known as the Frankfurt School, who founded and developed the idea of Critical Theory. Taken in its original meaning as a method or even a practice, rather than a systematic theory, Critical Theory suggests a way of thinking about the interrelations between philosophy and society, culture and politics, and on the complex relation between philosophical concepts and social reality. By reading key texts of Frankfurt School authors such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Benjamin, Kraeauer, and Fromm, the course inquires into the meaning of concepts such as critique, history, freedom, individuality, emancipation, and aesthetic experience.

JDST 653b / ANTH 531b / ARCG 531b / CLSS 815b / CPLT 547b / HIST 502b / NELC 533b / RLST 803b, Slavery, Dependency, and Genocide in the Ancient and Premodern World  Noel Lenski and Benedict Kiernan
Covers the subject of class and ethnic repression from the third millennium B.C.E. to the mid-second millennium C.E. Analyzes textual, epigraphic, and iconographic sources for slavery, dependency, and genocide in Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Han, Germanic, Angkorian, Vietnamese, Burmese, Malay, Mayan, and Aztec cultures.

JDST 672b / SMTC 535b, Readings in Babylonian Aramaic Texts  Elitzur Bar-Asher
This course builds on SMTC 534. We read different texts from all sources of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic, with concentration on a variety of linguistic topics.
JDST 673a, Introduction to Babylonian Aramaic  Elitzur Bar-Asher
An introduction to the language of the Jewish Babylonian Aramaic. This course covers the grammar of this dialect followed by reading of texts of different genres. In addition this class introduces some of the major philological aspects for approaching Talmudic texts.

JDST 679a, World Literature  Anne Eller and Dixa Ramirez
The concept of world literature, from its origins in eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism represented by Herder and Goethe up to contemporary critical debates (Apter, Casanova, Cheah, Damrosch, Dharwadker, I. Hesse, Moretti, Mufti, Pollock, Said, Spivak). World literature in relation to national literature, German-language, and Jewish literature; translation, untranslatability, the effect of markets, diaspora, politics. Literary critical readings supplemented by exemplary literary texts in multiple genres. Student contributions based on individual linguistic backgrounds.

JDST 695b / HEBR 563b, From Biblical to Modern Hebrew  Dina Roginsky
This course aims to support students who have reading knowledge of Biblical Hebrew but cannot read or converse in Modern Hebrew. The course concentrates on reading and aims at enabling students to use Modern Hebrew for research purposes. The texts chosen are tailored to students’ particular areas of interest. Prerequisite: two years of Biblical or Modern Hebrew studies, or permission of the instructor. Conducted in English.

JDST 707a, Christians in Early Jewish Sources  Michal Bar-Asher Siegal
The course explores Jewish and Christian texts from the first centuries (1–6th) C.E. Christian writers are at the center of class readings: writings of Church fathers, east and west, and church canons of laws. The focus is on comparing texts produced by Jewish and Christian writers in various geographical areas and communities. We discuss the contacts and interactions between the two religious communities as they appear in these texts: the way they saw each other, and the world in which they both lived. All these serve to demonstrate the complex picture of Jewish-Christian interactions in this early period.

JDST 721b / NELC 703b / RLST 751b, Introduction to Judaism in the Ancient World: From Temple to Talmud  Steven Fraade
The emergence of classical Judaism in its historical setting. Jews and Hellenization; varieties of early Judaism; apocalyptic and postapocalyptic responses to suffering and catastrophe; worship and atonement without sacrificial cult; interpretations of scriptures; law and life; the rabbi; the synagogue; faith in reason; Sabbath and festivals; history and its redemption.

JDST 757b, Capital Punishment in Judaism and Christianity  Noah Bickart
Study of religious texts as basis for capital punishment. Special attention to the (in)famous trial and execution of Jesus of Nazareth in both the Bible and literatures of Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. Further exploration of how medieval and modern Jews and Christians alike attempt to apply values from documents of late antiquity to changing circumstances both in medieval Europe and contemporary America.

JDST 760a / RLST 772a, Rabbinics Research Seminar  Christine Hayes
An in-depth survey of research debates and of methods and resources employed in the study of classical (pre-Geonic) rabbinic literature of all genres. Required of graduate students in ancient Judaism. Prerequisites: knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic, ability to read academic Hebrew, and permission of the instructor.

JDST 761a / HIST 596a / RLST 773a, Jewish History and Thought to Early Modern Times  Ivan Marcus
A broad introduction to the history of the Jews from biblical beginnings until the European Reformation and the Ottoman Empire. Focus on the formative period of classical rabbinic Judaism and on the symbiotic relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Jewish society and culture in its biblical, rabbinic, and medieval settings.

JDST 764b / HIST 598b / RLST 777b, Jews in Muslim Lands from the Seventh through the Sixteenth Century  Ivan Marcus
Introduction to Jewish culture and society in Muslim lands from the Prophet Muhammad to Suleiman the Magnificent. Topics include Islam and Judaism; Jerusalem as a holy site; rabbinic leadership and literature in Baghdad; Jewish courtiers, poets, and philosophers in Muslim Spain; and the Jews in the Ottoman Empire.

JDST 790b / HIST 601b / RLST 776b, Jewish History, Thought, and Narratives in Medieval Societies  Ivan Marcus
Research seminar that focuses on the two medieval Jewish subcultures of Ashkenaz (northern Christian Europe) and Sefarad (mainly Muslim and Christian Spain).

JDST 793b / HIST 587b / RLST 799b, Introduction to Modern Jewish Thought  Eliyahu Stern
An overview of Jewish philosophical trends, movements, and thinkers from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. Topics include enlightenment, historicism, socialism, secularism, religious radicalism, and Zionism.

JDST 842b / CPTL 688 / RLST 775b, Political Theology  Hannan Hever
This course investigates the theological aspects of modern political ideologies. Subjects include sovereignty, universalism, law, election, commandment, and messianism. Primary readings include Carl Schmitt, Martin Buber, Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, Daniel Boyarin, and Giorgio Agamben.

JDST 844b / HIST 596b / RLST 692b, Introduction to Modern European Jewish History  David Sorkin
This course introduces students to European Jewish history since approximately 1648. It teaches the major historiographical traditions as well as the major themes of European Jewish history. Its audience is students specializing in Jewish history but also other historians who wish to add an understanding of Jewish history to their understanding of Europe.
JDST 856b / CPLT 686b, Jewish Literary Masterpieces  Hannan Hever
Exploration of the nature of Jewish identity through a literary prism, focusing on novels, stories, poetry, and homilies. Study of texts written over a three thousand year period by Jews living in the Middle East, Europe, and America, from biblical writings through modern works composed by Franz Kafka, Philip Roth, as well as Israeli literature. Special attention given to the role of gender, minority identities, and the idea of nationalism. Taught in translation, readings in English.