JUDAIC STUDIES

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Maurice Samuels

Director of Graduate Studies
Steven Fraade

Professors Joel Baden (Divinity), John J. Collins (Divinity; Religious Studies), Steven Fraade (Religious Studies), Paul Franks (Philosophy), Christine Hayes (Religious Studies), Hannan Hever (Comparative Literature), Ivan Marcus (History; Religious Studies), Anita Norich (Visiting), Paul North (German), Maurice Samuels (French), David Sorkin (History), Laura Wexler (Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies; American Studies), Robert Wilson (Divinity; Religious Studies)

Associate Professors Yonatan Adler (Visiting), Elli Stern (Religious Studies; History), Noah Strote (Visiting)

Assistant Professor Jacqueline Vayntrub (Divinity)

Senior Research Scholar Margaret Olin (Divinity; History of Art; Religious Studies)

Senior Lecturer Peter Cole (Comparative Literature)

Senior Lectors Shiri Goren (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)

Senior Lectors Dina Roginsky (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)

Lectors Josh Price, Orit Yeret (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)

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 670b / PERS 505b, Middle Persian Kevin Van Bladel
This one-term course covers the grammar of Middle Persian, focusing on royal and private inscriptions and the Zoroastrian priestly book tradition. Permission of the instructor required.

JDST 671a / HEBR 524a, Creative Writing in Hebrew Orit Yeret
An advanced language course with focus on creative writing and self-expression. Students develop knowledge of modern Hebrew, while elevating writing skills based on special interests, and in various genres, including short prose, poetry, dramatic writing, and journalism. Students engage with diverse authentic materials, with emphasis on Israeli literature, culture, and society.

JDST 680a / CPLT 618a / GMAN 709a, Walter Benjamin's Critical Theory Paul North
Careful analysis of central texts in Benjamin's oeuvre in the context of his philosophical, political, and literary reading.

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 725a / NELC 704a / RLST 757a, The Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of Ancient Judaism: The Damascus Document  Steven Fraade
Study of the Damascus Document, one of the most important of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Attention to the document’s place in the history of biblical interpretation and ancient Jewish law; the nature and rhetorical function of its textual practices, both narrative and legal; and its relation to the central sectarian writings of the Qumran community. Prerequisite: reading proficiency in ancient Hebrew. EMWAR area of concentration designations: STHJ, ScrInterp. The course also provides important historical context for students concentrating in Rabbinic Judaism.

JDST 734b / RLST 740b, Textual and Thematic Approaches to Classical Rabbinic Literature  Christine Hayes
The course trains students in the two basic approaches employed in the advanced study of classical rabbinic literature: (1) the critical analysis and elucidation of a defined unit of text using tools of higher criticism, and (2) the investigation and elucidation of a concept, theme, or topic across a range of texts viewed in literary, cultural, historical, and/or comparative context. The last few weeks of the course are devoted to the evaluation of recent dissertations that both exemplify these research methods and stimulate reflection on the place of rabbinic literature in the study of religion in antiquity and in the broader humanities. This course is designed for EMWAR students with a primary or secondary area of concentration in Rabbinic Judaism, Scriptures and their Interpretation in Antiquity, Christianity and Judaism in the Hellenistic East, and West Asian Religions of the Sasanian and Early Islamic Eras. The course also provides important historical context for students concentrating in Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism, New Testament, and Late Ancient Christianity. Note: an additional hour will be scheduled for students working with the texts in original languages. Students interested in completing a seminar-based exam in connection with the course may speak to the instructor. EMWAR area of concentration designations: RabJud, ScrInterp, XtyJudEast, WAR.

JDST 764b / HIST 590b / 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 803a / HIST 594a, The Jews in Medieval Europe, 800–1200  Ivan Marcus
This writing seminar focuses on developing a research paper on some aspect of the history of the Jews living in close relationship with Christians in medieval Europe between 800 and 1200. Students develop a topic, select bibliography based on primary sources in Hebrew and other languages, write an outline, and produce a draft of a paper between 20 and 25 pages including notes. Students meet with the instructor on a regular basis throughout the process of researching and writing the paper. Deadline for submission of the paper is to be worked out with the instructor.

JDST 804b / HIST 591b, The Jews in Medieval Europe, 1200–1500  Ivan Marcus
This writing seminar focuses on developing a research paper on some aspect of the history of the Jews living in close relationship with Christians in medieval Europe between 1200 and 1500. Students develop a topic, select bibliography based on primary sources in Hebrew and other languages, write an outline, and produce a draft of a paper between 20 and 25 pages including notes. Students meet with the instructor on a regular basis throughout the process of researching and writing the paper. Deadline for submission of the paper is to be worked out with the instructor.

JDST 835a, Israel in Ideology and Practice  Dina Roginsky
An advanced Hebrew class that focuses on changing ideology and politics in Israel. Topics include right- and left-wing political discourse, elections, state-religion dynamics, the Jewish-Arab divide, and demographic changes. Materials include newspapers, publications, online resources, speeches of different political and religious groups, and contemporary and archival footage. Also, this course draws comparisons to American political and ideological discourse. Prerequisite: HEBR 502 or equivalent.

JDST 844a / HIST 595a / RLST 692a, 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.