JUDAIC STUDIES

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Chair
David Sorkin

Director of Graduate Studies
Christine Hayes

Professors Joel Baden (Divinity), Elitzur Bar-Asher Siegal (Visiting), Michal Bar-Asher Siegal (Visiting), Steven Fraade (Emeritus, Religious Studies), Paul Franks (Philosophy), Christine Hayes (Religious Studies), Hannan Hever (Comparative Literature), Daniel Lasker (Visiting), Nancy Levene (Religious Studies), Ivan Marcus (History; Religious Studies), Samuel Moyn (Law), Anita Norich (Visiting), Paul North (German), Maurice Samuels (French), David Sorkin (History), Katie Trumpener (Comparative Literature; English), Laura Wexler (Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies; American Studies),

Associate Professors Elli Stern (Religious Studies; History), Marci Shore (History), Jacqueline Vayntrub (Divinity)

Assistant Professor Maya Benton (Visiting)

Senior Lecturer Peter Cole (Comparative Literature)

Senior Lecturer II Shiri Goren (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)

Senior Lecturer I Dina Roginsky (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations)

Lectors Josh Price (German), 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
Courses

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

**JDST 648a / PHIL 666a, German Idealism and Religion**  Paul Franks and Robert Stern

The philosophies of Kant and his German Idealist successors address a number of questions in the philosophy of religion, and also presuppose a religious background when addressing questions of general metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics. In this course, we explore the relevant religious context—both in works of Erasmus and Luther and also in the writings of the kabbalists of Safed, Christian kabbalah, and Jakob Boehme. We then read major works by Kant, Hegel, and Schelling against that background. Other authors include Conway, Herrera, Jacobi, Kierkegaard, Lessing, Mendelssohn, and Rosenzweig. Issues considered include freedom of the will and determinism, pantheism and panentheism, infinity and finitude, knowledge and faith, love and law, antinomianism, love of God and love of neighbor. Some prior study of Kant and German Idealism is recommended.

**JDST 657b / ANTH 514b / ARCG 515b / CLSS 878b / CPLT 671b / HIST 515b / NELC 570b / RLST 672b, Corrupting Seas: Premodern Maritime Ecologies (Archaia Seminar)**  Noel Lenski and Hussein Fancy

Uses the theoretical framework of "corrupting seas" developed by Horden and Purcell as a hermeneutic to investigate the cultural, economic, political, and religious environments of the archaic, ancient and medieval Mediterranean, and similar maritime ecologies. Landscape and natural ecologies play an important but not exclusive role in mapping how diversity and connectivity combined to constitute complex and dynamic environments in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, Caribbean, and South China Sea. The course is connected with Archaia's Ancient Societies Workshop, which runs its own series of events through the academic year. Students must attend the ASW events in the spring (fall events are optional).

**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 677a / CPLT 574a, Marxist Theory of Literature**  Hannan Hever

Marxist thought has played a major role in the understanding of literary institutions, as well as literary texts. Within Marxist thought, literature always had a unique function in the processes of ideology, class struggles, and the constitution of the subject; material Marxism, cultural Marxism, European Marxism, and neo-Marxism all studied the work of literature as an institution and as both reflection and construction of reality, and of its perception. The aim of this seminar is to acquaint ourselves with Marxist theories of
literature in the twentieth century. We start with the very basics of Marxism, focusing especially on the theory of ideology. We then study Lukács’s theory of literature as the basis of the development of Marxist literary theory, followed by the literary theories developed by the Frankfurt School, the materialistic school of Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Terry Eagleton, Catherine Belsey, Fredric Jameson, and others. Open to undergraduates. All texts are in English, and no previous knowledge is required.

JDST 761a / HIST 596a / MDVL 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 590b / MDVL 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 799b / AMST 692b / HSAR 730b / RLST 788b, Religion and the Performance of Space  Sally Promey and Margaret Olin
This interdisciplinary seminar explores categories, interpretations, and strategic articulations of space in a range of religious traditions. In conversation with the work of major theorists of space, this seminar examines spatial practices of religion in the United States during the modern era, including the conception, construction, and enactment of religious spaces. It is structured around theoretical issues, including historical deployments of secularity as a framing mechanism, ideas about space and place, geography and gender, and relations between property and spirituality. Examples of case studies treated in class include the enactment of rituals within museums, the marking of religious boundaries such as the Jewish “eruv,” and the assignment of “spiritual” ownership in Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park. Prerequisite: permission of the instructors; qualified undergraduates are welcome.

JDST 806b / HIST 603b / MDVL 603b / RLST 616b, Jews and Christians in the Formation of Europe, 500–1500  Ivan Marcus
This seminar explores how medieval Jews and Christians interacted as religious societies between 500 and 1500.

JDST 835b / HEBR 519b, 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.
J DST 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.