

JEWISH STUDIES

JUD 101 Elementary Modern Hebrew I (5 Credits)

The first half of a two-semester sequence introducing modern Hebrew language and culture, with a focus on equal development of the four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Learning is amplified by use of online resources (YouTube, Facebook, newspapers) and examples from Hebrew song and television/film. No previous knowledge of modern Hebrew is necessary. This course is available to Mount Holyoke College students through a simultaneous video-conferencing option. Enrollment limited to 18.

Fall

JUD 102 Elementary Modern Hebrew II (5 Credits)

The second half of a two-semester sequence introducing modern Hebrew language and culture, with a focus on equal development of the four language skills: reading, writing, speaking and listening. By the end of the year, students are able to comprehend short and adapted literary and journalistic texts, describe themselves and their environment, and express their thoughts and opinions. Learning is amplified by use of online resources (YouTube, Facebook, newspapers) and examples from Hebrew song and television/film. Prerequisite: JUD 101 or equivalent. This course is available to Mount Holyoke College students through a simultaneous video-conferencing option. Enrollment limited to 18. {F}

Spring

JUD 115tt Topics-What Matters: Thinking Through Jewish Studies (1 Credit)

This topics course explores pressing questions at the heart of Jewish Studies from multiple theoretical, historical, political, cultural and artistic perspectives. Members of the Program in Jewish Studies will talk with students about how their research and teaching animates not only their interpretation of Jewish histories and cultures but also their understanding of contemporary events and their role as global citizens. Repeatable with a different topic. S/U only. {H}{L}

Fall, Spring, Variable

JUD 125/ REL 125 The Jewish Tradition (4 Credits)

Offered as REL 125 and JUD 125. Who are the Jews? What is Judaism? How have Jews understood core ideas and texts, and put their values into practice, from biblical times until today? An interdisciplinary introduction to the dramatic story of Jewish civilization and its conversation with different cultures from religious, historical, political, philosophical, literary and cultural perspectives, organized around different themes. {H}{L}

Fall, Spring, Annually

JUD 214/ REL 214 Women in the Hebrew Bible (4 Credits)

This course focuses on the lives of women in ancient Israelite society through close readings of the Hebrew Bible. We look at detailed portraits of female characters as well as the role of many unnamed women in the text to consider the range and logic of biblical attitudes toward women, including reverence, disgust and sympathy. We also consider female deities in the ancient Near East, women in biblical law, sex in prophetic and Wisdom literature, and the female body as a source of metaphor. {H}

Fall, Spring, Variable

JUD 217 Motherhood in Early Judaism (4 Credits)

How did early Jewish communities imagine mothers, and what does this reveal about communal ideas of gender, family and identity in early Judaism? This course considers various manifestations of mothers in early Judaism through exploration of such literary sources as the Bible, rabbinic literature and the pseudepigrapha, as well as artifacts from material culture such as Aramaic incantation bowls, synagogue wall paintings and other archeological evidence. No prior knowledge of Judaism is expected (E). {A}{L}

Spring, Alternate Years

JUD 219 Midrash: The World of Rabbinic Interpretation (4 Credits)

This course explores the world of midrash, a genre of rabbinic biblical interpretation. In this course, students define the word midrash, speculate about the origins of midrash and learn about various midrashic genres and techniques. Students see how the creation of midrash allowed the rabbis to explore vital moral, theological and literary concerns in daring and imaginative ways. Ultimately, the study shows how the rabbis transformed their Bible, the TaNaKh, into a living document that had continued relevance in their own times and which continues to be relevant today. (E) {H}{L}

Spring, Alternate Years

JUD 223 The Modern Jewish Experience (4 Credits)

A thematic survey of Jewish history and thought from the 16th century to the present, examining Jews as a minority in modern Europe and in global diaspora. We analyze changing dynamics of integration and exclusion of Jews in various societies as well as diverse forms of Jewish religion, culture and identity among Sephardic, Ashkenazic and Mizrahi Jews. Readings include major philosophic, mystical and political works in addition to primary sources on the lives of Jewish women and men, families and communities, and messianic and popular movements. Throughout the course, we explore tensions between assimilation and cohesion, tradition and renewal, and history and memory. {H}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

JUD 227 Women and Gender in Jewish History (4 Credits)

Previously REL 227. An exploration of Jewish women's changing social roles, religious stances and cultural expressions in a variety of historical settings from ancient to modern times. How did Jewish women negotiate religious tradition, gender and cultural norms to fashion lives for themselves as individuals and as family and community members in diverse societies? Readings from a wide range of historical, religious, theoretical and literary works in order to address examples drawn from Biblical and rabbinic Judaism, medieval Islamic and Christian lands, modern Europe, America and the Middle East. Students' final projects involve archival work in the Sophia Smith Collection of Women's History. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Variable

JUD 228/ HST 228 The Jew in the Middle Ages (4 Credits)

Offered as JUD 228 and HST 228. The medieval period in Jewish history is also a global history. It includes the long history of Jews in the Islamic Middle East and North Africa, the Iberian Peninsula and North-Western Europe, and their subsequent exiles. Some of the greatest medieval thinkers, mystics, poets and travelers emerge from this period, marked by significant intellectual and cultural crosspollination and competition, sometimes in aggressive ways through disputations, crusades, exile and murder. How does the medieval period continue to influence or complicate contemporary understandings of race, religious cooperation and rivalry, and constructions of otherness? Open to students at all levels. {H}{L}

Fall, Spring, Variable

JUD 230/ ENG 230 American Jewish Literature (4 Credits)

Offered as JUD 230 and ENG 230. Explores the significant contributions and challenges of Jewish writers and critics to American literature, broadly defined. Topics include the American dream and its discontents; immigrant fiction; literary multilingualism; ethnic satire and humor; crises of the left involving 60s radicalism and Black-Jewish relations; after-effects of the Holocaust. Must Jewish writing remain on the margins, too ethnic for the mainstream yet insufficient for contemporary gatekeepers of diversity? No prerequisites. {H}{L}

Fall, Spring, Variable

JUD 235/ MES 235 Perspectives on the Arab-Israel Conflict (4 Credits)

Same as MES 235. What is in dispute between Israelis and Palestinians? What has prevented a resolution to the conflict, and why does it continue to arouse such passions? Situating contemporary controversies in their historical contexts, explores key issues such as borders, settlements, Jerusalem, refugees, security, debates about Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, the impact of religious claims, and the role of regional and international players and activists. Includes analysis of competing models for conflict resolution. No prerequisites. Open to students at all levels. {H}{S}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

JUD 238 Sacred Space in Jewish Antiquity (4 Credits)

This course examines archaeological and textual evidence to explore how diverse Jewish groups in antiquity constructed sacred spaces, and ultimately Jewish identity, through art, architecture, and ritual. (E) {A}{H}

Fall, Variable

JUD 239 Jewish Art (4 Credits)

A global survey of Jewish art from artistic traditions and practices in the ancient and medieval world to the impact of Jewish artists on the development of modern and contemporary art. Discussions include art and archeology of the ancient Mediterranean world; Medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts; the impact of Jewish culture on such twentieth century movements as Abstract Expressionism and American social realism; traditions of Ethiopian, Middle Eastern and Southwest Asian Jewish art; and Jews and comics. No background in Jewish studies or art history is presumed. (E) {A}

Spring, Variable

JUD 260 Colloquium: Yiddish Literature and Culture (4 Credits)

Why did Yiddish, the everyday language of Jews in east Europe and beyond, so often find itself at the bloody crossroads of art and politics? From dybbuks and shlemiels to radicals and revolutionaries, the course explores Yiddish stories, drama, and film as sites for social activism, ethnic and gender performance, and artistic experimentation in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Americas. How did post-Holocaust engagements with Yiddish memorialize a lost civilization and forge an imagined homeland defined by language and culture rather than borders? All texts in translation. No prerequisites. Enrollment limited to 18. {L}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

JUD 263 Colloquium: The Jewish Graphic Novel (4 Credits)

Traces the history of major antecedents to the graphic novel and related works, including illustrated books, journalistic cartoons, and comics and sequential art. Topics include Jewish secularism; Yiddish theatre and literature; comic strips; comic books; editorial and magazine cartoons; book, magazine, and other forms of illustration; and a range of Jewish graphic novels, primarily from the United States, Canada, and Israel, with some consideration of creators and publications from Europe and the Middle East. {A}{L}

Spring

JUD 284 Colloquium: The Lost World of East European Jewry, 1750-1945 (4 Credits)

The modern history of the largest Jewish community in the world, from life under the Russian tsars until its extermination in World War II. Topics include Jewish political autonomy under the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; the shifting effects on Jews in Russian, Soviet and Polish society of Partition, tsarist legislation, Revolution, Sovietization and the emergence of the modern nation-state; the folkways and domestic culture of Ashkenaz; competition between new forms of ecstatic religious expression and Jewish Enlightenment thought; the rise of mass politics (Zionism, Socialism, Diaspora Nationalism, Yiddishism) and the role of language (Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Polish) in the creation of secular Jewish identity; and the tension between memory and nostalgia in the aftermath of the Holocaust. Concludes with an analysis of the recently opened Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. Enrollment limited to 18. {H}

Fall, Spring, Variable

JUD 287 The Holocaust (4 Credits)

The history of the Final Solution, from the role of European antisemitism and the origins of Nazi ideology to the implementation of a systematic program to annihilate European Jewry. How did Hitler establish a genocidal regime? How did Jews physically, culturally and theologically respond to this persecution?. {H}

Fall, Spring, Alternate Years

JUD 288 History of Israel (4 Credits)

Looking to make better sense of today's headlines? A historical survey of the State of Israel, from the 19th-century origins of Zionism to the present. Competing interpretations of Israel's political and cultural history through analysis of primary sources, literature and film, and debates over how history is written and by whom. Places discussions about Zionism and Israel within the broader histories of Judaism, Palestine, Europe and the Middle East. Open to students at all levels. {H}

Fall, Spring, Variable

JUD 362yl Seminar: Topics in Jewish Studies-Yiddishland (4 Credits)

Explores the relationship between East European Jewish history and post-Holocaust and post-Communist memory through the prism of Yiddishland, the dream of a transnational homeland defined by language and culture rather than borders. The seminar includes a course field trip to Poland over March break. Enrollment limited to 15. Juniors and seniors only. Instructor permission required. {H}{L}

Spring, Variable

JUD 400 Special Studies (1-4 Credits)

Advanced research or language study, conducted by a faculty member in Jewish studies.

Fall, Spring

JUD 430D Honors Project (4 Credits)

Full-year course offered each year. Credits: 8 for year-long course.

Fall, Spring, Annually