

Jewish Studies Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

HEBREW

HEBREW 111-1: Hebrew I

H. Seltzer, M/T/W/TH 10:00 – 10:50am

The three-quarter first-year course in Hebrew is designed to develop all four language skills (listening and reading comprehension, speaking and writing) as well as provide a cultural foundation. The course is based on *Hebrew from Scratch*, a comprehensive textbook with grammar and interactive exercises for the beginning learner. The instructions for the exercises as well as the translations of the vocabulary lists are in English. Otherwise, the course is all in Hebrew, creating an important immersive environment for the students throughout the year. Hebrew 111-1, taught in the Fall Quarter, is the first quarter of first-year Hebrew. In the Fall quarter students will learn to read and write the Alef-Beit (Hebrew alphabet) in both systems-the printing letters, Dfus, for reading, and the writing letters, Ktav, for writing. Students will also learn the vowels of Hebrew language. They will learn the fundamentals of Hebrew grammar-pronouns, feminine and masculine grammatical forms-pronunciation, and basic vocabulary. The three-quarter first-year course is designed to develop language skills by weaving them all in our daily classes through a communicative-cultural approach

HEBREW 121-1: Hebrew II

H. Seltzer, M/T/W/TH 11:00-11:50pm

Hebrew 121 is a second-year Hebrew course sequence taught over three quarters. The purpose of the course is to enlarge the student's vocabulary and to reinforce and expand his/her knowledge of Hebrew grammar in order to improve conversational and writing skills as well as the ability to understand short literary texts. Hebrew 121-1 is the first quarter of second-year Hebrew. Students will continue with the textbook they had in the previous year, a familiarity which will ease the return to Hebrew after a long summer. Students will expand their vocabulary and will practice the words already familiar from the previous year. We will begin learning the past tense and its binyanim (pa'al, pi'el, hif'il, etc.). Students will also learn conjugations of basic prepositions they were introduced to last year. We will also learn the body parts, colors and more useful concepts. The readings will be in a level-appropriate difficulty with more information on Israeli daily life and reality.

HEBREW 216-1: Hebrew III, Topics in Hebrew Literature: The City of Jerusalem

H. Seltzer, T/TH 2:00 – 3:20pm

Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world, and she has seen many victories and downfalls. She is the subject of writing for poets and storytellers, Jews and non-Jews alike, and she has been the setting for many Israeli-produced films and TV series. Jerusalem is immensely diverse, encompassing ultra-orthodox Jews and secular Jews, Ashkenazi Jews and Sephardi ones, and Jews and Arabs. In this class we will get a glimpse of each of these sectors as they are portrayed in literary and visual art. We will read poems by Yehuda Amichai, and by Erez Biton. We will watch several films and episodes from TV series where Jerusalem takes place as an actress in her own right. This course will give students a deeper understanding of some of the complexities of Israeli culture.

HISTORY

HISTORY 101-6-22 (First year seminar): The Image of the Jew in Western Modernism

Y. Petrovsky-Shtern, T/TH 9:30 – 10:50am

Modernity has radically changed the way the Jew and Jewish Civilization are portrayed in western literature. Once a marginal satirical image representing a despised and alienated minority, the Jew has become a quintessential human being in modern literature across languages and cultures. Images and metaphors stemming from Judaic liturgy, philosophy, and religion have become indispensable in the discussion of the Irish independence, the Russian revolution, the French resistance movement, and the American experience. This course will explore how Christian and Jewish writers contributed to the reevaluation of the role of a Jew and Jewish civilization in modern society incorporating them into the Western literary canon. The students will discuss chapters from novels and short stories that will open up issues related to the history of Jewish people and religion, Judeo-Christian dialogue, and tradition vis-à-vis modernity. The course will considerably enhance students' understanding of modern literary response to the 20th century historical upheavals, cultural revolutions, and mentality changes.

HISTORY 203-2-20: Jewish History II: 1492-1789

Y. Petrovsky-Shtern, T/TH 2:00 – 3:20pm

In 1492, the Spanish Catholic Kings issued a decree that banished Jews from the Iberian Peninsula allowing to stay those who converted. In 1789—1791, the French Revolutionary Parliament accepted Jews as legal citizens ushering in the era of Jewish emancipation. This course explores three centuries of radical changes that triggered the rise of more tolerant political and religious treatment of and attitude toward Jews. We will concentrate on the following major issues: The early modern era of mercantilism that reshaped the Jewish community economically and culturally; the legalization of the process of readmission of Jews to urban centers from which they were expelled in medieval times; the spread of Jewish mysticism and the rise of Jewish religious revivalist movements; the impact of the French Enlightenment on the rise of modern Jewish thought; the formation of Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewish identity; and the revolutionary upheavals in Netherlands, Britain, and France that triggered the process of emancipation that bolstered Jewish integration into the fabric of European society.

HISTORY 392-0-22/395-0-22: Arabs in Israel

E. Rekhess, M/W 3:30 – 4:50pm

The 1948 war created a unique situation: Palestinian-Arab minority amidst the Jewish state of Israel. Thus, Israel was established as a Jewish state but not exclusively so. The Palestinian Arabs who became Israeli citizens remained nationally and religiously bound to the outside Arab world. This necessarily resulted in a sharp crisis of loyalties, the Arab community being torn between its Israeli citizenship and its Arab national identity. Today the Arab minority constitutes nearly 20 percent of Israel's population. It has undergone intensive processes of change, generally referred to as: Israelization, Palestinization and Islamization. The seminar will focus on minority-majority relations in Israel, with special emphasis on three areas: first, the effect of modernization on the more traditional Arab society; second, the dilemma of national identity (the interrelation between the Israeli, Arab, Palestinian and Muslim/Christian components, the impact of the PLO and Hamas), political participation (Knesset) and the struggle of the Arab minority for equality, and third, the developments following the Oslo Accords, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and the Intifada (the October 2000 Uprising; the discourse over the "Jewish and Democratic" nature of Israel; the search for alternative models - "State of its Citizens", separatism, autonomy).

HISTORY 395-0-20: Sects and Sectarions in Jewish History

Y. Petrovsky-Shtern, T/TH 3:30 – 4:50pm

This course explores religious pluralism within the Judaic tradition over twenty-five centuries focusing on the relations between various Jewish groups competing with one another for what they considered to be a "true" understanding of the Jew. Over three thousand years Jews have defined themselves through who they are but also through who they are not. Judaism evolved through the interaction between various groups fighting for the right to be considered the mainstream. Samaritans considered themselves "real" Jews while Jews coming back from the Babylonian exile considered them a sect. Mainstream Jews in the times of the Second Temple were Hellenizers who perceived the Maccabees as rebellious heretics. The medieval Karaites were so influential intellectually in the tenth and eleventh centuries that they could eclipse the Rabbinic Jews, who fought against being marginalized. Thousands of the followers of Shabtai Tzvi in the seventeenth century also believed they were the "real" Jews and looked with disdain at those who considered them sectarians. And in modern times, such liberal group as the Reform Jews and such Orthodox group as Hasidic Jews have had to deal with fierce opposition to who they were by trying to prove their right to remain within Judaism. This course emphasizes the key role of the interaction between various Jewish groups that prayed, read the Bible, understood the law, performed the rituals, ate, and dressed differently and sought to find their place within the Judaic tradition. This course will focus on those who left the Jewish flock and those who remained, will analyze the historical reasons behind the itinerary of sects and heretics, and will show how the interaction with the Other Jew shaped various types of a modern Jew, of modern skepticism, and of religious and secular thinking.

JEWISH STUDIES (JWSH_ST)

JWSH_ST 101-6-1 (First year seminar): A Rabbi and a Priest Walk into a Bar to Talk about God

C. Sufrin, M/W 9:30 – 10:50am

As the course title suggests, when Jews and Christians get together we expect them to be joking around about practices like wearing prayer shawls, not eating pork, or abstaining from sex. But what happens when Jews and Christians try to talk together in a serious way about the Bible? Or what happens when we die? Or even about the nature of God? In this class, we will consider whether it is possible for people from different faith traditions to learn from one another in a way that is constructive and meaningful while still respecting the differences between them. We will begin with a historical example of an interfaith dialogue gone awry and then turn to examples of contemporary religious thinkers trying to understand the purpose and possibility of interfaith dialogue. While our focus will be on Jews and Christians, our texts will include some Muslim writers as well. In short: this course is a chance to think about how to talk about our highest values and commitments with those who don't share them.

JWSH_ST 390-0-1 (HISTORY 393-0-24 / MENA 301-1-20): Topics in Israel Studies: Ottoman Jews in the Age of Nationalism

I.Yosmaoglu, T/TH 3:30 – 4:50pm

The Ottoman Empire was home to a large number of Jewish communities that were scattered over a vast area from the Balkans to the Arab lands. They spoke a diverse range of languages: Greek, Ladino, Yiddish, Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish, but after the 1590s the influx of refugees from Spain and Portugal made the Sephardic Jewish community the largest one in the empire. Even though they were nominally under the authority of the Grand Rabbinat in the imperial center just like the other major confessional groups of the empire, like the Greek Orthodox, and the Armenians, the functioning of Jewish communities did not conform to a uniform pattern and was far more heterogeneous in practice. During the nineteenth century, as the Ottoman Empire was shaken up by the influence of nationalist movements on the one hand, and the conflicting agendas of the Great Powers on the other, its Jewish communities also had to devise strategies to deal with these forces and engage with the question of modernization. After the demise of the Ottoman Empire they found themselves separated by the boundaries of different nation-states. This seminar will analyze the impact of competing forms of nationalism on the Ottoman Sephardim who eventually became "minorities" in these successor states. We will read and discuss scholarly works in the field and also work with primary source material.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RELIGION)

RELIGION 374-0-20: God after the Holocaust

C. Sufrin, T/TH 9:30 – 10:50am

Throughout the history of the Jewish religion, times of crisis and collective suffering have given rise to theological innovation and creative shifts in religious expression as Jews sought to understand their tradition in light of their tragic experiences. In the wake of the Holocaust, Jews and others faced a similar need for religious rethinking. In theological terms, they asked: where was God and should we expect God to act in human history? What does this event indicate about God's existence? In human terms, they asked: how do we live as Jews today? How do we live as human beings? Given that the Holocaust occurred in modern Europe and within the context of the Second World War, not only Jews but Christians and others asked many of these same questions and also struggled to articulate answers. Focusing on theological and literary texts, in this course we will explore how Jews and others have reshaped their thinking about God and religion in response to the Holocaust and the experience of suffering in the modern world.