

Jewish Studies Spring 2019 Course Descriptions

ECONOMICS (ECON):

ECON 315-0-20: Topics in Economic History: Economic History of Israel

J. Luis Flor Toro and J. Zeira, M/W/F 2:00 – 3:20pm

This course will deal with the economy and economic history of Israel. It aims to provide a historical perspective for understanding the strengths and limitations of the contemporary Israeli economy. The main topics the course discusses are economic growth of Israel, the economic effects of the Israeli-Arab conflict, public policy over the years, inequality in Israel, and the structure of the economy.

GERMAN:

GERMAN 331: Shattered Worlds: Representation after the Shoa

A. Parkinson, T/TH 11:00 – 12:20pm

The course offers a literary, historical, and cinematic introduction to the topic of art and literature "after" or, respectively, "about" Auschwitz. Readings address questions such as: What is the role of art in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century in view of this so-called breach of civilization? Is there a relationship between art and politics? How can, or even why should poetry continue to be written after Auschwitz? Is there such a thing as an "aesthetics of memory" and which forms might this take? Attention will be paid to the relationship of representation and history, as well as that of art and memory, by drawing on contributions by influential authors and filmmakers including T.W. Adorno, Paul Celan, Peter Weiss, Ruth Klüger, Alain Renais, Billy Wilder, and Robert Thalheim. The course concludes by considering the contemporary phenomenon of so-called "dark tourism" in the context of oftentimes competing Holocaust memory discourses.

HEBREW

HEBREW 111-3: Hebrew I

H. Seltzer, M/T/W/TH 10:00 – 10:50am

This is a course in elementary modern Hebrew. The course is designed to develop all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and an explicit knowledge of Hebrew grammar. Class work centers on learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures. These are introduced and exercised orally in anticipation of dealing with written dialogues and essays. Drills on the texts and on audio files expand and reinforce the new material. Independent lab work is part of the coursework.

HEBREW 121-3: Hebrew II

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

This is an intermediate level course in Hebrew. 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 handle literary texts from biblical to modern.

HEBREW 216-3: Hebrew III, Topics in Hebrew Literature: Between Two Writers: Sayed Kashu'a and Etgar Keret

H. Seltzer, T/TH 2:00 – 3:20pm

"This summer, the last vestiges of hope in my heart were crushed... I'm still writing to you, maybe because I want you to give me a little hope. You can lie, if you feel like. Please, Etgar, tell me a short story with a happy ending, please." (From a letter Sayed Kashua wrote to Etgar Keret on September 2014).

This course is for undergraduate and graduate students who are interested in exploring contemporary writings by two prominent writers in Israeli culture, Sayed Kashua and Etgar Keret. These writers share unique perspectives on Israeli society: Keret, a son of Holocaust survivors, writes short stories, often surreal and absurdist, that deal with the paradoxes of modern Israeli society; Kashua, an Israeli Arab who grew up in the Israeli educational system, writes books and humorous columns in the Hebrew language in which he addresses the problems faced by Arabs in Israel. Shortly after Kashua and his family left Israel following a politically charged summer, the two writers began a lively correspondence chronicling their innermost thoughts and trepidations. In this class, students will delve into the writers' correspondence (which was translated into English and published in the New York Times), explore selective works from both authors, watch films and TV series they have created (such as Keret's movie *Jellyfish* and Kashua's TV series *Arab Labor* as well as discuss their other works.

HISTORY

HISTORY 203-1-20: Jewish History 750-1492

M. Freedman, T/TH 2:00 – 3:20pm

This course is intended as a broad introduction to medieval Jewish history. It will trace the life of Jewish communities from c.750 (the rise of the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad) to 1492 (the expulsion of Jews from Spain). The course explores the rich, varied, and nuanced social, religious, intellectual, and political experiences of Jewish communities over a vast chronological and geographical expanse. The aims of the course are two-fold: 1) to develop an understanding of how Jewish communities experienced co-existence with their Christian and Muslim neighbors; 2) understand how Jewish culture and identity were constructed in the Middle Ages. The course will introduce students to important primary source material, and will include key secondary readings. This will equip students with the tools to reconstruct Jewish history through primary sources, as well as understand historiographic debates.

HISTORY 393-0-20 (GNDR_ST 382-0-20): Gender, Race and the Holocaust

S. Cushman, T/TH 3:00 – 4:50pm

The aim of this seminar is to introduce students to the history and historiography of race and gender during the Holocaust. As in many historical contexts, race and gender interacted dynamically and created the particular context of Nazi-occupied Europe, which was a place where Jewish men and women suffered in particular ways, German men and women participated in particular ways, and other racial groups - men and women alike - were targeted, collaborated, resisted and rescued. We will read a variety of texts that explore the influences that shaped the behavior and response of an array of people during the Holocaust. Racism sat directly in the center of the Nazi world view. Once the Nazis got into power, they sought to translate ideology into policy. Still, their racial policies evolved over time, spurred by opportunism, innovation, and war. And too, Jewish men and women responded in ways similar and divergent to the Nazi onslaught. Sexism was also seemingly an important aspect of the Nazi perspective. While they indeed embraced an anti-feminist stance, the Nazis nevertheless sought to incorporate "German" women into the national community and women participated actively in the implementation of Nazi racism.

HISTORY 492-0-20: Jewish Life in Medieval Europe

D. Shyovitz, W 2:00 – 4:50pm

This graduate course surveys the history and historiography of the Jews of medieval Europe, with a particular emphasis on Jewish-Christian relations. We will trace the cultural, intellectual, and socioeconomic shifts that transformed Jewish life over the course of the Middle Ages, and the important roles played by Jews (real and imagined) in medieval Christian culture. Primary readings will include chronicles, literary works, legal texts, polemical tracts, and theological treatises; we will also survey both classic and current secondary works, and explore the diverse theoretical approaches that have been used to deepen scholars' understanding of this period.

[JEWISH STUDIES \(JWSH_ST\)](#)

JWSH_ST 280-5 (HISTORY 200-0-24): Topics in Israel Studies: Modern Israel: History, Politics and Society, 1882 - present

S. Hirschhorn, M/W 2:00 – 3:20pm

The history of modern Israel can be viewed as the narrative of bringing Jews of many different persuasions to live together for the first time in 5000 years in a new nation-state, while simultaneously confronting the reality of an indigenous population within its territorial bounds and "imagined community." This course is organized around the classic theme of the "aliya" (lit., ascendance), adapted to encompass both the pre-state and post-state period as well as to discuss groups/topics that have been marginalized in the traditional history and historiography of modern Israel. At the same time, this new approach underscores that the history and historiography of modern Israel is truly that of a dual narrative, as two nations developed side-by-side in the same geographic and temporal space of Israel/Palestine. Yet, as this course will also emphasize, the history of modern Israel goes far beyond the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and we will explore the complexity and dynamism of the state and society of Israel today.

JWSH_ST 280-7 (COMM_ST 395-0-24): Topics in Israel Studies: Media and Minorities in Israel
E. Daskal, T/TH 9:30 – 10:50am

This course examines the relationship between media and minorities while focusing on the Israeli case. The course is divided into two parts. The first part will be dedicated to the study of the relationship between media and minorities using Kellner's triangular perspective for analyzing cultural products: text, audience, and production. The discussions during this part of the course will include (but not be limited to) the following topics: the characteristics of minorities' textual representations in mass media; the educational, political and social influences of such representations; ethnic minorities' media use; minorities as interpretive communities; minority ethnic media and media policy studies. The second part of the course will be devoted to the study of the minorities in the Israeli media while focusing on the following socio-political topics: Israel as an immigrant society, in which different minority groups live; Israel as a Jewish ethnic democracy, in which a large Palestinian minority resides; and Israel as a country, which was founded on the cultural ethos of a melting pot. The discussion will touch upon the following conflicts in Israel that exist between: women and men, immigrants and Sabras, Jews and Arabs, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, the geo-economic center and the periphery, and the religious and secular Jews.

JWSH_ST 390 (CIV_ENV 395-0-25): Water in Israel and the Middle East: Resilience, Sustainability, Security
E. Rekhess and C. Phillips, TH 2:00 – 4:50

Water has indelibly shaped the historical and geopolitical landscape of the Fertile Crescent. This seminar will focus on water issues in Israel and the Middle East. Among the topics that will be discussed are: the centrality of water systems in the region from ancient times to present-day, how water scarcity spurs the development of new technologies and innovations in water use, the breakthrough of drip-water irrigation, modern recycling systems, and water management systems. The seminar will also feature a half-day conference with international experts exploring how control of and access to water play into trans-boundary politics and whether recent advances in water technologies in Israel may provide a model for sustainable water development in other water-poor regions of the world.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RELIGION)

RELIGION 220-0-20: Introduction to Hebrew Bible
B. Wimpfheimer, M/W 11:00 – 12:20pm

There is no understating the significance of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in Western Culture. The Bible is a text that has been repeatedly turned to for spiritual guidance, for explanations of humankind's origins and as the basis of both classical art and contemporary cinema. English idiom is peppered with phrases that originate in the Hebrew Bible and many a modern political clash can be understood as a conflict over what the Bible's messages and their implications. This course introduces students to the Hebrew Bible by reading sections of most of the Bible's books. But reading is itself a complicated enterprise. The Bible has been put to many different uses; even within the world of academic scholarship, the Bible is sometimes a source of history, sometimes a religious manual, sometimes a primitive legal code and sometimes a work of classical literature. This course will introduce students to the various challenges that present themselves within the study of the Hebrew Bible and the varied approaches scholars take when reading the Hebrew Bible. This course is a critical introduction to the Hebrew Bible.

RELIGION 374-0-20: Religion and Literature

C. Sufrin, M/W 9:30 – 10:50am

This course addresses the intersection of religion and literature in Judaism and Christianity from several perspectives. We will begin with the biblical story of the Binding of Isaac (Genesis 22) and its role in the thinking of Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard. We will then read the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15) and consider its treatment in the novel *Home* by Marilynne Robinson. Finally, the third part of the course examines the work of Cynthia Ozick, who uses fiction to address the question of idolatry in modern culture. These examinations will also allow us to interrogate other key terms in the study of religion such as faith, orthodoxy, heresy, martyrdom, and holiness.