

Jewish Studies (JWSS)

JWSS 1285. Jewish Religion and Culture. 4 Hours.

Explores the basic features of Judaism in the ancient, rabbinic, and modern periods. Employs an historical critical approach to the formative texts and their interpreters. Analyzes Jewish practices within specific historical contexts and discusses the ways in which practices relate to the texts and history of Judaism. Examines the rich varieties of Jewish cultural expressions. JWSS 1285 and PHIL 1285 are cross-listed.

JWSS 1294. Strangers in a Strange Land? European Jewish History 1750–1945. 4 Hours.

Examines cultural, religious, political, and economic developments in European Jewish life between 1750 and 1945. Emphasizes the diversity of Jewish experiences in Europe and the significant changes in Jewish identity that occurred as many Jews became increasingly integrated into their surrounding populations. Includes topics such as “Haskalah,” or “Jewish Enlightenment”; the development of Reform Judaism; political and economic emancipation; changes in gender norms; Zionism; and anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Includes films, memoirs, and cartoons and graphic novels, as well as important texts in Jewish history. HIST 1294 and JWSS 1294 are cross-listed.

JWSS 1990. Elective. 1-4 Hours.

Offers elective credit for courses taken at other academic institutions. May be repeated without limit.

JWSS 2285. America and the Holocaust. 4 Hours.

Examines the American response to the Holocaust, in terms of both contemporaneous knowledge and actions and the lasting impact on policy and culture. Starts with early twentieth-century events, such as the Armenian genocide, that shaped later attitudes. Explores the prewar period, particularly U.S. immigration and isolationist policies. Assesses Americans’ knowledge of European events as the extermination campaign unfolded and fights ensued over rescue possibilities. Examines changing depictions of the Holocaust that emerged in the postwar period as a result of critical events such as the Eichmann trial and popular television and film portrayals. Finally, considers how perceptions of the Holocaust have shaped subsequent U.S. responses to genocide. HIST 2285, JRNL 2285, and JWSS 2285 are cross-listed.

JWSS 2431. Immigration and Identity in the American Jewish Experience. 4 Hours.

Examines Jewish political, social, and cultural history from the arrival of the first group of Jews at New Amsterdam in 1654 to the present. Themes include immigration, adaptation, family life, religion, anti-Semitism, Zionism, the Holocaust, and American-Israeli relations. HIST 2431 and JWSS 2431 are cross-listed.

JWSS 2990. Elective. 1-4 Hours.

Offers elective credit for courses taken at other academic institutions. May be repeated without limit.

JWSS 3678. Bedrooms and Battlefields: Hebrew Bible and the Origins of Sex, Gender, and Ethnicity. 4 Hours.

Considers stories from Hebrew Scripture in English translation, beginning with the Garden of Eden through the Book of Ruth, asking how these foundational narratives establish the categories that have come to define our humanity. Analyzes how the Bible’s patterns of representation construct sexual and ethnic identities and naturalize ideas about such social institutions as “the family.” ENGL 3678, JWSS 3678, and WMNS 3678 are cross-listed.

JWSS 3685. Modern and Contemporary Jewish Literature. 4 Hours.

Surveys Jewish literature from the late modern (1880–1948) and contemporary (1948–present) periods. Considers themes of immigration and cross-cultural influences and issues of religious, ethnic, and gender identity. Emphasizes American and European literatures to begin to define an international Jewish literary canon, including Yiddish poets and playwrights, Russian Jewish writers, and modern writers. ENGL 3685 and JWSS 3685 are cross-listed.

JWSS 3990. Elective. 1-4 Hours.

Offers elective credit for courses taken at other academic institutions. May be repeated without limit.

JWSS 4660. Jewish Studies Module. 1 Hour.

Permits specialized Jewish studies topics to be studied as part of more general courses. Restricted to junior, senior, or graduate standing. May be repeated without limit.

JWSS 4992. Directed Study. 1-4 Hours.

Offers students an opportunity for special readings and research in Jewish studies. May be repeated for up to 8 total credits.