

JEWISH STUDIES

Rebecca Lesses, Associate Professor and Coordinator

Jewish studies approaches the history and culture of the Jewish people from a multicultural and interdisciplinary perspective. The goals of the Jewish studies minor are to foster greater knowledge about Jewish history, religion, and culture and to explore who Jews are in their geographic and cultural diversity, and how they have interacted with other peoples politically, economically, socially, ideologically, philosophically, and artistically. In order to understand Jewish history, it is necessary to investigate the economic, political, and social forces that have affected the lives of Jews in varied cultural settings for thousands of years. The study of Jewish cultures includes religious beliefs and practices, philosophy, literature, folklore, visual arts, music, and the media.

The Jewish studies minor is relevant for students going on to graduate study in any of a number of disciplines, with or without a Jewish studies focus. It is also important for students contemplating professional careers related to Jewish religion, education, or community service (e.g., as rabbis, cantors, Jewish educators, social workers, or administrators of Jewish community programs). More generally, it is a useful minor for a wide variety of students pursuing careers in which multicultural awareness is important.

Minor Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
CORE COURSES		
JWST 20100	Jews in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds	3
or JWST 20200 Jews in the Modern World		
Select one of the following:		3
JWST 10300	Hebrew Scriptures	
JWST 20300	Living Judaism	
ENGL 32400	Literature of the Bible	
ELECTIVES		
Select 12 credits of electives chosen from a list of courses maintained by the Coordinator of Jewish Studies and updated on the Jewish Studies website every semester. ¹		12
FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT		
Students in the minor must successfully complete one course (3 credits) in a language of Jewish civilization or scholarship, including but not limited to: Hebrew, Arabic, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Yiddish, or Judeo-Espanol, with a grade of at least a C-.		3
Total Credits		21

¹ No more than 3 credits of internship or independent study will count toward the electives for the Jewish studies minor.

Additional Requirements

1. No more than 6 credits from a student's major department or 3 credits from a student's second minor will count toward the Jewish studies minor.
2. At least 6 credits toward the minor must come from courses at level 3 or above.
3. At least 12 credits toward the minor must be taken at Ithaca College.

1.

JWST 10300 Hebrew Scriptures (LA)

This course treats the books of the Bible critically as literature, as religious and moral texts, and as a source of sociological knowledge. It surveys the biblical literature, acquaints students with critical methods for the study of the Bible, situates the Bible within the literature and culture of the ancient Near East, and discusses the religion of ancient Israel. The course will deal with questions of history and archaeology and with questions of meaning: what the biblical text meant to its ancient readers and what meanings it has today. Cross-listed as RLST 10300. (F,Y)

Attributes: 3A, H, HM, HU, TIDE, TMBS
3 Credits

JWST 20100 Jews in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds (LA)

An introduction to Jewish history and the varieties of Jewish cultures and religious traditions in the ancient and medieval worlds, covering Jewish history from the period of the Second Temple (sixth century B.C.E.) to the expulsion from Spain in 1492. (F,O)

Attributes: 1, AN3, G, H, HM, HU, TIDE, TPJ
3 Credits

JWST 20200 Jews in the Modern World (LA)

A survey of world Jewish history from 1492 to the present, concentrating on the Middle East, Europe, North Africa, and the United States. Discussion of the expulsion from Spain, growth of Jewish communities in the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Europe, enlightenment and emancipation, European colonialism, migration to the Americas, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, the state of Israel, and modern religious movements. (F,E)

Attributes: 1, G, H, HM, HU, TIDE
3 Credits

JWST 20300 Living Judaism (LA)

Introduces Judaism as a lived tradition, with a focus on ethical, ritual, and cultural practices and beliefs from a wide variety of Jewish communities. Readings include texts from the biblical, rabbinic, medieval, and modern periods. Theological and ethical issues addressed include God, good and evil, covenant, death and afterlife, justice, and social responsibility, as lived out through practices associated with birth and death; marriage and commitment; sexuality; and the life of study, prayer, and devotion. Course cross-listed with RLST 20300; students may not receive credit for both courses. Prerequisites: One three credit Liberal Arts course. (S,Y)

Attributes: 1, G, HM, HU, TIDE, TMBS
3 Credits

JWST 27500 Selected Topics in Jewish Studies (LA)

Topics of special interest to students and teachers may be developed under this course heading. Further prerequisites may be added according to topic. This course may be repeated for credit when topics change. (IRR)

Attributes: HM, HU, JWST, SS, TIDE, TPJ
1-3 Credits

JWST 29400 Contemporary Jewish Identities: Race, Gender, and Nation (LA)

Addresses the multiplicity of contemporary Jewish identities, focusing on Jews in the United States and Israel, the two largest contemporary Jewish communities. Examines the intersection of racial, gender, and national identities among contemporary Jews, including how Jews came to be defined in racial terms, feminist and queer identities, and the complexities of Jewish identity in a multi-ethnic Israel. (S,Y)

Attributes: DV, HM, HU, JWST, TIDE, TPJ, WGS, WGSJ
3 Credits

JWST 32300 Gender and Sexuality in Judaism (LA)

Exploration of what it means to be a Jewish man or woman. The course addresses how Jewish gender roles have changed throughout history, as well as how contemporary Jews deal with changes in women's roles and demands for gender equality. Topics covered include what is "gender" and how to study it; traditional roles of men and women in Judaism; the gendered Jewish body; family and sexuality; homosexuality; Jewish feminism; the gender of God; and changing women's religious roles.

Cross-listed with RLST 32300. (Y)

Attributes: 1, AN3, DV, HU, WGS

3 Credits

JWST 33300 Jewish Mysticism (LA)

This course traces the history of Jewish mysticism. After a brief overview of early Jewish mysticism from the biblical and rabbinic periods, students will concentrate on the medieval flowering of Kabbalah, and its further development in the 16th-century Kabbalah of Safed and Israel and 18th-century Eastern European Hasidism. The emphasis will be placed on understanding both the theoretical and experiential aspects of Jewish mysticism and on examining some of the key texts of Jewish mysticism.

Cross-listed with RLST 33300. (Y)

Attributes: AN3, HU

3 Credits

JWST 34300 Biblical Interpretation in Judaism and Christianity (LA)

Examines the theological and literary dimensions of reading the Bible in the Jewish and Christian traditions. Focuses on the comparative study of Jewish and Christian methodologies for interpreting the Bible.

Prerequisites: Two Liberal Arts Course. (Y)

Attributes: HU, RSEA

3 Credits

JWST 35300 Jewish Folk Religion: Magic and Ritual Power (LA)

Traces the history of the Jewish tradition of ritual power from biblical antiquity through the Middle Ages and through its transformation in the modern world. Introduces students to the historical and anthropological study of magic and ritual power, and the relationship between magic and religion. Topics covered include the use of amulets and incantations for healing, the relationship between magic and Jewish mysticism, possession, and exorcism in the early modern world, and the persistence of the Jewish magical tradition in the modern era. Prerequisites: Two Liberal Arts Courses. (IRR)

Attributes: AN3, AN4, HU, RSEA

3 Credits

JWST 37500-37501 Selected Topics in Jewish Studies (LA)

Topics of special interest to students and teachers may be developed under this course heading. Further prerequisites may be added according to topic. This course may be repeated for credit when topics change. (IRR)

Attributes: HU, SS

1-3 Credits

JWST 42000-42001 Internship: Jewish Studies (NLA)

On-site work experience, combined with academic study, in agencies or educational institutions with significant Jewish content, such as Jewish schools or community agencies or multicultural groups. Arranged individually at the student's request with the individual instructor, a sponsoring agency, and permission of the Jewish studies coordinator.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor. (IRR)

Attributes: JWST, UND

1-12 Credits

JWST 49100 Independent Study in Jewish Studies (LA)

Special research on an individual project arranged by a student with a particular faculty member. The project may include reading books and/or writing papers under the guidance of the faculty member, with a performance expectation of upper-level work. Offered on demand only.

Prerequisites: Permission of instructor. (IRR)

Attributes: UND

1-4 Credits