



Course Catalog



Revel

Bernard Revel Graduate School
of Jewish Studies

Jewish Studies

All courses in this Catalog count toward the general Jewish Studies MA.
For the required distribution of courses for the general Jewish Studies MA and
all specialized concentrations, you should consult the Revel website.

Course Catalog

Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies

Table of Contents

Jewish History4

Medieval Jewish History5

Modern Jewish History8

Bible16

Jewish Philosophy20

Talmud & Ancient Judaism25

Hebraica Veritas: Korean-Jewish Fellowship Program.....31

Hebraic Studies Scholars33

Jewish History

The following courses appear again under their “home” designation in this Catalog. But for ease of reference, listed here are all the history courses that can count toward both history concentrations, as well as the Talmud & Ancient Judaism concentration.

JHI 5450 History and Nature of Anti-Semitism

This course provides an overview of the history of anti-Semitism from antiquity through the contemporary world. It examines the intellectual underpinnings of tolerance and intolerance in the key civilizations where Jews resided, discrimination against Jews, and eruptions of anti-Jewish violence. It will also examine historiographical debates regarding specific manifestations of Jew hatred and the evaluation of both the term “anti-Semitism” and the phenomenon as a whole.

JHI 6243 Samaritans and Jews: From the Bible to Modern Israel

This course introduces the complex relationship between Jews and Samaritans from biblical Israel to the present day. Drawing on both Jewish and Samaritan literary sources, archaeology and visual culture, we will explore one of the longest and most fraught continuous relationships in human history. This course is part of the larger YU Israelite Samaritans Project, <https://www.yu.edu/cis/samaritans-project>

JHI 6255 Jewish Art and Visual Culture

Implications of Jewish art and visual culture for the study of Jewish history from Talmudic times through the twentieth century.

JHI 6500 History, Memory, and the Commemoration of Catastrophe: From the Destruction of the Temples Through the Holocaust

The course examines the Jewish attempts to commemorate the communal catastrophes they experienced from the destructions of both Temples in ancient times through the twentieth century. We will examine the specific particularity of the response to each of the historical events surveyed in the course.

JHI 6807 Maimonidean Controversy and the Issue of Secular Learning

Jewish attitudes toward secular learning from Talmudic through early modern times. Various stages of the medieval conflict over the writings of Maimonides; early attitudes toward rationalism; the Mishneh Torah and resurrection debates; the great dispute of the 1230s; role of the Kabbalists; compromises of Ramban and Rashba; late medieval Spain; the study of philosophy, literature, and history as an issue in Italy and Poland in early modern times.

JHI 6811 Messianism: Chazal to Chabad

Messianic beliefs, speculations, and movements from Talmudic times to the present. Varieties of messianic calculations. The naturalistic messianism of Maimonides. Sephardic versus Ashkenazic Messianism. Messianic figures from Bar Kokhba to Shabbetai Zvi to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The messianic dimension of religious Zionism.

Medieval Jewish History

JHI 5821 (Introduction to the Literature of the Rishonim) and JHI 6819 (The Interface Between Sefarad & Ashkenaz in the High Middle Ages) also count toward the Talmud & Ancient Judaism concentration. See also Talmud & Ancient Judaism, Jewish History, and Modern Jewish History for courses that can also count toward this concentration.

JHI 5321 Medieval Jewish History: Christian Europe

Survey of the legal standing, communal life, and intellectual history of medieval European Jewry under Christendom; the relationship between Judaism and Christianity, the rise of anti-Semitism, cultural achievement, and confrontation in the major Jewish centers; the challenges of late medieval persecutions and expulsions.

JHI 5345 The History of the Tosafists and their Literary Corpus

The Tosafists of northern France and Germany revolutionized the study of Talmud and halakhah. This course will identify and discuss the possible pre-Crusade origins of the Tosafist methods, the leading figures and schools of the 12th and 13th centuries (including the salient differences in method and literary style between the various centers), and the impact of historical events and intellectual currents in medieval European society on these developments. Attention will be paid to manuscript sources and 'lost' Tosafists works as well.

JHI 5821 Introduction to the Literature of the Rishonim

Orientation to the works of the classical Rishonim, the various schools, their affiliations and relationship; personalities of various Rishonim; the several often differing editions of their works.

JHI 6384 Convivencia and Conflict: A Sephardic Cultural History: 711-1492

This course explores the cultural history of the Jews of Spain (the Sephardim), from the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula in 711 until the expulsion of 1492. The course explores the rich intellectual and artistic heritage of the Sephardim. We will read a wide range of Hispano-Jewish writing including poetry, chronicles, epistolary, travel diaries, polemics, and philosophy. In addition, we will study the complex interactions between Christians, Muslims and Jews and the possibilities and realities of Iberian convivencia. The last section of the course will examine Jewish responses to the expulsion.

JHI 6652 The Jewish-Christian Debate in the Middle Ages

Major themes of medieval Jewish-Christian polemic: the Christological reading of the Bible, philosophical challenges to Christian dogma, use of the Talmud and Christian Scripture, public disputations, the problem of exile, and the impact on the political and social standing of the Jews.

JHI 6807 Maimonidean Controversy and the Issue of Secular Learning

Jewish attitudes toward secular learning from Talmudic through early modern times. Various stages of the medieval conflict over the writings of Maimonides; early attitudes toward rationalism; the Mishneh Torah and resurrection debates; the great dispute of the 1230s; role of the Kabbalists; compromises of Ramban and Rashba; late medieval Spain; the study of philosophy, literature, and history as an issue in Italy and Poland in early modern times.

JHI 6810 Mysticism, Magic, & Liturgy in Medieval Ashkenaz

The involvement of Tosafists and Ashkenazic scholars in the areas of mysticism, formulaic magic, and the writing and interpretation of piyyutim. Analysis of these disciplines will be introduced through an overview of Ashkenazic prayer and ritual theory. Despite objections and reservations of some rabbinic scholars, the interest in these disciplines continued during the Tosafist period. Comparison between Hasidei Ashkenaz and the Tosafists will be made throughout, and the differences between the Northern French and German centers will be considered.

JHI 6811 Messianism: Chazal to Chabad

Messianic beliefs, speculations, and movements from Talmudic times to the present. Varieties of messianic calculations. The naturalistic messianism of Maimonides. Sephardic versus Ashkenazic Messianism.

Messianic figures from Bar Kokhba to Shabbetai Zvi to the Lubavitcher Rebbe. The messianic dimension of religious Zionism.

JHI 6812 Devotional and Ascetic Practices and Ideals in Medieval Ashkenaz

Rabbinic culture in Germany and northern France during the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, quite apart from the teachings and doctrines of the German Pietists, espoused a series of devotional prayer rituals, eating practices, and other acts of self-abnegation which are not easily located within talmudic and halakhic literature. This course will look at several examples of these religious behaviors throughout the period and region, seeking to identify earlier literary sources (such as the Hekhalot corpus), parallels and possible influences from the surrounding Christian society, and the role of Hasidei Ashkenaz in these developments.

JHI 6819 The Interface Between Sefarad & Ashkenaz in the High Middle Ages

The impact of these two centers on each other in several disciplines, including the influence of the Tosafists on the Talmudic commentaries of Nahmanides and his students, early Sefardic codification and Ashkenazic halakhic works of the 13th century, and Ashkenazic pietism and Rabbenu Yonah of Gerona.

JHI 6822 History of Biblical Exegesis in Medieval Ashkenaz

On the basis of published texts as well as manuscripts, this course will identify and locate historically a significant body of comments on the Torah that were produced by several Tosafists and other leading rabbinic figures in northern France and Germany during the late 12th and early 13th centuries. These comments consist (broadly speaking) of a combination of rabbinic and peshat exegesis, and are perhaps closest overall to the commentaries of Rashi and R. Yosef Bekhor Shor. The existence of this stratum of commentaries has implications for several other important issues and problems within the intellectual history of medieval Ashkenaz, e.g., why the northern French pashtanim of the 12th century appear to have had few Ashkenazic heirs if any, and how the development in the mid-13th century (and beyond) of the diverse compilatory commentaries known as the perushei Ba'alei ha-Tosafot 'al ha-Torah is to be understood.

JHI 6828 The History of Medieval Ashkenazic Piyyut (Liturgical Poetry)

History and Literary Development of Ashkenazic Piyyut during the Eleventh through Thirteenth Centuries with Particular Emphasis on Authors, Genres, Styles, Patterns of Composition and Earlier Influences

JHI 6831 Topics in the History of Halakhah

This course will trace the history and development of several significant halakhic policies in medieval Ashkenaz, with comparisons to Spanish and Provençal halakhah and society as well. Among the topics to be discussed are immersion for the returning apostate, the requirements of qiddush ha-Shem, the underpinnings and parameters of Jewish self-government, and the regulation of synagogue functionaries and rites.

JHI 6832 Topics in History of Halakhah II

This course will trace the history and development of several significant halakhic policies in medieval Ashkenaz, with comparisons to Spanish and Provençal halakhah and society as well. Among the topics to be discussed are immersion for the returning apostate, the requirements of qiddush ha-Shem, the underpinnings and parameters of Jewish self-government, and the regulation of synagogue functionaries and rites.

JHI 8800 Doctoral Seminar in the Historical Analysis of Medieval and Early Modern Rabbinic Literature

The aim of this seminar is to focus on reading and analytical methods. We will begin with the two topics that follow, the first focused on an issue of social history and spirituality (Sefer Huqqei ha-Torah), and the second on the interface between halakhah and society (dina de-malkhuta dina, with an emphasis on 'arka'ot shel goyim). These two topics will last for up to three sessions each (and both topics will involve some manuscript work as well). After this, doctoral students will begin to present key texts in their area of research (one to two sessions per student), followed by any M. A. students who would like to do so.

JHI 9000 Themes & Methods in Jewish Studies

This team-taught course will introduce PhD students to central themes and methodologies of the various subfields of Jewish Studies. Students will become conversant with the wide-ranging techniques employed by scholars of Jewish history, culture, and thought, and will gain an understanding of central questions that have shaped the academic study of Judaism.

Modern Jewish History

JHI 5402 (Sephardic Reactions to Persecution: The Phoenix and the Fire), JHI 5580 (The Jews of Latin America 1492 – Present), JHI 6387 (Varieties of Jewish Autobiography: From the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period), and JHI 6407 (Marranos and Other Heretics: Varieties of Heresy in the Iberian World) also count toward the Medieval Jewish History concentration. See also Jewish History and Talmud & Ancient Judaism for courses that can also count toward this concentration.

JHI 5400 Early Modern Europe: 1492–1760

Historical, social, and intellectual developments in the Jewish communities of early-modern Western Europe; emphasis on the transition from medieval to modern patterns.

JHI 5401 The Sephardic Atlantic

This course will explore the social, economic, cultural and religious activities of Jews, Conversos and Crypto- Jews within the early modern Atlantic world. Instead of focusing on one specific national or geographic zone, this course looks at the vast and complex networks linking and cutting across European centers of power and the quickly evolving areas of American and African trade and colonization. We will chart the structures and mechanism through which Iberian Conversos developed global business enterprises and maintained close family connections across political and religious lines.

JHI 5402 Sephardic Reactions to Persecution: The Phoenix and the Fire

This course examines seminal turning points in the late medieval and early modern history of Iberian Jewry and the varied ways Iberian Jewry responded to these events. From the traumatic events of 1391 to the expulsion of 1492 and 1497 from Spain and Portugal respectively, Sephardic Jews moved on to new geographic frontiers and responded to these upheavals by founding new communities and developing new ways of thinking about their past and present. In this course we will study both the social and political history of the Sephardic communities and the rich literature these exiles crafted as they forged their new identities and refashioned their new communities into vibrant intellectual and socio-economic centers.

JHI 5410 Jews in Modern Europe, Social and Intellectual History: 1760–1900

Transition of Western European Jewry from the traditional community to the modern world; struggle for emancipation; Haskalah; rise of religious movements: reform, positive-historical school, orthodoxy, neo- orthodoxy. Course covers German, French, English, and Italian Jewry.

JHI 5440 East European Jewish History: 1750–1914

Survey of the political, social, and economic history of East European Jewry from the last years of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the outbreak of World War I; problems of emancipation; competing forces of Hasidism and Haskalah; rise of official and popular anti-Semitism in Tsarist Russia and Jewish reactions in the form of Zionism, Socialism, and Autonomism; changing family and social patterns; rise of modern Hebrew and Yiddish literature.

JHI 5441 The Jews of Eastern Europe: 1914–89

Survey of the political, social, and economic history of the Jews in Eastern Europe from the outbreak of World War I to the end of Communist rule in 1989; character of the Soviet Jewish experiment; position of interwar Jewry in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Lithuania; impact of Nazi genocidal policies on the Jewish communities of the area; fate of these Jewish communities during the half-century after World War II.

JHI 5445 *Kulturkampf* in Eastern Europe: The Russian Haskalah and the Rabbinic Response

Until the 1860s, most Russian maskilim were observant Jews who sought to reconcile Jewish and secular learning. However, their cultural program of acculturation and educational reform set them on a collision course with most rabbis, whose authority they challenged. This course will focus on the writings and activity of three central representatives of the three generations of Russian Haskalah: Isaac Ber Levinsohn (1788–1860), Samuel Joseph Fuenn (1818–1890), and Moshe Leyb Lilienblum (1843–1910). Through a careful reading of some of their works, we will analyze how the Haskalah program changed and developed over the span of these generations. This course will be taught as a text-course/seminar and requires reading fluency in Hebrew.

JHI 5450 History and Nature of Anti-Semitism

This course provides an overview of the history of anti-Semitism from antiquity through the contemporary world. It examines the intellectual underpinnings of tolerance and intolerance in the key civilizations where Jews resided, discrimination against Jews, and eruptions of anti-Jewish violence. It will also examine historiographical debates regarding specific manifestations of Jew hatred and the evaluation of both the term “anti-Semitism” and the phenomenon as a whole.

JHI 5571 American Jewish History: 1654–1881

Political, economic, social, and religious development of American Jewry in the contexts of both American and Jewish history from the earliest Jewish settlements until the arrival of mass immigration from Eastern Europe.

JHI 5572 American Jewish History: 1881–1967

Political, economic, social, and religious development of American Jewry in the contexts of both American and Jewish history from the arrival of mass immigration from Eastern Europe to the Six-Day War.

JHI 5580 The Jews of Latin America 1492–Present

This course explores Jewish immigration, settlement, cultural production and religious life from the earliest instances of European conquest and colonization of the Americas until the present day. We will explore the interplay between Jews, Judaism and the realities and mythologies of Latin America. The majority of the material will come from the Spanish and Portuguese zones of Central and South America with attention given to the Jewish communities of the Dutch and English colonies of the Caribbean such as Curaçao and Jamaica. The investigation into the colonial period will focus more heavily on aspects of Sephardic history such as crypto-Judaism, Inquisitorial persecution and the expansion of the Western Sephardim to the New World. As the course moves into the modern period, more emphasis will be placed on the experience of Eastern European Jewish immigrants and their descendants.

JHI 6387 Varieties of Jewish Autobiography: From the Middle Ages to the Early Modern Period

The course explores different forms of Jewish self-writing from the middle ages and the early modern period. We will read autobiographical texts from across the Jewish world—Western and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and the Americas. The Jewish works will be analyzed within their wider social and cultural context.

Because these texts are also a medium for spiritual and psychological self-expression and exploration, our analyses will be attentive to the interiority that is being crafted by these diverse authors.

JHI 6407 Marranos and Other Heretics: Varieties of Heresy in the Iberian World

This course examines the interaction between the Spanish Inquisition and a wide range of its targets. Beginning with a brief history of the Inquisition in the Iberian world, the focus shifts to a series of individual testimonies presented before the Inquisition. These individuals were accused of a variety of religious crimes, from bigamy and witchcraft to adhering to varying manifestations of Jewish and Protestant heresies. The course is particularly interested in the ways that individual “heretics” present themselves to their inquisitors and how they transform their interrogations into acts of self-fashioning. In addition to inquisitorial records we will examine literary and visual interpretations of the Inquisition including contemporary cinema.

JHI 6416 German Jewish Intellectual History

This course is a thematically-organized survey of trends in German-Jewish intellectual production from the late 18th century through the Weimar Republic. Topics discussed include the Haskalah, development of Jewish academic studies, religious division, discourse and denominationalism, nationalism, and interwar Jewish identity and renewal. We will conclude the course with a study of reflections by German-Jewish exiles on the meaning of German-Jewish cultural engagement in the wake of the Third Reich and Holocaust.

JHI 6417 Jews and Empires

This course is a comparative study of the Jewish communities of the Russian, Ottoman and Austrian Empires in the 1848-1918 period. In addition to a basic familiarity with the various structures of Jewish communities in these imperial settings, we will explore the ways in which Jewish communities responded to imperial policy politically and culturally. We will pay close attention to the intersection of these Jewish communities, the unique forms of Jewish cultural exchange in places where the Jews of different empires encountered each other (for instance, Russian Jews in Ottoman Palestine; Sephardic Jews of the Balkans in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, etc.). This course will also stress familiarity with the theoretical framework in current academic research that seeks to understand the interplay of ethnic and religious minorities in imperial contexts, including such themes as subaltern culture, center-periphery relations, and modes of accommodation and resistance.

JHI 6419 Zionist Culture Before the State of Israel

Study of the origins and evolution of Zionist culture from the mid-19th century to 1948, with a focus on the process of cultural development in both Israel and the Diaspora.

JHI 6421 Rabbis in the Land of Atheism: Rabbinic Thought and Writing in the Soviet Union

On the eve of Revolution, Russia's Jewry still venerated the rabbis as a communal elite. This course attempts to answer such questions as: how did the rabbis of this still highly traditionalist Jewry maintain the loyalty of their constituents? How did they view the Jewish identity of Soviet Jews? How did they change their legal approach to allow for the possibility of living according to halakha in the new Soviet reality?

JHI 6425 From Catastrophe to Renewal: Polish Jewry, 1939–2009

This course traces the history of the Jews in Poland from the eve of World War II down to the present day. Examining the voluminous secondary and primary sources on Polish Jewry during the Holocaust and its aftermath, we study chronically the history of Polish Jewry since 1939, from the Shoah and the attempts to reestablish Jewish communal life after 1945, to Jewish renewal in post-communist Poland, from 1989 to the present.

JHI 6444 Jewish Modernity in Lithuania: From Talmud and Mussar to Revolution and Zionism

For two centuries, Jewish Lithuania served as a center of Jewish religious, cultural, and political life. This region served as a bastion of traditional Talmudic learning and the Mussar movement even as it functioned as the cradle of such modern intellectual and political movements as Haskalah, religious Zionism, Jewish socialism, and modern Yiddish culture. In this class, we will study the works of leading representatives of each of these movements. Two of the questions that the course will address are the larger historical reasons for Lithuanian Jewry's remarkable creativity and the extent to which the secular movements continued the legacy of their religious predecessors, despite their rebellion against them.

JHI 6452 Vilna: A Jewish Cultural Metropolis

East European Jews referred to Vilna as "the Jerusalem of Lithuania." This course will explore the history of Vilna Jewry from the middle of the eighteenth century through the Holocaust. The following will serve as the course's principle themes: traditional rabbinic culture, the battle between Hasidim and Mitnagdim, the Mussar Movement, the Haskalah, Zionism, Jewish socialism, Orthodoxy, the rise of modern Yiddish culture, and cultural life in the Vilna Ghetto during the Holocaust.

JHI 6466 Eastern European Jewish History through the Prism of Drashot

This course will explore the history of early modern and modern East European Jewry through the medium of drashot (sermons). This course will begin with a methodological consideration of drashot as a source of studying Jewish history. We then will analyze representative drashot of leading magidim and rabbis in an attempt to understand how these figures interacted with and impacted the major social, cultural, and religious trends of East European Jewry from the pre-Chmienicki Golden Age through the Holocaust. More specifically, we will explore how these magidim and rabbis responded to the following trends and movements: economic success and materialism, poverty, Hasidism, Haskalah, the Mussar Movement, Zionism, secularization, and the Holocaust. Selected drashot of the following rabbis and magidim will be studied in depth: R. Efrayim Shelomoh of Lunshitz (Kli Yakar), the Dubner Magid, the Magid of Mezritsh, the Kelemer Magid, R. Yitshak Nissenbaum, R. Zvi Hirsch Masliansky, and R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapiro (Esh Kodesh). Fluency in rabbinic Hebrew is a prerequisite for this class.

JHI 6484 Destruction of European Jewry 1933-1945

The ideological roots of Nazi anti-Semitism, the breakdown of democratic institutions in Weimar Germany, Hitler's seizure of power, anti-Jewish policy and legislation in pre-WWII Germany, ghettoization in Nazi-occupied Europe, and the conception and implementation of the Final Solution. The Judenräte, Jewish resistance, life in the ghettos and camps, and the reactions of the Allied governments and the churches to Nazi genocidal policies. Comparison of the fate of Jews in different countries.

JHI 6485 At the Edge of the Abyss: Jewish Intellectual Responses to Nazism

Jewish intellectual responses to Nazism from 1933 to 1940. The crisis of humanism, the debate about the legacy of Jewish emancipation, rabbinic responses, and the “return to the ghetto” debate.

JHI 6486 Cultural Responses to the Holocaust

This course offers a study of the holocaust’s impact on a myriad of academic disciplines. It illustrates the way this dark chapter in the history of humankind continues to shape and reshape our lives and has affected the fields of history, literature, social work, film studies, theology, and more.

JHI 6487 Life in the Valley of the Shadow of Death: Jewish Religion, Culture, and Physical Resistance in the Nazi Ghettos of Eastern Europe

In this course, we will explore not the mass murder of East European Jews during the Holocaust, but rather their lives in the “Valley of the Shadow of Death”, in such places as the Warsaw, Vilna, and Kovno Ghetto. Regarding religious life, we will examine Rabbi Ephraim Oshry’s responsa in the Kovno Ghetto and Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira’s hasidic sermons in the Warsaw Ghetto. We will also look at the importance of Yiddish theater, literary clubs, and libraries in the Vilna Ghetto. In addition, we will learn the story of the Vilna Ghetto’s “paper brigade” and will discover Emanuel Ringleblum’s Oyneg Shabes archive in the Warsaw Ghetto. Methodologically, we will address the question of the extent to which pre-war local conditions determined Jewish religious, cultural and physical responses to ghettoization and to what extent Nazi policies contributed to these responses.

JHI 6488 Germany and the Holocaust: Roots, Perpetration, and Aftermath

This course will investigate the place of the Holocaust in modern German history. We will explore the roots of German-Jewish interaction in modernity and the evolution of anti-Semitism in Germany; the specific factors that shaped the rise of radical and violent antisemitic politics under the Nazi regime; and the process of the war and Holocaust. Finally, we will consider the role that the Holocaust has played in post-war Germany, from post-war reorientation of German politics to the resurgence of radical political movements in Germany today.

JHI 6500 History, Memory, and the Commemoration of Catastrophe: From the Destruction of the Temples Through the Holocaust

The course examines the Jewish attempts to commemorate the communal catastrophes they experienced from the destructions of both Temples in ancient times through the twentieth century. We will examine the specific particularity of the response to each of the historical events surveyed in the course.

JHI 6504 Zionist Thought: 1881–1947

This seminar explores the formative context, theoretical underpinnings, and diverse expressions of Zionist thought between 1881 and 1947. It begins by focusing on the attempt to create a new identity for Jews, to “imagine”, in contemporary parlance, a national community for the Jewish people. This process had parallels in and drew inspiration from contemporaneous national movements in Europe which sought to place the nation, rather than religious faith, at the center of self-identity. After exploring the rise of the international Zionist movement under Theodor Herzl, as well as the alternative currents of cultural, religious and labor Zionism, the focus will shift away from the ideological laboratory of Europe to the testing grounds of Palestine. Different strands of Zionist thought and activism in pre-State Palestine will be explored. Finally, we shall apply contemporary models of nationalism to the Jewish context.

JHI 6506 Varieties of Jewish Nationalism

The rise of Jewish national movements in late-19th and early-20th century Central and Eastern Europe; focuses on the diverse forms of Jewish national expression, including Zionism, Autonomism, and Bundism; the emergence of these movements within the wider context of the national revival in 19th-century Europe.

JHI 6508 Secularism and Religion in Zionism and Israel

In this course, we will explore the tension between competing secularist and religious visions of Jewish national renaissance from an historical perspective. The first half of the semester will discuss rabbinic attitudes toward Hibat Zion and Theodor Herzl; the conflict between cultural and religious Zionism; the theological arguments of both anti-Zionist and Zionist rabbis; the religious Zionist drashah as synthesis of traditional Judaism and Zionism; and the rise of Mizrahi as a political movement. During the second half, we will explore the tensions between secularism and religion in the State of Israel. Topics will include: The attitudes of the founders of the State of Israel toward Judaism and the question of the halakhic or secular nature of Israeli law; the compromise achieved at the founding of the State; differing attitudes within the haredi world toward the state; and the transformation of religious Zionism following the Six Day War.

JHI 6540 The Social and Intellectual Life of German Jewry: 1780–1933

This course is an in-depth study of the history and historiography of 19th and 20th century German Jewry. We will engage with the social, cultural and intellectual features of German Jewish communities from the late Enlightenment through the collapse of the Weimar Republic.

JHI 6541 Austro-Hungarian Jewry, 1772–1916

This course will explore the encounter of the Habsburg Empire with its various Jewish communities from the expansion of the Habsburg Empire in 1772 to the collapse of the Empire in 1918. We will investigate themes central to Jewish identity in Austro-Hungary, such as nationalism and patriotism, religion and aesthetics. As we proceed, we will combine a number of historical methods and use a diverse set of materials. We will examine secondary historical accounts to give a clearer idea of the general picture, which will be combined with original texts and artifacts, the voices of those who lived and experienced the period themselves.

JHI 6573 Jewish Religion in America

Free and religiously-voluntary American society has posed major and persistent challenges to the continuity of Judaism. How Jews have defined that challenge and attempted to reconcile, accommodate or preserve unchanged their religious faith and practice in America will be the focus of this course. Among the specific topics to be considered: differing lay and rabbinic perceptions of what America represents, issues of cooperation and competition among different movements or conceptions of American Judaism; growth and development of religious institutions and their parallels within Christian society.

JHI 6581 American Jews and Judaism Between the Two Wars

Examining the transformation of American Jewish life during a period that witnessed the close of one hundred years of migration, focusing on both history and historiography. Among the issues to be considered: the evolution of American forms of Judaism, the nature of Jewish urban demography, the nature of domestic anti-Semitism, inter-group and inter-racial relations and the challenge of the Great Depression.

Prerequisite: JHI 5572

JHI 6654 Jews and the Church in Modern Times

Students in this course will explore the topic of Jewish-Christian dialogue in modern times, study key documents pertaining to Jewish-Christian dialogue, and examine turning points that are central to the history of this dialogue. We will also consider the horizons that lie ahead for Jewish-Christian relations in a post October-7 world.

JHI 6673 Phenomenon of East European Jewish History: Poland and Lithuania

In this class, students from both Yeshiva University and Vilnius University will explore the history of eastern European Jewish history, with focuses on Poland and Lithuania. A unique opportunity to study Jewish history in Europe alongside citizens who still live within the borders, offering fresh perspectives and understanding.

JHI 6835 Responsa as a Source of Modern Jewish History

Halakhic responsa—she'elot uteshuvot—serve as crucial primary sources in the study of multiple fields, ranging from the history of Halakha to Jewish social and economic histories. Yet, Jewish historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have relied less on these sources than their medievalist and early modernist counterparts. In this course, we will explore how leading Central and East European rabbinic authorities applied halakha to novel historical circumstances and social conditions. In this course, we will focus on responsa that deal with issues of marital life and personal status: the plight of agunot, especially those whose husbands disappeared at war and those who needed ḥalitsah from a recalcitrant brother-in-law to remarry; the halakhic status of civil marriage; and conversion for the sake of marriage.

JHI 6745 Topics in Jewish History

Topics in Jewish History will vary each semester, particularly with respect to geographical areas and time periods. Topics to be discussed may include but are not limited to: the relationship between religion and politics during periods of social, cultural, and legal transformation; Jewish reinterpretations of medieval religious and legal traditions; the interplay between Jewish and broader cultures and how Jewish communities navigated tensions with general society; rabbinic personalities and controversies concerning rabbinic authority and sectarianism.

JHI 8851 New York Jews and Their City, 1900-2020

During the 20th century, New York Jews moved from inner city enclaves to outer-borough districts and ultimately to suburbia only to return to a gentrified city. This course explores through secondary readings and primary sources, processes of migration and natures of Jewish life in each setting.

JHI 6889 The History of New York Jews in the 20th Century

The Jews of New York have been favored over the past two generations with an enormous number of significant monographs about their history in 20th century and the first years of the new millennium. This course will examine and evaluate a selection of the most important recent works, beginning with studies of pre-WWI life on the Lower East Side and the move to successor neighborhoods. We will then focus on the inter-war period, the post war decades and then the contemporary era.

JHI 6890 Blacks and Jews in America

This course is a study of themes in the history of the Black and Jewish experience in North America, from the seventeenth century until today. The course explores the varied encounter of both minority groups with American politics, society and culture, as well as the history of mutual interactions between groups. Topics include: The Middle Passage and the Atlantic Slave Trade, Russian Jewish migration and the Great Migration; Image and reality of the ghetto, relationships between Jewish and African American religious identity, racism and violence against Jews and Blacks.

JHI 9000 Themes & Methods in Jewish Studies

This team-taught course will introduce PhD students to central themes and methodologies of the various subfields of Jewish Studies. Students will become conversant with the wide-ranging techniques employed by scholars of Jewish history, culture, and thought, and will gain an understanding of central questions that have shaped the academic study of Judaism.

Bible

BIB 6093 also counts toward the Jewish Philosophy concentration. See also Talmud & Ancient Judaism, and Jewish Philosophy for courses that can also count toward this concentration.

BIB 5031 Introduction to Biblical Studies

This course will focus on the movement from text to Scripture—that is, the process by which the Bible became a sacred corpus of books—the impact of that process on modes of interpretation in antiquity and the Middle Ages, and modern methodologies of biblical interpretation, particularly those inspired by history and literature.

BIB 5203 Biblical Hebrew

Orthography (the Tiberian system of pointing), phonology (gemination, vowel length, stress, syllable structure, reduction, alternation of reduced vowels with full vowels, compensatory lengthening), morphology (the definite article, the conjunction, prefixed prepositions, suffixed pronouns, regular and irregular verbs in all binyanim), syntax (passive, causative, reflexive; clause types), semantics, with occasional comparison to Late Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew.

BIB 6001 Advanced Biblical Hebrew

This course introduces more advanced methods in the study of Biblical Hebrew than those covered in the introductory required course. Topics include diachronic change, synchronic variation, and case studies in topics in syntax and semantics.

BIB 6030 Bible Manuscripts from the Judean Desert

In the 20th century dozens of Bible and Bible-related manuscripts dating from the end of the Second Temple period were discovered at Qumran and other places in the Judean Desert. Through close readings of a selection of these manuscripts and in conversation with modern scholarship, students will explore the contribution of these finds to knowledge of the development of the text and canon of the Bible. The course will familiarize students with the best available tools for independent study of these manuscripts.

BIB 6050 Methodology of the Targumim & their Reception History

This course will consider the various methods employed in the Targumim (Aramaic translations of the Bible) composed in oral and later in written form beginning in the early Second Temple period, and analyze their on biblical exegesis, from the medieval through the modern age.

BIB 6077 Battle Poems of the Bible

This course examines biblical poems including the Song at the Sea, the Song of Deborah, and others. The focus will be on the language, ideology, and literary forms of the texts, as well as issues of parshanut.

BIB 6084 The Medieval Peshat Tradition, c. 900–1300

In-depth survey of the medieval peshat school of Bible exegesis, with its roots in the philological analysis of Saadia Gaon and his Karaite contemporaries in the tenth century, subsequent developments in al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) in the eleventh century, in Rashi's school in northern France in the twelfth century, in the Byzantine school in the tenth through twelfth centuries, and in the offshoots of the Andalusian tradition in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Nahmanides). Special focus on the notion of peshuto shel miqra and related hermeneutical concepts in Muslim and Christian scriptural interpretation.

BIB 6087 Rabbi David Kimhi and his Exegetical Methods

This course examines the Provencal exegete R' David Kimhi and his works and exegetical methods. Among the issues to be discussed are critical textual considerations, Radak's unique contribution to Jewish biblical exegesis, his anti-Christian interpretations, approach to philosophy, linguistic works, relationship to his predecessors, and approach to rabbinic authorities. Study of the complexities of his exegesis deals with numerous aspects of medieval Jewish exegesis and intellectual thought.

BIB 6090 Maimonides' Biblical Exegesis

Maimonides' philological, literary-historical interpretation of Scripture in light of rabbinic sources, the Babylonian-Iberian exegetical school, and Greco-Arabic learning. Special emphasis on his concept of peshuto shel miqra and its role in his system of halakhic exegesis in Sefer ha-Mitsvot (Book of the Commandments) and Mishneh Torah (Code of Jewish Law). Biblical interpretation in the Guide of the Perplexed, including Maimonides' analysis of Genesis 1-5 (Account of Creation), Job, Song of Songs, and his ta'amei ha-mitsvot (rationale for the commandments).

BIB 6093 Kabbalistic vs Philosophical Bible Exegesis

Comparison of kabbalistic and philosophical interpretive approaches to Scripture, with emphasis on the writings of Saadia Gaon, Maimonides, Nahmanides, and Zoharic sources. Conceptions of divine presence (shekhinah), angelic beings, sanctity (e.g., of the Land of Israel, Hebrew language), rationale for the commandments (ta'amei ha-mitsvot), miracles, and divine providence.

BIB 6094 Rashi's Peshat Revolution

Rashi is the most influential Bible commentator of all time. But what do we know of Rashi himself in his eleventh-century Ashkenazic world? This course explores the cultural factors that motivated Rashi to revolutionize Bible study and launch the northern French peshat school.

BIB 6097 Nahmanides' Exegesis and Thought

Nahmanides' interpretive methods in light of earlier exegetical traditions and his cultural environment. Relation to Rashi, Abraham Ibn Ezra and David Kimhi; possible link to the northern French peshat school. Conceptions of peshat and its relation to Midrash. Debates with Maimonides. Integration of Kabbalah and exegesis. Scriptural multivalence.

BIB 6110 Jewish Biblical Exegesis After the Haskalah (Post Enlightenment Exegesis)

This course explores the various methodologies developed by individual commentators and classes of commentators in response to the unique challenge of modernity from the Jewish Enlightenment to the early twentieth century. The course considers differences between these modern approaches and those found in earlier Jewish biblical exegesis.

BIB 6212 Genesis: Creation of the World

A close reading of Genesis 1–3 in conjunction with rabbinic, medieval and modern commentaries, focusing on the meaning of the text and the use of important grammatical tools. Biblical creation and cosmic history will be explored in its ancient Near Eastern context as well as the foundational role of cosmogonies in society.

BIB 7325 Book of Judges

This course examines textual, thematic, and structural issues in the book of Judges. Emphasis is given to literary considerations, especially inner-biblical textual relationships, and their role in the interpretation of individual passages and of the book generally.

BIB 7401 Book of Jeremiah

Traditional exegesis of selected chapters of Jeremiah examined and weighed with the help of modern historical and philological tools and methods.

BIB 7506 Isaiah 44–60

This course will study Isaiah 40–66, the latter part of the Book of Isaiah. Through study of selected chapters, students will become familiar with modern historical and philological tools and methods of exegesis. Topics considered will include: the early Persian period as historical context, rhetoric and poetics, influence of and relationship to other biblical literature and theology.

BIB 7718 The Book of Hosea

Textual study of the Book of Hosea, with emphasis on modern historical and philological methods of its interpretation.

BIB 7719 Prayer in the Hebrew Bible

Study of prayers included in the Hebrew Bible, with an eye towards their poetics and religious ideologies. Close reading of biblical passages, comparison with analogues from ancient Near Eastern literature and later Hebrew prayers, as well as engagement with modern academic writings on the subject. Texts drawn from most major genres of biblical literature, including prose, prophecy and the Psalms.

BIB 7720 Book of Amos

Textual study of the Book of Amos, with emphasis on philological, literary, historical, and ideological issues.

BIB 8209 Book of Psalms

Selected Psalms. Overview of the entire book, with special attention to major genres, literary style, historical setting, and expression of religious sentiments; Jewish exegesis, especially the rabbinic and medieval traditions; major contributions of modern scholarship; application of modern literary methods to reveal the poetic complexity of Psalms.

BIB 8305 Book of Job in the Jewish Exegetical Tradition

Analysis of Job, its message and literary structure in light of modern scholarship and the Jewish exegetical tradition. Philological interpretations of Rashi, Joseph Kara and Rashbam; philosophical interpretations of Sa'adia, Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides; Nahmanides' Kabbalistic approach. Implications for Jewish biblical hermeneutics: literary nature of Scripture, the role of peshat as opposed to other layers of meaning in Scripture.

BIB 8306 Faith, Doubt and Salvation in the Bible: Job and Psalms

How are faith, doubt, and salvation expressed in the Tanakh / Hebrew Bible? How is the concept of suffering and divine providence addressed in the Book of Job? How do the Psalms offer salvation? How are these key biblical religious themes interpreted by Jewish commentators? Answering these questions will offer insight into the Jewish perspective on the Bible, the role it plays in Jewish faith and practice, and how Judaism and Christianity might come to a better mutual understanding through their shared sacred scriptures.

BIB 8310 Human and Divine Love in Songs of Song

In-depth study of Shir HaShirim, its language, structure, imagery, and depiction of human and spiritual love; literal vs. allegorical readings in rabbinic and medieval commentaries; modern scholarship, with special emphasis on literary analysis; medieval and modern theories of poetics as applied to Biblical poetry.

BIB 8600 Book of Daniel

Study of the book of Daniel introducing students to its literary, historical, and linguistic aspects. Class discussion will be divided between careful reading and interpretation of the Hebrew and Aramaic text and consideration of key issues in current scholarship.

BIB 8800 Egypt and the Bible

This course surveys the various ways in which Egypt and Israel interacted in biblical times, and the ways in which understanding ancient Egypt can help understand the Bible. Topics covered include linguistic influences, historical interactions from the Late Bronze Age through the Persian period, literary and religious influences and commonalities (hymns, and psalms, wisdom literature, love songs, prophesy, creation, monotheism) and the place of Egypt in Israelite thought.

BIB 8801 Northwest Semitic Inscriptions & the Bible

This course surveys the inscriptions, mostly royal and mostly monumental, of the cultures surrounding the Bible, mostly in the period 1000-600 BCE. We will read the texts in Phoenician, Old Aramaic, and Moabite, and also look backwards in time to the Sinai inscriptions of the second millennium BCE, always with an eye towards how these texts illuminate the Hebrew Bible, as well. Besides the texts themselves, topics covered will include: royal ideology; Northwest Semitic grammar; historical and literary approaches to reading inscriptions.

BIB 9000 Methods in Jewish Studies

This team-taught course will introduce PhD students to central themes and methodologies of the various subfields of Jewish Studies. Students will become conversant with the wide-ranging techniques employed by scholars of Jewish history, culture, and thought, and will gain an understanding of central questions that have shaped the academic study of Judaism.

Jewish Philosophy

JPH 6204 (The Akedah in Jewish Thought) also counts toward the Bible concentration. See also Bible and Talmud & Ancient Judaism for courses that can also count toward this concentration.

JPH 5011 Introduction to Medieval Jewish Philosophy

An introduction to the basic arguments and concepts of medieval Jewish Philosophy, as reflected in the writings of its major exponents. The emphasis will be on the analysis of philosophic issues, and the historical and philosophic contexts from which they emerged (Kalâm, Neoplatonism, Aristotelianism, critique of Aristotelianism).

JPH 5012 Survey of Modern and Contemporary Jewish Philosophy

An introduction to modern and contemporary Jewish philosophy through the analysis of selections from the philosophy of the most significant thinkers of the period. Thinkers to be studied will include Baruch Spinoza, Moses Mendelssohn, Nachman Krochmal, Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham Isaac Kook, Joseph Soloveitchik, Emil Fackenheim, and Emmanuel Levinas.

JPH 5350 Introduction to Jewish Mysticism

Survey of major currents in Jewish mysticism in their historical and literary context from the merkavah speculations of late antiquity to the Kabbalah of 16th-century Safed. Themes discussed will include: conceptions of God, conceptions of the Torah, reasons for the commandments, evil, eschatology, piety, esotericism, and mystical experience. Readings in selected primary and secondary literature.

JPH 5360 Introduction to Hassidic Thought

Survey of the major themes of Hassidic thought through an examination of the works of its major exponents including the Baal Shem Tov, the Maggid of Mezhibezh, R. Jacob Joseph of Polonoye, R. Menahem Nahum of Chernobyl, R. Shneur Zalman of Lyady and others. Particular attention will be paid to the intellectual and historical contexts in which Hassidism flourished. Relevant secondary literature will also be considered.

JPH 6100 Philosophy of Biblical Narrative

This course will explore a variety of philosophical concepts by examining theologically, philosophically and ethically challenging biblical narratives. Each narrative will be analyzed from medieval and contemporary exegetical and philosophical perspectives through primary and secondary readings.

JPH 6111 Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought

This course will critically evaluate the concept and status of dogma within Judaism and examine the historical motivation for the initial formalization of beliefs in the Middle Ages, as well as the contemporary dispute over their obligatory nature. The medieval debate over the number of principles, as well as the culpability of accidental heretics will be analyzed through philosophic and halakhic texts.

JPH 6201 Virtue & the Good Life in Medieval Jewish Philosophy

Between the 12th and 15th centuries, Jewish philosophers began to explore the cultivation of good character as one of the central purposes of the Torah. Virtue ethics, as elucidated by Aristotle in his “Nicomachean Ethics”, was adopted by Jewish thinkers such as Moses Maimonides, Levi Gersonides, Hasdai Crescas, Joseph Albo and Isaac Arama, all of whom began to develop new ways of explaining how the cultivation of moral virtues and the pursuit of happiness are central to the Torah and the Jewish tradition. This course will discuss primary and secondary literature relating to this material to engage in a sustained discussion of the nature of ethical behavior and how it relates to the teachings of Torah.

JPH 6204 The Akedah in Jewish Thought

Survey of Jewish interpretations of and responses to the Akedah over the past 2000 years, with comparisons to those found in Christian and Islamic literature and art. Deals with pre-modern literature of various genres (midrash, piyyut, chronicles, and commentary) and in different media and then focuses on modern thinkers, from Kierkegaard to the present day.

JPH 6205 Visions of the Just Society in Medieval Jewish, Christian and Islamic Philosophy

Medieval Jewish, Christian and Islamic philosophers often interpreted their sacred texts as guidebooks for how to create the ideal society. In doing so, they each strove to delineate the nature of justice and how their particular religious law best serves to achieve it. Yet one must ask: how can their spiritual vision be brought into the real world, and would it even be desirable to do so? We will consider both the arguments for and against bringing together religion and politics, ending with Spinoza’s case for the division of philosophy, religion and politics.

JPH 6522 Secrecy in Jewish Thought

An examination of the theological and social ramifications of secrecy in Jewish thought. Readings will include works of Maimonides, Samuel ibn Tibbon, and various kabbalistic authors.

JPH 6640 Philosophy of Judah Halevi

This course is devoted to a study of major issues in the thought of Judah Halevi on the basis of the careful analysis of selected passages from The Kuzari. After establishing the philosophical context out of which The Kuzari emerged, the course will focus on the form and structure of the work, before moving on to the study of key theological and metaphysical themes in Halevi’s thought including religion and philosophy, prophecy, inyan elohi, am segullah, philosophy of law, and servant of God.

JPH 6651 Philosophy of Maimonides

A detailed study of Maimonides’ philosophical thought based on a close analysis of selections from his Guide of the Perplexed alongside his treatises and halakhic writings. After establishing the philosophical context out of which Maimonides’ writings emerge, the course will focus on his methodology, Biblical exegesis, and the key physical and metaphysical themes in his thought.

JPH 6662 Philosophy of Gersonides

This course will involve the detailed study of Gersonides' philosophical thought, based principally on a close analysis of selections from *Milhamot Ha-Shem*. After establishing the historical and philosophical context out of which Gersonides' writings emerge, the course will focus on his views on the immortality of the soul, divine attributes, providence, prophecy, and creation.

JPH 6714 Philosophy and the Concept of Mitzvah

This course is devoted to two of the most significant philosophical issues relating to the concept of mitzvah and is thus split into 2 parts. Part I develops a contemporary approach to the project of *Ta'amei ha-Mitzvot* out of the critical study of previous approaches from the history of Jewish philosophy. Part II is devoted to the conceptual analysis of models of freewill and responsibility in Jewish philosophy.

JPH 6715 Sefer ha-Bahir

An intensive study of a foundational text of Kabbalah. Particular attention will be paid to the light this text sheds on the history of Kabbalah, on the development of kabbalistic symbolism and conceptions of the divine, and on the varieties of Jewish mystical experience.

JPH 6735 Kabbalistic Views of Maimonides

An examination of kabbalistic attitudes toward the thought of Moses Maimonides. We will consider a variety of stances ranging from attempts to reconcile Maimonidean and kabbalistic thought to bitter criticism.

JPH 6745 Themes in 13th-Century Kabbalah

An examination of the key themes of the formative period of Kabbalah. Topics studied will include: "origins" of Kabbalah, relationship to Maimonides, role of *Sefer Yetzirah*, Catalanian versus Castilian Kabbalah, kabbalistic theosophy, theories of evil, views of the nature of language, reasons for the commandments, and mystical experience. Readings will be taken from the works of Asher b. David, Ezra of Gerona, Azriel of Gerona, Jacob ha-Kohen, Isaac ha-Kohen, Todros Abulafia, Moses de Leon, and Josef Gikatilla.

JPH 6760 Messianism in Kabbalah & Hasidut

An examination of the development of Kabbalistic and Hasidic views on messianism through a close reading of selected Zoharic, Lurianic, and Hasidic texts, and relevant scholarship.

JPH 6860 The Early Modern Period: Spinoza & Mendelssohn

Whether Baruch Spinoza can be thought of as a "Jewish philosopher" has always been a subject for debate. This course will analyze his key philosophical ideas in relation both to his medieval Jewish forbears and the major Jewish thinker who followed him—Moses Mendelssohn. Topics to be covered will include: the nature of God; the immortality of the soul; freedom and determinism; the status of Jewish Law; and the relationship between religion and state.

JPH 6862 Nietzsche & Modern Jewish Philosophy

Friedrich Nietzsche's relationship to Judaism has long been a focus of scholarly debate. After some initial consideration of the classical debates, this course will focus primarily on the manner in which modern Jewish thinkers have implicitly and explicitly engaged with his controversial philosophy, in particular his potent critique of religion. Topics to be covered will include: 1) Nietzsche and Nazism; 2) Nietzsche's attitude towards the Jews; 3) Nietzsche, Rosenzweig, and the nature of philosophy; 4) Nietzsche, Buber, and Nationalism; 5) Nietzsche, Soloveitchik, and Life-Affirmation; 6) Nietzsche, Rav Kook, and Atheism.

JPH 6863 The Problem of Evil in Jewish Philosophy

A detailed analysis of the treatment of the problem of evil through the history of Jewish philosophy, addressing both pre- and post-Holocaust thought. Thinkers to be studied will be selected from among the following: Saadia Gaon, Moses Maimonides, Levi Gersonides, Baruch Spinoza, Hermann Cohen, Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Rav Kook, Richard Rubenstein, Emil Fackenheim, Eliezer Berkovits, and Rav Soloveitchik.

JPH 6872 Jewish Existentialism: Buber & Rosenzweig

A critical examination of some of the central themes that emerge out of the work of Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig, including, but not limited to, the nature of religious philosophy, human relationships (ethics), and the human-divine encounter (revelation). The course will focus primarily on developing these themes through close reading and analysis of primary texts.

JPH 6874 The Philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas

A study of Levinas' philosophy that will concentrate on close readings of the often difficult primary texts in order to enable students both to become independent readers of the Levinasian corpus and to understand the key movements of Levinasian thought: What does it mean to speak of ethics as "first philosophy"? What do "Totality" and "Infinity" mean for Levinas? What is the "other" and why do we have an "infinite responsibility" toward it? And how does Levinas' philosophy relate to his Jewish writings?

JPH 6876 Halakhah & Contemporary Legal Philosophy

This course is devoted to the critical analysis of attempts to apply models of Anglo-American jurisprudence to the halakhic system. Models to be considered will include legal positivism, natural law, Dworkin's interpretive approach and Cover's narrative approach.

JPH 6880 Themes in 20th-Century Jewish Philosophy

A critical examination of selected topics in 20th-century Jewish philosophy with a particular focus on the writings of some of the more neglected thinkers from the period such as Yeshayahu Leibowitz, Eliezer Berkovits, and Emil Fackenheim. Topics to be studied will include: conceptions of God, faith and theology; the status of ethics in contemporary Jewish law and thought; and conceptions of Zionism.

JPH 6885 The Philosophy of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

A detailed study of philosophical themes in the writings of Rav Soloveitchik, based on an analysis of key texts and recent scholarship. Works to be studied will include: *The Halakhic Mind*; *Halakhic Man*; *Confrontation*; *Lonely Man of Faith*; and *U-Vikkashtem mi-Sham*.

JPH 6900 Topics in Jewish Philosophy

Topics in Jewish Philosophy will vary each semester. Topics to be discussed may include but are not limited to: Judaism and Pragmatism; Jewish Philosophies of Love; Post-holocaust Theology; Hassidic and Musar Thought; Kierkegaard and Judaism, and other topics.

JPH 9000 Methods in Jewish Studies

This team-taught course will introduce PhD students to central themes and methodologies of the various subfields of Jewish Studies. Students will become conversant with the wide-ranging techniques employed by scholars of Jewish history, culture, and thought, and will gain an understanding of central questions that have shaped the academic study of Judaism.

Talmud & Ancient Judaism

TAS 6002 (Mishnaic Hebrew) and JHI 6241 (Second Temple Period Aramaic) also count toward the Bible concentration. TAS 6400 (Readings in Medieval Talmudic Commentaries and Halakhic Compendia) and TAS 7523 (Geonic Responsa) also count toward the Medieval History concentration. JHI 6461 (Historians on Chazal: Writing the World of the Sages) also counts toward the Modern Jewish History concentration. TAS 6877 (Classical Rabbinic Thought) also counts toward the Jewish Philosophy concentration. See also Medieval Jewish History for courses that can also count toward this concentration.

TAS 5801 Introduction to Tannaitic Literature

The Tannaim continued in large part the laws and views of their predecessors the Pharisees, while also taking the initiative in leading their community in the post-Temple era. They produced Megilat Taanit, Seder Olam Rabbah, Mishnah, Tosefta, and Tannaitic Midrashim, which became the basis for subsequent Judaism until today. This course will survey the literature of the Tannaim with emphasis on the Mishnah and Tosefta within their historical context. It will focus on scholarly methodologies of analysis including manuscript variants, literary aspects, Greco-Roman background, parallel texts, editing, publication, and transmission. The goal is for students to gain research skills to find relevant scholarship, parse and critique academic arguments, and bring together the various methodologies studied to create their own comprehensive and well-grounded analyses of any given Tannaitic text.

TAS 5804 Talmud Yerushalmi and Bavli—Development and Methodology

The goal of this course is to introduce students to the methodology and important works of the modern academic study of Amoraic Literature, including the Talmud Yerushalmi and Talmud Bavli. By the end of the course, students should be able to find and analyze manuscript variants of the Talmud, find and compare parallel sugyot, appreciate a sugya's structure, and uncover its layers of development and editing.

TAS 6002 Mishnaic Hebrew

This course introduces students to the Hebrew language used by the Tannaim and Amoraim, in Eretz Israel and in Babylonia, from the first through the sixth centuries CE, through careful reading of primary texts in their best manuscripts. Careful attention will be paid to the interplay of Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew, the diachronic and synchronic variation evident within our sources, and issues of text transmission.

TAS 6352 Jewish Babylonian Aramaic

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the Aramaic used in the Bavli (Jewish Babylonian Aramaic), as recorded in reliable manuscripts. Other texts (Geonic literature, magical texts) will supplement our study of the text of the Bavli. The first weeks of the course will present an overview of the grammar of JBA, and the remainder of the semester will be inductive, i.e., we will study texts and see the language at work.

TAS 6353 Rabbinic Aramaic of Eretz Israel

Readings in the Jewish Aramaic of Eretz Yisrael, including excerpts from the Jerusalem Talmud, midrashic literature, targumim, synagogue inscriptions, ketubot, and magical texts. The end of the course will provide an opportunity for comparison with Jewish Babylonian Aramaic with readings from the Babylonian Talmud. Basic knowledge of Aramaic is required.

TAS 6400 Readings in Medieval Talmudic Commentaries and Halakhic Compendia

This series of courses will analyze a set of variegated pericopes (sugyot) within a particular talmudic tractate, through the reading of a wide range of primary rabbinic sources produced in medieval Europe and Islamic lands. Through careful consideration of the historical and conceptual underpinnings of these works (with emphasis on both published and manuscript texts) and on the intellectual milieu of their authors, significant interpretative methods and patterns will be identified and developed. Critical secondary studies and other relevant academic publications will be assigned in order to anchor and enhance the ongoing analysis of the primary sources.

TAS 6513 Tractate Avodah Zarah in Context

This course explores themes in tractates Avodah Zarah, “Foreign Worship”, of the Mishnah, Tosefta, Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmudim. We will explore Jewish relations with non-Jews-Romans, Christians and Sasanian Persians- from the late 1st to the 6th centuries CE, focussing on “idolatry” and its expression in the public sphere. This seminar will focus on modern methods for the historical study of rabbinic cultures and literatures.

TAS 6817 Readings in the Babylonian Talmud

A close reading and analysis of a section of Babylonian Talmud focusing on manuscript versions, sources and parallel texts, time and place of named sages, textual layers, editorial activity, medieval and modern commentaries, and development of ideas in their wider contexts.

TAS 6877 Classical Rabbinic Thought

This course will delve in the philosophical worldview of Hazal as presented in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmud and Midrash. We will cover the topics of predestination and fate versus freewill, forgiveness and repentance, suffering and punishment, reward and afterlife, marriage versus learning Torah, study of Greek, the evil inclination and the reasons for the commandments. For each topic we will analyze selected texts from across rabbinic literature in order to survey the range of opinions on each topic as well as appreciate the literary devices and arguments used in making each case. We will also trace the backgrounds of these opinions in Tanakh and in Second Temple literature as well as compare them with contemporary Greco-Roman philosophical schools and Persian sources.

TAS 6885 Midrash in Historical Context

This course surveys the major works and methods of rabbinic midrash, both halakhic and aggadic. We will discuss the historical background of Midrash, inner-biblical exegesis, exegesis in Second Temple literature, the schools of R. Ishmael and R. Akiva, the hermeneutical rules, the petihta and parable forms, literary theory, and the concepts of exegesis, eisegesis, omnisignificance, polysemy and intertextuality. By placing midrash into the context of inner-biblical and Second Temple exegesis, Greco-Roman forms of education, and political and social realities of the first two centuries CE, we will better appreciate the how and why the rabbis developed the midrashic compositions that lie at the basis of so much of Judaism until today.

TAS 6895 Topics in Aggadah

Nature and structure of Aggada and Homiletics in the Tannaitic and Amoraic Literature. Examination of a variety of methodologies, highlighting the interpretation of biblical texts, concepts and beliefs, and goals. Study of historical perspectives.

TAS 7523 Geonic Responsa

This course explores the rich body of responsa literature produced by the Geonim, the heads of the rabbinic academies in Baghdad during the Islamic Golden Age (8th-11th centuries). Focusing on the correspondence between Jewish communities across the Diaspora and the Geonic leadership, this course will examine how Geonic Responsa provides insight into Jewish law, theology, language, and culture in medieval Islamic societies. Students will analyze selected responsa, considering their physical features, transmission, and broader historical contexts. In doing so, the course aims to highlight the vital role of this literature in shaping Jewish intellectual and social life in the medieval world.

TAS 7554 Middle Persian Context of the Babylonian Talmud

This course explores the Babylonian Talmud as a product of the late antique Persian world. We will explore the social, literary and cultural contexts of the Bavli, with particular interest in the status of women in rabbinic thought. The mainly peaceful Jewish experience under Persia will be contrasted with the more complex situation in Israel under Rome, highlighting ways that these very different cultural contexts contributed to make the Bavli the unique document that it is.

TAS 9000 Methods in Jewish Studies

This team-taught course will introduce PhD students to central themes and methodologies of the various subfields of Jewish Studies. Students will become conversant with the wide-ranging techniques employed by scholars of Jewish history, culture, and thought, and will gain an understanding of central questions that have shaped the academic study of Judaism.

JHI 5213 Second Temple Jewish Literature

This course will survey a wide variety of Second Temple period texts, including biblical works, biblical interpretations, rewritten versions of scripture, apocalyptic visions, collections of wise sayings, sectarian polemics, halakhic writings, historiographical and philosophical works, and more. Each class session will focus on a different text or group of texts with two main goals in view: (1) to introduce the key features and some of the critical issues in the contemporary scholarly discussion of the text or texts in question and (2) to engage in analysis of selected passages.

JHI 5215 Jews under Roman Rule

An examination of Jewish history from the consolidation of Roman control over the land of Israel and other geographical regions of Jewish habitation (1st century BCE) through the Christianization of the empire (4th century CE). The course covers selected themes and trends relating to political, social, and religious development under the dynamic pressures of imperial rule, as well as specific events of interest (e.g., the violent uprisings of 66-70, 115-117, and 132-135 CE), with an eye toward engaging the diverse variety of research methodologies and debates driving the current scholarly discourse.

JHI 6220 Hazal in 3D: Archaeology Illuminates the Talmud

This course explores relationships between material culture and the literature of the Talmudic sages, looking toward a broad and deep history of the Rabbis in their world. Tools for the study of Hazal will be emphasized as we explore the human beings behind our literary sources, and ways that texts illuminate the archaeological record.

JHI 6221 Hebraism & Hellenism: Greco-Roman Culture & the Rabbis

This course will analyze the interaction of the Rabbis of the Talmud with their surrounding Greco-Roman culture regarding such diverse areas as language, law, science, art, mythology, and philosophy with special emphasis on their use of classical rhetoric, the mainstay of higher education throughout the Greco-Roman world. In each class, we will read primary sources from both Greek and Rabbinic sources in order to develop a methodology of how to go about such comparative analysis.

JHI 6233 Dead Sea Scrolls

Reading of selected Hebrew and Aramaic texts from the Qumran library. The course will provide students with a deep understanding of the philological, exegetical and historical issues raised by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the archaeological excavation of the site of Qumran. Students will be trained in the use of the scrolls for research on the history of Judaism.

JHI 6237 The “Parting of the Ways:” Early Christianity in its Jewish and Greco-Roman Contexts

This course explores the development from Christianity from a small Jewish sect of the Second Temple period into the official religion of the Roman empire, and Jewish responses to this amazing development.

JHI 6239 The Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic Literature

This course explores the various relationships between the Dead Sea Scrolls and rabbinic literature, with a particular interest in delineating how reading these two different corpora in light of one another may be done most profitably and responsibly. Comparative study will focus on a broad selection of topics, including matters relating to the history of Jewish law, biblical exegesis, and a number of religious beliefs and practices, including mysticism, magic, prayer, and messianism.

JHI 6240 Truth, Justice and Court Procedure in Comparative Roman and Talmudic Law

This interdisciplinary course analyzes the concepts of truth and justice in rabbinic literature on the background of Greek philosophy and Roman law. While the Rabbis did not write philosophical treatises, they thought deeply about these concepts and their insights are encoded within the details of court procedure in tractate Sanhedrin as well as embedded within various midrashim. Comparing these worldviews will highlight how the rabbis carefully and brilliantly navigated a middle path between the extreme positions of the philosophers and sophists.

JHI 6241 Second Temple Period Aramaic

This course focuses on Jewish literature written entirely or partially in Aramaic during the Second Temple period. A wide variety of texts of different genres and origins will be covered, including Daniel, Ezra, Elephantine papyri, the major Aramaic works discovered at Qumran, and some lesser known works and inscriptions. While there will be an emphasis on Aramaic grammar and philology, ample time will be devoted to discussion of larger literary and historical issues related to the texts.

JHI 6242 Views on Halakhah in Jewish Antiquity

This course considers how Jews in antiquity understood the basis for their legal practice—why did they have a duty to obey the law and how it was connected with other domains of knowledge such as apocalyptic, wisdom, and philosophy.

JHI 6243 Samaritans and Jews: From the Bible to Modern Israel

This course introduces the complex relationship between Jews and Samaritans from biblical Israel to the present day. Drawing on both Jewish and Samaritan literary sources, archaeology and visual culture, we will explore one of the longest and most fraught continuous relationships in human history. This course is part of the larger YU Israelite Samaritans Project, <https://www.yu.edu/cis/samaritans-project>

JHI 6244 Diaspora and Exile in Ancient Jewish Thought

The first half of this course will focus on how Jews in antiquity struggled theologically to make sense of exile. The second half of the course will deal with what we know about life in the ancient Jewish diaspora.

JHI 6245 Josephus: Profile of a 2nd Temple Jew

This course will examine the life and writings of the ancient Jew, Flavius Josephus, as a window into Second Temple Jewish society and a case study in the complexities of Jewish identity in antiquity. We will also consider the after-life of this ancient Jew by examining the reception of his works among Christians, medieval Jews, and 20th century Zionist historians.

JHI 6246 Philo of Alexandria: Profile of a 2nd Temple Jew

Using Philo of Alexandria and his massive literary output as an extended case study, this course will explore the complex configurations of Jewish identity for ancient Jews living in the Greek-speaking communities of the Diaspora.

JHI 6247 Paul: Profile of a 1st Century Jew

The apostle Paul is often regarded as the father of millennia of anti-Judaism, but this caricature fails to do justice to the complexity of his life and writings. This course will consider Paul's relationship to Jews and Judaism and ask: was it possible to become a devoted believer in the messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth while also maintaining one's Jewish identity? Was Paul in fact anti-Jewish or did he have a different understanding of Jewish destiny once he came to believe in Jesus' resurrection? We will explore Paul's writings as a case study in the complexities of Jewish identity in antiquity.

JHI 6255 Jewish Art and Visual Culture

Implications of Jewish art and visual culture for the study of Jewish history from Talmudic times through the twentieth century.

JHI 6285 Literatures of the Ancient Synagogue: Midrash, Liturgy, Targum

This course will explore the history of the synagogue during the Greco-Roman period, using the methods of social and cultural history, through the study of archaeological, rabbinic, patristic as well as Second Temple period sources. Synagogue studies will serve as a window through which to view significant trends in classical Jewish history.

JHI 6461 Historians on Chazal: Writing the World of the Sages

This course explores ways that modern historians have formed their visions of Jewish history within their own cultural contexts, as they set their focus upon the Greco-Roman period. This course also counts toward the concentration in modern Jewish history.

JHI 9000 Themes & Methods in Jewish Studies

This team-taught course will introduce PhD students to central themes and methodologies of the various subfields of Jewish Studies. Students will become conversant with the wide-ranging techniques employed by scholars of Jewish history, culture, and thought, and will gain an understanding of central questions that have shaped the academic study of Judaism.

Hebraica Veritas: Korean-Jewish Fellowship Program

The following courses are for Hebraica Veritas students. Students in the MA program cannot count these courses for credit towards the MA in Jewish Studies.

BIB 5201 Beginners Biblical Hebrew I

This course introduces students to Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) and lays the foundation for direct study of the Hebrew Bible. Working systematically through a textbook, students are introduced to the alphabet and vowel system and to the basic elements of the language, grammar, and vocabulary of the Hebrew Bible. By the end of the course, students will have studied numerous samples of biblical texts and be able to read, analyze and understand a number of biblical narrative passages

BIB 5202 Beginners Biblical Hebrew II

Building upon the knowledge-base and skills acquired in Beginners Biblical Hebrew I, this course provides students with a working knowledge of Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) and lays the foundation for direct study of the Hebrew Bible. Students continue to learn the morphology and syntax of Hebrew adjectives, conjunctions, nouns, numbers, prepositions, and verbs. By the end of the course, students will have studied numerous more complex samples of biblical texts and be able to read, analyze and understand a number of more complex biblical narrative passages.

Prerequisite: BIB 5201

HEB 5001 Modern Hebrew I

This course aims to familiarize the students with the basics of Modern Hebrew grammar and usage. This will be accomplished by means of grammatical explanations (accompanied by Power Point presentations), in class exercises (including drills, dialogues, and short reading passages), and homework assignments.

HEB 5002 Modern Hebrew II

This course is a continuation of HEB 5001, and aims to further develop the basic Modern Hebrew grammar and usage attained in the Beginners course. This will be accomplished by means of more advanced grammatical explanations (accompanied by Power Point presentations), in class exercises (including drills, dialogues, and short reading passages), and homework assignments.

JHI 5010 History of Jewish Education

This course explores the history of Jewish education from biblical times to the modern era, examining how Jewish communities have transmitted religious, ethical, and cultural values through formal and informal frameworks. Key topics include the biblical and rabbinic foundations of education, the evolution of institutions like the beit midrash and yeshiva, medieval pedagogical innovations influenced by Islamic and Christian systems, educational methodologies like hevruta learning and memorization, and the role of education in fostering Jewish identity during periods of persecution, migration, and modernization. The course also addresses the development of modern Jewish schooling systems.

JHI 6231 Introduction to Ancient Jewish and Christian Thought¹

An examination of the origins, historical and ideological backgrounds, and development of ancient Judaism and early Christianity, to better understand the relationship between them by examining their philosophical and theological interactions.

JST 5001 From the Bible to the Talmud

This course introduces the major texts and ideas of rabbinic Judaism as found in the Talmud, on the background of earlier biblical and Second Temple literature. We begin with major genres of biblical texts, followed by the “intertestamental period.” In the second half of the course we then turn to readings from the Mishnah and the Talmud to become familiar with rabbinic texts and rabbinic thought.

¹ This course might be offered in Korean in any given semester

Hebraic Studies Scholars

The following courses are for our Hebraic Studies Scholars. Students in the MA program cannot count these courses for credit towards the MA in Jewish Studies without special permission from the Dean.

BIB 5030 Fundamentals of Jewish Bible Interpretation

How have Jews perceived and understood the Tanakh/Hebrew Bible over the ages? How does this compare with the Christian reception of the Hebrew Bible? What are the most important biblical texts for Jewish people? What is the relationship—in classical Jewish thought—between the Bible and post-biblical Jewish literature such as Talmud and Midrash? How did Jewish Bible commentary develop? Who are the most important Jewish Bible commentators—historically and on the contemporary scene? Answering these questions will offer insight into the Jewish perspective on the Bible, the role it plays in Jewish faith and practice, and how Judaism and Christianity might come to a better mutual understanding through their shared sacred scriptures.

BIB 5201 Beginners Biblical Hebrew I

This course introduces students to Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) and lays the foundation for direct study of the Hebrew Bible. Working systematically through a textbook, students are introduced to the alphabet and vowel system and to the basic elements of the language, grammar, and vocabulary of the Hebrew Bible. By the end of the course, students will have studied numerous samples of biblical texts and be able to read, analyze and understand a number of biblical narrative passages

BIB 5202 Beginners Biblical Hebrew II

Building upon the knowledge-base and skills acquired in Beginners Biblical Hebrew I, this course provides students with a working knowledge of Standard Biblical Hebrew (SBH) and lays the foundation for direct study of the Hebrew Bible. Students continue to learn the morphology and syntax of Hebrew adjectives, conjunctions, nouns, numbers, prepositions, and verbs. By the end of the course, students will have studied numerous more complex samples of biblical texts and be able to read, analyze and understand a number of more complex biblical narrative passages.

Prerequisite: BIB 5201

BIB 5204 Readings in the Hebrew Bible

This first third of the course will complete the study of a first year of Biblical Hebrew grammar; the last two thirds will focus on consolidating this knowledge by reading the books of Ruth and Jonah in the original Hebrew. Work will focus on parsing verbs, analyzing nouns and other parts of speech, and studying the syntax of standard Biblical Hebrew prose.

JST 5000 Introduction to Judaism

This course introduces Jewish history, thought, and practice. We begin by focusing on the major developments of Jewish history and the central currents of Jewish thought. We then turn to focus on the lived experience of Judaism in the daily life of Jews through an examination of Jewish ritual and practice.

JST 6001 Reflections on Jewish-Christian Relations

This team-taught course is the culmination of the Hebraic Studies Program. As such, it will explore central aspects of the historical and theological relationship between Judaism and Christianity. Areas of study include biblical interpretation, the relationship of Jews and Christians in various historical periods, and Jewish and Christian attitudes towards key theological themes. Instructors will include specialists in both Judaism and Christianity.