

### **Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies is primarily to furnish our students with the knowledge, skills and credentials in the fields of Jewish History, Bible, Talmud and/or Jewish Philosophy to pursue their career objectives successfully as university professors of Jewish Studies, as teachers and administrators in Jewish educational institutions, and as Jewish communal professionals. The broader mission is to provide the substantial minority of students who will pursue different career objectives with advanced Jewish learning that will accompany them in whatever field they choose.

### **Program-level goals & objectives:**

#### **History**

1. Analyze primary texts. Students will demonstrate attainment of this goal by being able to:
  - a. understand the language and syntax of the text
  - b. accurately formulate both the main point(s) and the details of the text
  - c. explain how the text sheds light on the historical issues under discussion
  - d. assess the reliability of the text
  
2. Understand the impact of the majority society and culture on the Jews. Students will demonstrate attainment of this goal by being able to:
  - a. identify and characterize the key relevant elements of the majority society and culture
  - b. assess the degree to which Jews were aware of these elements, interacted with them, influenced them, or were influenced by them
  
3. Understand the historiographical approaches found in the secondary literature. Students will demonstrate attainment of this goal by being able to:
  - a. explain the central points of a historian's argument and his or her methodological approach
  - b. formulate reasons for endorsing or rejecting that argument or approach
  - c. evaluate the biases in both primary and secondary texts

## **Bible:**

### **Students will be able to:**

1. Understand the Hebrew texts in their original languages. Students will demonstrate attainment of this goal by being able to:
  - a. read the Hebrew Bible, related ancient texts, and Jewish exegetical texts in their original languages;
  - b. provide a literal but literate translation of those texts reflecting the plain sense
  
2. Appreciate the historical context in which biblical texts were produced. This will be demonstrated by students' ability to:
  - a. identify the relevant historical context for a given text in Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and archaeological terms;
  - b. recognize the basic primary source material for the various types of material, and know how to locate and utilize such material.
  
3. Synthesize their knowledge and understandings of Hebrew texts by being able to:
  - a. analyze the problems—linguistic, literary, historical, legal, etc.—raised by Hebrew texts;
  - b. offer solutions to identified problems accompanied by well-reasoned arguments;
  - c. explain why alternate solutions are less plausible;
  - d. identify the underlying assumptions that led to these conclusions.
  
4. Have familiarity with the different historical contexts in which the biblical text and biblical interpretations were produced, as demonstrated by the students' ability to:
  - a. identify the cultural background relevant to the major Jewish biblical interpreters, and their defining characteristics;
  - b. analyze the ways in which ideas of biblical interpretation circulated in the ancient and medieval worlds through discussion of primary texts.
    - a. Identify the spoken and unspoken methodological assumptions employed in secondary literature.
    - b. Critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of a scholar's particular approach.
    - c. Evaluate the scholar's biases.

## **Philosophy**

### **Students will be able to:**

1. Know the broad sweep of Jewish thought and philosophy. Students will demonstrate this goal by being able to:
  - a. Identify major intellectual currents.
  - b. Understand the historical and conceptual relationship of these currents to one another.
  - c. Situate these currents within their proper intellectual and historical contexts.
2. Analyze works of Jewish thought and philosophy. Students will demonstrate this goal by being able to:
  - a. Identify and evaluate the central and secondary arguments of the work.
  - b. Understand the relationship of these arguments to the broader philosophical perspective of the work's author.
  - c. Situate these arguments within the broader conceptual discourse to which the work belongs.
3. Apply the methodologies of analyzing Jewish thought and philosophy found in secondary literature. Students will demonstrate this goal by being able to:
  - a. Identify the spoken and unspoken methodological assumptions employed in secondary literature.
  - b. Critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of a scholar's particular approach.
  - c. Evaluate the scholar's biases.