

JEWISH STUDIES  
COURSES AT  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY



2017-2018  
CENTER FOR  
JEWISH STUDIES

This publication is for informational purposes only. The listing of a course in this booklet does not necessarily imply endorsement by the Center for Jewish Studies, nor does the absence of a course necessarily imply the lack of endorsement. The goal of this publication is to aid the process of course selection by students interested in Jewish studies, and we apologize for inadvertent inclusions and exclusions.

Course listings as of August 15, 2017. Course offerings and times may change.  
Please check the Website of the Registrar's Office of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
for updated information. <https://courses.my.harvard.edu>

# FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

FALL SEMESTER

GENERAL EDUCATION

## CULTBLF 39 THE HEBREW BIBLE

Class Number: 13137 Course ID: 125055

Fall 2017

Shaye J.D. Cohen

MWF 10:00am-11:00am

This course is a survey of the major books and ideas of the Hebrew Bible (commonly called the Old Testament). The course will also treat the historical contexts in which the Bible emerged, and the Bible's role as canonical scripture in Judaism and Christianity.

**Course Notes:** All readings in translation. No prior knowledge of the subject is assumed. This course fulfills the requirement that one of the eight General Education courses also engage substantially with Study of the Past.

**Class Notes:** Occasional Fridays are required. Please check course syllabus for details.

**HUMAN 10A A HUMANITIES COLLOQUIUM: FROM HOMER TO GARCIA  
MARQUEZ**

Class Number: 13490 Course ID: 110440

Fall 2017

Louis Menand, Stephen Greenblatt, Jill Lepore, David L. Carrasco, Jay Harris, and  
Alison Simmons

T 10:00am-11:30am

2,500 years of essential works, taught by six professors. Humanities 10a includes works by Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, Mozart, Austen, Douglass, and Garcia Marquez, as well as the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Declaration of Independence. One 90-minute lecture plus a 90-minute discussion seminar led by the professors every week. Students also receive instruction in critical writing one hour a week, in writing labs and individual conferences. Students also have opportunities to visit cultural venues and attend musical and theatrical events in Cambridge or Boston.

**Course Notes:** The course is open only to freshmen. Students who complete Humanities 10a meet the General Education requirement in Aesthetics and Culture. Students who take both semesters of Humanities 10 fulfill the College Writing Requirement. This is the only course outside of Expository Writing that satisfies that requirement. No auditors. The course may not be taken Pass/Fail.

**Class Notes:** *The course will be lotteried by application process, administered at the first meeting.* See the course website for more details.

## FRESHMAN SEMINARS

**FRSEMR 611 HERETICS, GANGSTERS, WRITERS**

Class Number: 17913 Course ID: 204931

Fall 2017

Saul Zaritt

W 3:00pm-5:00pm

Prophets gone rogue, rabbis trained as thieves, false messiahs, condemned heretics, synagogue-going gangsters, and writers lost between languages and cultures—these are only a handful of the sinful yet compelling characters that appear in texts written by Jews over the past three millennia. This seminar examines the ways in which such figures challenged the norms of collective Jewish practice by walking the boundaries between Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. We will read famous scenes of transgression in the Bible—from Eve in the garden of Eden to the “heresy” of Jesus—and continue on to stories of rabbis gone mad, early modern false messiahs, and excommunicated philosophers. Works to be discussed include the writings of Sholem Aleichem, Franz Kafka, Philip Roth, and Art Spiegelman, films by the Coen Brothers, and music by Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen. We will talk about how these artists struggled to simultaneously embody and escape their Jewishness, often by viewing this lost, rejected, and regained tradition in radical terms. This often meant that these sinners and saints would ask troubling questions that challenged stable Jewish communal narratives while also imagining the possibility of new utopias and dystopias. What was the goal of such boundary-crossing? Did they simply want to sin for sinning’s sake? Why is it that, paradoxically, the words of these sinners—however embedded in the dark pessimism of transgression—often appear to open the door to salvation?

**Course Notes:** The course will include a required trip to the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, MA and a special meeting with Art Spiegelman (the creator of *Maus*) during his visit to campus in the fall.

**Course Requirements:** Course open to Freshman Students Only

### **FRSEMR 61W THIS IS THE END OF THE WORLD**

Class Number: 19586 Course ID: 205196

Fall 2017

Giovanni Bazzana

W 3:00pm-5:00pm

For millennia the end of the world has been feared, imagined, and exorcized by gifted writers, religious leaders, and intellectuals from the most diverse cultural backgrounds. Scholars have even suggested that – over the last few decades – such a worldview centered around an imminent end has become hegemonic by

appearing in an almost endless number of very popular media stretching from blockbuster movies to comic books. This seminar will explore the cultural reasons behind this paradoxical attraction of humans towards fantasies detailing the end of the known world in catastrophic and often terrorizing colors. Imaginations of the end seem to have begun with the birth of the “apocalypse” as a literary genre in ancient Judaism and Christianity. The seminar will follow some trajectories of these fantasies by comparing and contrasting exoteric ancient and medieval religious texts with modern and contemporary novels and movies. The ultimate goal will be to see how the rupture of social bonds, zombie or demonic attacks, and natural disasters are preferential occasions to reflect on the relationship of humans with nature, with the supernatural, and with each other. A few scholarly essays will be assigned, but the largest part of the course will be occupied by the direct reading, viewing, and discussion of primary materials (with the final opportunity to write your own tale of “the end of the world”).

**Course Requirements:** Course open to Freshman Students Only

# BIBLICAL/ANCIENT NEAR EAST

## **ANE 120A INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT 1:**

### **PENTATEUCH AND FORMER PROPHETS**

Class Number: 12630 Course ID: 118849

Fall 2017

Andrew Teeter

TTh 10:00am-11:30am

A critical introduction to the literature and theology of the Hebrew Bible, considered in light of the historical contexts of its formation and the interpretive contexts of its reception within Judaism and Christianity. The course, the first part of a divisible, year-long sequence, will focus on the major biblical narrative

traditions, the Pentateuch and Former Prophets.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1102.

### **ANE 130 THE BIRTH OF BIBLICAL RELIGION**

Class Number: 18572 Course ID: 205115

Fall 2017

Israel Knohl

TTh 8:30am-10:00am

The inscriptions found in recent decades “For YHWH and his Asherah” have created a heated debate about the birth of biblical religion. Was the Canaanite goddess Asherah indeed YHWH’s consort? If so, when and how did the biblical God become a single and a jealous God as we see him in the Ten Commandments?

And what about Moses and his share in the process? Is he an historical figure? Was he influenced by the Egyptian revolutionist Pharaoh Akhenaten as Sigmund Freud has argued in his book “Moses and Monotheism”?

In this course, we will deal with these and other fundamental questions related to the Bible’s beginnings. Based on new readings of biblical and Egyptian sources we will offer new ways to solve the mysteries involved in the birth of biblical religion.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1126.

**Class Notes:** Instructor: Israel Knohl (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

### **RELIGION 1134 GENESIS: NARRATIVE ARTISTRY AND THEOLOGICAL MEANINGS**

Class Number: 18516 Course ID: 112855

Fall 2017

Jon Levenson

TTh 11:30am-1pm

A close critical reading in English of the book of Genesis with an eye both to the storytellers’ techniques and to the moral and theological dimensions of the text. Emphasis will be given to literary and religious rather than historical and editorial issues.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1417.

# CLASSICAL JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

## COMPLIT 137 CHILD SACRIFICE, PROS AND CONS: THE BINDING OF ISAAC IN JEWISH, CHRISTIAN, ISLAMIC, AND MODERN LITERATURE

Class Number: 18404 Course ID: 160331

Fall 2017

David Stern

Th 10:00am-11:30am

Child Sacrifice-- specifically, the story of the parent's sacrifice of the first-born child-- lies at the heart of Western religion and culture. The Biblical narrative in Genesis 22, known as the Binding of Isaac, is one of the most famous and problematic tales in the Bible. The same narrative is foundational to Christianity. Later Jewish tradition has interpreted the Biblical text in countless ways from the ancient period down to the present day. The narrative figures prominently in Islam from the Qur'an on. And the Biblical story has been criticized and critiqued since the Middle Ages as a barbaric narrative. Recent works have blamed it for the ubiquity of child abuse in Western society, and it has become a ubiquitous motif of anti-war and protest poetry all over the world. This course will use the interpretive career and literary history of Genesis 22 as a lens through which to study the place of this foundational narrative in Western culture. Readings will include Biblical texts, Euripides' *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, Philo of Alexandria, ancient Jewish sources, the New Testament, St. Augustine and other Christian exegetes, the Qur'an and later Islamic traditions, Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling*, Martin Buber, Kafka, Bob Dylan, Yehuda Amichai, and Leonard Cohen, among many other modern writers and poets.

**Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1134

## HEBREW 238 READINGS IN MIDRASH: SEMINAR

Class Number: 19926 Course ID: 109532

Fall 2017

Jon Levenson

Th 4:00pm-6:00pm

Close reading in Hebrew of selections from the *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* with the goal of understanding the nature of biblical interpretation in rabbinic Judaism and the shape of rabbinic theology.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 3678.

**Recommended Prep:** Three years of college level Hebrew (any period) or the equivalent.

### **JEWISHST 225 MESSIANISM IN EARLY JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY**

Class Number: 19331 Course ID: 205293

Fall 2017

David Stern

W 10:00am-12:00pm

Messianism is one of the messiest, most fraught topics in the history of early Christianity and Judaism. This seminar will trace the evolution and development of the many different ideas of the messiah—his character, his fate, his role in history—from its Ancient Near Eastern beginnings through the Hebrew Bible into early Jewish and Christian tradition up until the early Middle Ages. We will also pay attention to parallel developments in the Greco-Roman world. Topics to be studied include the semi-divinity of the messiah, the idea of the suffering or dying messiah, and the relationship between messianism and apocalypticism. Readings will include primary sources as well as the relevant secondary literature. All readings will be provided in English translation and (in the case of primary sources) in their original languages.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1127. Depending on the make-up of the class, the instructors will make special provisions (like an extra class hour) for those students interested and able to read the primary sources in their original languages.

**Class Notes:** Co-taught by Professor Israel Knohl  
Yehezkel Kaufmann Professor of Bible  
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

§Because the first day of FAS classes, Wednesday August 30, follows a Monday class schedule, *the first meeting for this class is on Wednesday, September 6.*

**JEWISHST 299 SPECIAL TOPICS IN JEWISH STUDIES**

Class Number: 15863 Course ID: 161197

Fall 2017

Shaye J.D. Cohen

TBA

Special Topics in Jewish Studies

**RELIGION 1426 APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE FROM THE SECOND TEMPLE  
PERIOD TO BYZANTIUM AND EARLY ISLAM**

Class Number: 20186 Course ID: 109541

Fall 2017

Giovanni Bazzana

Th 2:00pm-4:00pm

The course will review a broad sample of texts belonging to the apocalyptic genre and composed between the third century BCE and the seventh century CE. The main goal of the course is to reflect on the crucial role played by apocalyptic literature in shaping religious thoughts and practices as well as socio-political movements and ethical choices in a span of time that witnessed the formation of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions as we know them today. Moreover, the course will introduce students to interpretive tools useful to think about the relationship between ancient apocalyptic literature and the contemporary world in selected areas such as historical imaginations of the future, violence and religion, and means to reflect on change.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1536.

# MODERN JEWISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE

## HIST 1008 THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Class Number: 18523 Course ID: 203044

Fall 2017

Derek Penslar

TTh 10:00am-11:30am

This course addresses controversies surrounding the history of Zionism and the state of Israel. Central to these controversies are questions of comparison. Is Zionism a movement for collective liberation, like national movements of stateless or colonized peoples, or a variety of western colonialism? Does Israeli statecraft operate within a normal geopolitical spectrum, or is it unusually expansionist and aggressive? This course seeks to answer such questions through a broad and deep analysis that spans the 19th and 20th centuries, pays close attention to Israel's social and cultural history as well as high politics and military affairs, and imbeds modern Israel into multiple global contexts.

**Related Sections:** Discussion TBA

## MOD-HEB 241R ADVANCED SEMINAR IN MODERN HEBREW: ISRAELI CULTURE: CINEMA & LITERATURE

Class Number: 13339 Course ID: 127670

Fall 2017

Irit Aharony

TTh 1:00pm-3:00pm

This course constitutes the final level of Modern Hebrew language studies. The course offers representative readings and screenings from contemporary Israeli literature and cinema, and it forms bases of discussion on major cultural and linguistic themes through academic readings.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4045. Not open to auditors. Discussions, papers, movies and texts presented only in Hebrew.

**Class Notes:** Enrollment limited to 15.

**Recommended Prep:** Modern Hebrew 130b or equivalent.

# CLASSICAL (BIBLICAL) AND MODERN HEBREW LANGUAGE

## CLAS-HEB AA ELEMENTARY CLASSICAL HEBREW

Class Number: 13751 Course ID: 123023

Fall 2017

Jon Levenson and Andrew Walton

MWF 9:00am-10:00am

A thorough and rigorous introduction to Biblical Hebrew, with emphasis on grammar in the first term, and translation of biblical prose in the second. Daily preparation and active class participation mandatory. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4010A. Classical Hebrew AA/AB is an indivisible year-long course. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

## CLAS-HEB 120A INTERMEDIATE CLASSICAL HEBREW I

Class Number: 14007 Course ID: 116431

Fall 2017

Andrew Teeter and Jonathan Mason

MWF 10:00am-11:00am

Readings in prose books; review of grammar.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4020.

**Recommended Prep:** Classical Hebrew AA/AB sequence or equivalent.

### **CLAS-HEB 130AR RAPID READING CLASSICAL HEBREW I**

Class Number: 14008 Course ID: 122692

Fall 2017

Jon Levenson and Reed Carlson

Th 1:00pm-3:00pm

Advanced reading in selected biblical prose texts and intensive review of the grammar of Biblical Hebrew.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1625.

**Recommended Prep:** Classical Hebrew AA/AB sequence, CH 120A, and 120B, or equivalent.

### **MOD-HEB BA ELEMENTARY MODERN HEBREW**

Class Number: 13800 Course ID: 114218

Fall 2017

Irit Aharony

MTWThF 10:00am-11:00am

The course introduces students to the phonology and script as well as the fundamentals of morphology and syntax of Modern Hebrew. Emphasis is placed on developing reading, speaking, comprehension and writing skills, while introducing students to various aspects of contemporary Israeli society and culture. This is an indivisible course. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4015A. Not open to auditors. Cannot be taken pass/fail. Modern Hebrew BA/BB is an indivisible year-long course. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit. In specific cases the instructor will consider approval of enrollment in MOD-HEB BB and MOD-HEB 120A as fulfillment of the one-year language requirement, depending on the student's proficiency level.

## **MOD-HEB 120A INTERMEDIATE MODERN HEBREW I**

Class Number: 15817 Course ID: 110947

Fall 2017

Irit Aharony

MTWThF 11:00am-12:00pm

The course reinforces and expands knowledge of linguistic and grammatical structures, with emphasis on further developing the four skills. Readings include selections from contemporary Israeli literature, print media, and internet publications. Readings and class discussions cover various facets of Israeli high and popular culture. Conducted primarily in Hebrew. Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4040. Modern Hebrew B or passing of special departmental placement test.

**Course Notes:** Conducted primarily in Hebrew. Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4040. Not open to auditors.

**Class Notes:** Enrollment limited to 18.

**Recommended Prep:** Modern Hebrew BA/BB sequence or passing of special departmental placement test.

## **MOD-HEB 130A ADVANCED MODERN HEBREW I**

Class Number: 12840 Course ID: 119630

Fall 2017

Irit Aharony

MW 1:00pm-3:00pm

This course constitutes the third year of the Modern Hebrew language sequence. The course emphasizes the development of advanced proficiency in all skills. Readings include texts of linguistic and cultural complexity that cover contemporary Israeli literature and culture.

**Course Notes:** Conducted in Hebrew. Not open to auditors. Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4042.

**Class Notes:** Enrollment limited to 18.

**Recommended Prep:** Modern Hebrew 120A/120B sequence, or equivalent level of proficiency.

# YIDDISH LANGUAGE

## YIDDISH AA ELEMENTARY YIDDISH

Class Number: 13743 Course ID: 114058

Fall 2017

Madeleine Cohen

MWF 9:00am-10:00am

Introduction to Yiddish language, literature, and culture. In the course of the year, students will acquire a thorough grounding in Yiddish grammar and will develop strong foundational reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills. The course will introduce students to the 1000-year history of Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe, the United States, and around the world. Students will learn about the past and present of this culture through exposure to Yiddish literature, music, theater, film, radio, oral history, and the Yiddish internet—an introduction to the dynamic world of Yiddish culture and scholarship that exists today. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Course Notes:** For students with little or no knowledge of Yiddish. Additional sections at different times may be added as needed. Contact instructor if you have a scheduling conflict. Yiddish AA/AB is an indivisible year-long course. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Class Notes:** Interested students please email: [nelc@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:nelc@fas.harvard.edu)

**Recommended Prep:** No prerequisites; knowledge of Yiddish not assumed.

## YIDDISH BA INTERMEDIATE YIDDISH I

Class Number: 12941 Course ID: 119874

Fall 2017

Madeleine Cohen

MW 11:00am-12:30pm

Building on the skills gained in Yiddish AA/AB, students will further develop their Yiddish reading, writing, speaking, and oral comprehension skills. Focus will be on working with a wide variety of textual and cultural materials spanning the Yiddish-speaking world in the modern era. Course materials include selections

from Yiddish fiction, poetry, drama, film, music, the press, and historical documents. Students will become familiar with the language's dialects, writing conventions, and historical development. Course activities will introduce students to the latest developments in online Yiddish publishing and digital humanities scholarship.

**Course Notes:** Additional sections at different times may be added as needed. Contact instructor if you have a scheduling conflict.

**Class Notes:** Interested students please email: [nelc@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:nelc@fas.harvard.edu)

**Recommended Prep:** Yiddish AA/AB sequence, or equivalent.

### **YIDDISH CA ADVANCED YIDDISH I**

Class Number: 12841 Course ID: 123432

Fall 2017

Madeleine Cohen

MW 1:00pm-2:30pm

Building on the skills gained in Yiddish BA/BB, the emphasis of this course is on gaining ease in reading, speaking, writing, and listening comprehension. Students will be guided in exploring their individual areas of interest in Yiddish culture, and will be encouraged to begin producing their own research, creative projects, and translations; taking part in the latest developments in online Yiddish publishing and digital humanities scholarship. Continued exposure to a wide variety of textual and cultural materials, including literature, journalism, folklore, music, film, and theater; with a special focus on the diversity of Yiddish in terms of dialects, vocabulary, historical development, and writing conventions. Ample use of audiovisual and digital materials.

**Course Notes:** Additional sections at different times may be added as needed. Contact instructor if you have a scheduling conflict.

**Class Notes:** Interested students please email: [nelc@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:nelc@fas.harvard.edu)

**Recommended Prep:** Yiddish BB or permission of the instructor.

# JEWISH LAW (HARVARD LAW SCHOOL)

## ADVANCED TOPICS IN JEWISH LAW AND LEGAL THEORY

Professor Noah Feldman

Fall 2017 reading group

Th 7:00pm - 9:00pm in WCC Room 3012

1 classroom credit

**Prerequisite:** This seminar will be by permission of the instructor, who strongly prefers that students have a background in advanced study of Jewish legal material. To apply please send a short statement of interest including background in Jewish legal studies to [nfeldman@law.harvard.edu](mailto:nfeldman@law.harvard.edu) with a copy to [swhalen@law.harvard.edu](mailto:swhalen@law.harvard.edu).

**Exam Type:** No exam.

The group will examine sociological questions of the Yeshiva world as well as theoretical/textual ones regarding what is studied, and how, and by whom.

**Note:** The reading group will meet on the following dates: TBD.

**Subject Areas:** International, Comparative & Foreign Law, Disciplinary Perspectives & Law

## LAW AND ANCIENT JUDAISM

Dr. Ayelet Libson

Fall 2017

T, W 3:20pm-4:50pm in Hauser Hall Room 102

3 classroom credits

**Prerequisite:** None

**Exam Type:** No exam.

This course presents the world of the rabbis who created the Talmud, one of the

richest texts of law and literature produced in the pre-modern world. As bearers of biblical tradition, the rabbis struggled to preserve their unique religion and culture under the Roman and later Persian empires. All aspects of the human condition—philosophy, ethics, politics, and theology—are the subjects of rabbinic law and thought. This course examines what drove the rabbis to create their legal system, exploring core ideas of rabbinic thought, the structure and form of rabbinic legal argument and narrative, and the historical and cultural context in which the rabbis operated.

**Subject Areas:** Legal History, International, Comparative & Foreign Law

## ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES

### ANE 103 ANCIENT LIVES

Class Number: 15816 Course ID: 110014

Fall 2017

Gojko Barjamovic

TTh 11:30am-1:00pm

What are the essential elements of human society? Have our fundamental conditions developed, and how? Can we use themes from ancient history to think about contemporary society and culture? These questions are in focus in this course on ‘Ancient Lives’, which explores the earliest human civilizations in the region commonly known as Mesopotamia (c. 3000-300 BCE) in what is now Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. Few elements in the way we live and organize ourselves today are to be taken for granted. There is, and has always been, a wealth of ways in which humans live. But biologically we are the same as our ancestors of 5000 years ago, at the dawn of history. Any likeness or difference between ‘us and them’ is therefore likely to be a product of history and culture. ‘Ancient Lives’ builds upon this realization to inspire a critical way of thinking about society in the broadest

possible scope. Areas explored during the course are selected for their relevance across the range of contemporary life - they include freedom, music, public health, food, jurisprudence, trade, the visual arts, science, sexuality, religion and political power. You learn about how societies and individuals have dealt with change on multiple levels, from large-scale societal revolutions to personal transformation. Having taken this course, you will have gained a fundamental understanding and appreciation of human life in the broadest scope, as well as of your own life as a part of history. You will be able to critically assess contemporary discourses on the study of 'the other' in past and present; engage with core concepts of human society, such as justice, beauty, value and belief on a broad historical base; be familiar with examples of classical social theory and thinkers through concrete cases in which their work has been applied to or shaped by the study of the past; and acquire skills in presenting scholarly work to a general audience.

**Course Notes:** This course, when taken for a letter grade, meets the General Education requirement for Societies of the World. This course fulfills the requirement that one of the eight General Education courses also engage substantially with Study of the Past.

### **COMPLIT 252 THE LITERATURES OF MEDIEVAL IBERIA**

Class Number: 18363 Course ID: 125848

Fall 2017

Luis Giron Negron

W 3:00pm-5:00pm

The cultural interactions in premodern Spain between Muslims, Christians and Jews shaped the literary history of Arabic, Hebrew and the Ibero-Romance vernaculars. Our seminar examines selected scholarly debates on the comparative study of these literatures.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 3726.

### **GOV 940F LAW AND POLITICS IN MULTICULTURAL DEMOCRACIES**

Class Number: 13384 Course ID: 128009

Fall 2017

Ofrit Liviatan

M 2:00pm-4:00pm

Examines the role of law in the governance of cultural diversity drawing on examples from the USA, Western Europe, India and Israel. Central themes at the intersection of law and politics will be explored, including: the impact of courts on rights protections, law's function as a venue of conflict resolution, and courts' relationship with other political institutions. Specific attention will be given to contemporary controversies such as Islamic veiling, abortion and same sex marriage.

**Class Notes:** Undergraduate seminar. *Enrollment by lottery*. Please see Gov Dept undergraduate website for details.

### **RELIGION 1414 SCRIPTURE STORIES OF WOMEN**

Class Number: 20116 Course ID: 119944

Fall 2017

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza

M 4:00pm-6:00pm

This course will engage in a feminist reading of - texts of Scripture about wo/men in order to reconstruct wo/men's religious history and to assess whether these texts are "good news" for wo/men. Special attention will be given to feminist hermeneutics, and historical reconstruction. Discussion will focus on the significance of social location, critical methods, and historical imagination for the interpretation and significance of these stories about Jewish wo/men and their significance for contemporary religious self-understanding and ministerial praxis. Lectures, group discussions, and group projects seek to foster a participatory democratic style of learning. Note: Course has additional hour to be arranged.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1503.

### **RELIGION 1434 HISTORY OF WESTERN CHRISTIANITY, 150-1100**

Class Number: 19994 Course ID: 117053

Fall 2017

Kevin Madigan

MW 4:00pm-5:30pm

This course is designed to provide a historical overview of the Church and society in western Europe from the second through the twelfth century. Thus, this course will investigate late-antique and early medieval Christianity in its social and its

cultural context. Narrative and theological story lines to be pursued will include the varieties of early Christianity; relations with the Roman state (including persecution of Christians by it); the emergence of normative or “early Catholic” Christianity; early and early medieval monasticism; the search for the Christian doctrine of God and Christ; early Christian architecture, piety and worship; Christianity and other world religions (especially Judaism and Islam); western and eastern Christianity; the emergence of the Roman primacy; the Christianization of the north of Europe; the nature of parochial Christianity; the emergence of the pope, in the eleventh century, as an international religious force; the crusades; and early medieval piety. We will also be strengthening our skills as interpreters of primary sources. Some attention will be paid to major historiographical issues.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 2230.

# FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SPRING SEMESTER

GENERAL EDUCATION

CULTBLF 23 FROM THE HEBREW BIBLE TO JUDAISM, FROM THE OLD  
TESTAMENT TO CHRISTIANITY

Class Number: 12995 Course ID: 120880

Spring 2018

Shaye J.D. Cohen

MWF 10:00am-11:00am

The Hebrew Scriptures, what Christians call the “Old Testament” and Jews call the “Bible,” are the basis of both Judaism and Christianity. In this course we shall survey how this work of literature, through interpretation and re-interpretation, spawned two different cultural systems. Topics to be surveyed include: canon and prophecy; exegesis and Midrash; Shabbat and Sunday; temple, synagogue, church; the Oral Torah and the Logos; sin and righteousness; messiah and redemption.

**Course Notes:** This course fulfills the requirement that one of the eight General Education courses also engage substantially with Study of the Past.

**Class Notes:** Occasional Fridays are required. Please check course syllabus for details.

**ETHRSON 15 IF THERE IS NO GOD, ALL IS PERMITTED: THEISM AND MORAL REASONING**

Class Number: 18127 Course ID: 146699

Spring 2018

Jay Harris

MW 12:00pm-1:00pm

This course will examine the ways in which a concept of God has informed Western moral discourse trying to help students engage the literature as they consider why one might think “if there is no God, all is permitted” and why one might think if there is a God, human moral achievement is impossible.

**Related Sections:** Discussion TBA

# BIBLICAL/ANCIENT NEAR EAST

**ANE 120B INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT 2:  
LATTER PROPHETS AND WRITINGS**

Class Number: 13191 Course ID: 126065

Spring 2018

Andrew Teeter

TTh 10:00am-11:30am

A critical introduction to the literature and theology of the Hebrew Bible, considered in light of the historical contexts of its formation and the interpretive contexts of its reception within Judaism and Christianity. The course, the second part of a divisible, year-long sequence, will focus on the Latter Prophets and the Writings.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1103.

## HEBREW 239 EXODUS 2 IN THREE CONTEXTS: SEMINAR

Class Number: 19115 Course ID: 156094

Spring 2018

Jon Levenson

Th 4:00pm-6:00pm

A close critical reading of the account of the early life of Moses in three contexts:

(1) the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Near Eastern world in which it took shape;  
(2) rabbinic Judaism in Late Antiquity; and (3) medieval Jewish commentary.

Texts to be read in Hebrew include Exodus 2 and a selection of rabbinic midrashim and medieval commentaries on it.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1826.

**Recommended Prep:** Three years of Hebrew or the equivalent (not a course for those lacking a secure grasp of Hebrew grammar).

# CLASSICAL JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

## RELIGION 1250 JUDAISM: TEXT AND TRADITION

Class Number: 19659 Course ID: 205396

Spring 2018

Jon Levenson

TTh 11:30am-1:00pm

A general and wide-ranging exploration of the Jewish religious tradition, from its inception in biblical Israel through its' rabbinic, medieval, and modern iterations.

The central focus lies on the literary meanings and existential questions of the classical tradition, as well as on the relationships between texts, religious claims, and practices. We shall also consider some of the restatements, reformulations, and challenges to tradition that have arisen in modern times. Open to undergraduates,

including first year students, by permission.

**Course Notes:** Jointly offered with Divinity as 3036.

### COMPLIT 258 ANCIENT INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

Class Number: 18432 Course ID: 160526

Spring 2018

David Stern

W 1:00pm-4:00pm

This is a course about READING; specifically about the different ways in which a single book, the Bible, has been read through the centuries, particularly in the ancient and early medieval periods by Jews and Christians. No book in the history of Western culture has been read more intensively than the Bible, and the main emphasis of the course will fall on close readings of major ancient Jewish and Christian interpreters of the Bible, with a view to considering their exegetical approaches historically as well as through the lens of contemporary critical and hermeneutical theory. We will also consider how the respective religious and theological beliefs of these interpreters shaped and were shaped by the ways they read Scripture. As a consequence, this will also be a course about the early development of Judaism and Christianity although the focus will always be on the interpretation of the bible. All readings will be in English translation, and will include Dead Sea Scrolls selections, Philo, Rabbinic Midrash and Medieval Jewish Commentaries, the New Testament, Origen and other early Christian commentators, Augustine, Luther, and as a concluding coda, Spinoza. The course is open to both undergraduates and graduate students; there will be extra sessions for the graduate students.

**Course Notes:** To be jointly offered with the Divinity School.

### HEBREW 241 TALMUDIC NARRATIVE

Class Number: 19498 Course ID: 205531

Spring 2018

David Stern

M 2:00pm-5:00pm

Talmudic literature is full of stories. This is surprising, even odd, given the fact that Talmud is primarily a legal literature. What purpose do these stories serve? How, in particular, does narrative serve legal discourse? How are these narratives to be

analyzed and understood, both as examples of narrative “art” and within their legal context? In addressing these questions, we will look at narrative theory in general as well as contemporary scholarship on Talmud and Talmudic narrative, with a particular focus on Mishnah and the Babylonian Talmud. Assignments will include secondary readings on and about narrative more generally, but the focus of the course-- and the majority of class-time-- will be on reading the Rabbinic texts in their original language. All readings in the original language will also be provided in English translation.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 3031. Knowledge of Hebrew is required but provisions will be made for students with different levels of proficiency. All readings in the original language will also be provided in English translation. Students with questions as to whether their Hebrew proficiency is sufficient should consult the instructor.

### JEWISHST 299 SPECIAL TOPICS IN JEWISH STUDIES

Class Number: 15751 Course ID: 161197

Spring 2018

Shaye J.D. Cohen

TBA

Special Topics in Jewish Studies

# MODERN JEWISH HISTORY AND LITERATURE

### HIST 1007 WAR, STATE, AND SOCIETY

Class Number: 18490 Course ID: 204990

Spring 2018

Derek Penslar

TTh 11:00am-12:00pm

This course surveys the relationship between warfare, the military, politics, and society from the 18th century to the present. Combining methodologies from History and International Relations, we will examine the distinction between war and other kinds of inter-human conflict; the origins and effects of conscription; the relationship between modern nationalism and military service; gendered and minority perspectives on combat; and the impact of 20th- and 21st-century global wars on combatants and civilians. The course is divided into halves. The first half deals with our main themes via a broad, comparative approach that encompasses world history over the past 250 years. The second half applies general concepts to two case studies: the First World War and the Middle East War of 1948.

**Related Sections:** Discussion TBA

### COMPLIT 166 JEWS, HUMOR, AND THE POLITICS OF LAUGHTER

Class Number: 18428 Course ID: 205045

Spring 2018

Saul Zaritt

T 2:00pm-4:00pm

By mistake some thieves found their way into Hershele's house late at night while he was sleeping. They searched and searched but found nothing. Meanwhile, Hershele heard their rummaging and slowly crept up behind one of the thieves. He grabbed him by the arm and the thief, naturally, tried to run away. Hershele held him close, whispering, "Be still. Maybe together we'll actually find something." Beginning with jokes like this one, this course will examine the question of Jewish humor, exploring the concept of therapeutic joking, the politics of self-deprecation, and strategies of masking social critique behind a well-timed joke. Rather than reach some essential definition, we will instead investigate literature, stand-up comedy, film, and television of the twentieth and twenty-first century in order to 1) think together about the theory, mechanics, and techniques of comedy and humor and 2) ask how and when a text or performance gets labeled Jewish, by whom and for what purposes. Texts, films, and performers include: Freud, Kafka, Sholem Aleichem, the Marx Brothers, Larry David, Jon Stewart, Jill Soloway, Broad City, and Rachel Bloom.

## EXPOS 20 245 EXPOSITORY WRITING 20

Class Number: 15520 Course ID: 116353

Spring 2018

Jane Rosenzweig

MW 11:00am-12:00pm

An intensive seminar that aims to improve each student's ability to discover and reason about evidence through the medium of essays. Each section focuses on a particular theme or topic, described on the Expos Website. All sections give students practice in formulating questions, analyzing both primary and secondary sources and properly acknowledging them, supporting arguments with strong and detailed evidence, and shaping clear, lively essays. All sections emphasize revision.

### **Topic: *Jewish Identity in American Culture***

**Course Notes:** Students must pass one term of Expository Writing 20 to meet the College's Expository Writing requirement.

**Class Notes:** What does it mean to be Jewish in America in 2016? At a time when a majority of American Jews do not belong to a synagogue and an estimated one-third of married American Jews are married to non-Jews, is there such a thing as a shared identity among American Jews? This course will examine representations of Jews in American culture in an attempt to understand how Jewish-American culture has evolved since World War II, as well as how shifts in the cultural conversation about minorities in America have affected our conception of Jewish identity. As we consider recent works of literature, art, film, and television, we will question how they challenge and reinforce Jewish stereotypes, and how they continue to shape our ideas about assimilation, the Holocaust, ethnicity, and religious practice in America. We will begin by examining stories of assimilation by authors including Grace Paley, Allegra Goodman, Philip Roth, Nathan Englander, and others. We will then consider representations of the Holocaust, including Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, Judy Chicago's *Holocaust Project*, and Larry David's *Curb Your Enthusiasm* "survivor episode." In the final unit of the course, students will choose their own sources as they research and develop their ideas about Jewish identity in American culture.

## HIST 1907 GERMANS AND JEWS

Class Number: 18159 Course ID: 204992

Spring 2018

Derek Penslar

W 4:00pm-6:00pm

This course provides offers an intensive examination of the history of Jews in the modern German Kulturbereich – that swath of Europe where German was the sole, or a primary, language of political administration, education, communication, and high culture. Covering the period from the eighteenth through mid-twentieth centuries, we will explore the meaning of Germanness to Jews and of Jews to German Christians. Among the topics to be explored are debates over Jewish emancipation, Jewish struggles with religious and secular identities, processes of acculturation and integration, antisemitism and Jewish responses, economic and family life, Jewish culture in the German empire and Dual Monarchy and in the post-1918 German and Austrian republics, and the fate of the Jews in Nazi Germany and its annexed territories.

# R ELIGION

## RELIGION 1529 THE HOLOCAUST AND THE CHURCHES, 1933-45

Class Number: 19570 Course ID: 124910

Spring 2018

Kevin Madigan

W 2:00pm-4:00pm

This seminar will approach the Nazi persecution of European Jewry from several disciplinary perspectives. Initially the seminar will explore the topic historically. In these weeks, the seminar will use a variety of historical materials dealing with the

history of European anti-semitism, German history from Bismarck to the accession of Hitler, the evolution of anti-Jewish persecution in the Third Reich, and the history of the Holocaust itself. Sources to be used will include primary sources produced by the German government 1933-1945, by Jewish victims-to-be or survivors, documentary films, and secondary interpretations. The aims of this part of the seminar will be to understand the basic background to and narrative of the Holocaust, to introduce students to the critical use of primary historical sources, and to familiarize them with some of the major historiographical debates. Then the members of the seminar will ponder religious and theological reactions to the Holocaust. The seminar will also consider the historical question of the role played by the Protestant and Catholic churches and theologies in the Holocaust. Throughout the seminar, participants will use various literary and cinematographic sources and test their limits in helping to understand and to represent the Holocaust.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 2293. Some background in European history is desirable but not required.

# Classical (BIBLICAL) AND Modern HEBREW LANGUAGE

## CLAS-HEB AB ELEMENTARY CLASSICAL HEBREW

Class Number: 13638 Course ID: 159881

Spring 2018

Jon Levenson and Andrew Walton

MWF 9:00am-10:00am

Continuation of Classical Hebrew AA. A thorough and rigorous introduction to Biblical Hebrew, with emphasis on grammar in the first term, and translation of biblical prose in the second. Daily preparation and active class participation mandatory. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4010B. Classical Hebrew AA/AB is an indivisible year-long course. Students must complete both

terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

### CLAS-HEB 120B INTERMEDIATE CLASSICAL HEBREW II

Class Number: 13464 Course ID: 159881

Spring 2018

Andrew Teeter and Eric Jarrard

MWF 10:00am-11:00am

Readings in prose books; review of grammar.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4021.

**Recommended Prep:** Classical Hebrew 120a or equivalent.

### CLAS-HEB 130BR RAPID READING CLASSICAL HEBREW II

Class Number: 13472 Course ID: 122693

Spring 2018

Jon Levenson and Matthew Percuoco

Th 1:00pm-3:00pm

Advanced reading in selected biblical prose texts and intensive review of the grammar of Biblical Hebrew.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1626.

**Recommended Prep:** Classical Hebrew 130a or equivalent.

### MOD-HEB BB ELEMENTARY MODERN HEBREW

Class Number: 13708 Course ID: 159988

Spring 2018

Irit Aharony

MTWThF 10:00am-11:00am

The course introduces students to the phonology and script as well as the fundamentals of morphology and syntax of Modern Hebrew. Emphasis is placed on developing reading, speaking, comprehension and writing skills, while introducing students to various aspects of contemporary Israeli society and culture. This is an indivisible course. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4015B. Not open to auditors. Cannot be taken pass/fail. This is an indivisible course. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit. In specific cases the instructor will consider approval of enrollment in MOD-HEB BB and MOD-HEB 120A as fulfillment of the one-year language requirement, depending on the student's proficiency level

### **MOD-HEB 120B INTERMEDIATE MODERN HEBREW II**

Class Number: 12407 Course ID: 111756

Spring 2018

Irit Aharony

MTWThF 11:00am-12:00pm

Continuation of Hebrew 120a.

**Course Notes:** Conducted primarily in Hebrew. Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4041. Not open to auditors.

**Recommended Prep:** Modern Hebrew 120a.

### **MOD-HEB 130B ADVANCED MODERN HEBREW II**

Class Number: 13342 Course ID: 126531

Spring 2018

Irit Aharony

MW 1:00pm-3:00pm

This course is a continuation of Hebrew 130a. Texts, films, and other materials expose students to the richness and complexity of the contemporary sociolinguistics of Israeli society.

**Course Notes:** Conducted in Hebrew. Not open to auditors. Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4043.

**Recommended Prep:** Modern Hebrew 130a, or equivalent level of proficiency

# YIDDISH LANGUAGE

## YIDDISH AB ELEMENTARY YIDDISH

Class Number: 13629 Course ID: 159871

Spring 2018

Madeleine Cohen

MWF 9:00am-10:00am

Continuation of Yiddish AA. Introduction to Yiddish language, literature, and culture. In the course of the year, students will acquire a thorough grounding in Yiddish grammar and will develop strong foundational reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills. The course will introduce students to the 1000-year history of Yiddish culture in Eastern Europe, the United States, and around the world. Students will learn about the past and present of this culture through exposure to Yiddish literature, music, theater, film, radio, oral history, and the Yiddish internet—an introduction to the dynamic world of Yiddish culture and scholarship that exists today. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Course Notes:** For students with little or no knowledge of Yiddish. Additional sections at different times may be added as needed. Yiddish AA/AB is an indivisible year-long course. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

**Class Notes:** Interested students please email: [nclc@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:nclc@fas.harvard.edu)

**Recommended Prep:** No prerequisites.

## YIDDISH BB INTERMEDIATE YIDDISH II

Class Number: 12976 Course ID: 119875

Spring 2018

Madeleine Cohen

MW 11:00am-12:30pm

Continuation of Yiddish BA. Students will further develop their Yiddish reading, writing, speaking, and oral comprehension skills. Focus will be on working with a wide variety of textual and cultural materials spanning the Yiddish-speaking world in the modern era. Course materials include selections from Yiddish fiction, poetry,

drama, film, music, the press, and historical documents. Students will become familiar with the language's dialects, writing conventions, and historical development. Course activities will introduce students to the latest developments in online Yiddish publishing and digital humanities scholarship.

**Class Notes:** Interested students please email: [nelc@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:nelc@fas.harvard.edu)

**Recommended Prep:** Yiddish BA or permission of the instructor.

## YIDDISH CB ADVANCED YIDDISH II

Class Number: 13891 Course ID: 124883

Spring 2018

Madeleine Cohen

MW 1:00pm-2:30pm

Continuation of Yiddish CA. The emphasis of this course is on gaining ease in reading, speaking, writing, and listening comprehension. Students will be guided in exploring their individual areas of interest in Yiddish culture, and will be encouraged to begin producing their own research, creative projects, and translations; taking part in the latest developments in online Yiddish publishing and digital humanities scholarship. Continued exposure to a wide variety of textual and cultural materials, including literature, journalism, folklore, music, film, and theater; with a special focus on the diversity of Yiddish in terms of dialects, vocabulary, historical development, and writing conventions. Ample use of audiovisual and digital materials.

**Class Notes:** Interested students please email: [nelc@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:nelc@fas.harvard.edu)

**Recommended Prep:** Yiddish CA or permission of the instructor.

# JEWISH LAW (HARVARD LAW SCHOOL)

## ADVANCED TOPICS IN JEWISH LAW AND LEGAL THEORY

Professor Noah Feldman

Spring 2018 reading group

Th 7:00pm - 9:00pm

1 classroom credit

**Prerequisite:** This seminar will be by permission of the instructor, who strongly prefers that students have a background in advanced study of Jewish legal material. To apply please send a short statement of interest including background in Jewish legal studies to [nfeldman@law.harvard.edu](mailto:nfeldman@law.harvard.edu) with a copy to [swhalen@law.harvard.edu](mailto:swhalen@law.harvard.edu).

**Exam Type:** No exam.

The group will examine sociological questions of the Yeshiva world as well as theoretical/textual ones regarding what is studied, and how, and by whom.

**Note:** The reading group will meet on the following dates: TBD.

**Subject Areas:** International, Comparative & Foreign Law, Disciplinary Perspectives & Law

### RELIGION AND HUMAN RIGHTS: JUDAISM AS A TEST CASE

Dr. Ayelet Libson

Spring 2018 seminar

T 5:00pm-7:00pm

2 classroom credits

**Prerequisite:** None

**Exam Type:** No exam.

This seminar explores the relationship between religion and human rights in two ways. The first part of the seminar examines biblical and early Jewish ideas that served as a foundation for the development of human rights, and discusses the significance of the theological background from which human rights emerged. The second part will explore contemporary points of conflict between human rights and religion, focusing in particular on concepts of membership and gender and how they are negotiated within the Jewish tradition.

**Subject Areas:** Human Rights, International, Comparative & Foreign Law

# ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES

## RELIGION 13 SCRIPTURES AND CLASSICS: INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF RELIGION

Class Number: 18611 Course ID: 110957

Spring 2018

William A. Graham

TTh 10:00am-11:00am

An introduction to the history of religion through selective reading in significant, iconic texts from diverse religious and cultural traditions. Considers important themes (e.g., suffering, death, meaning, community, transcendence, religion vs. culture) as well as problems of method and definition as they present themselves in the sources considered. Readings from texts such as the Upanisads, Bhagavad Gita, Dhammapada, Lotus Sutra, Analects, Zhuangzi, Dao de Jing, Basho's *Narrow Road to the Far North*, *Gilgamesh*, *Aeneid*, Torah, Talmud, New Testament, and Qur'an.

## RELIGION 1437 HISTORY OF WESTERN CHRISTIANITY, 1100-1500

Class Number: 19569 Course ID: 116586

Spring 2018

Kevin Madigan

MW 4:00pm-5:30pm

This course is designed to provide a historical overview of the Church and society in western Europe from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. Thus, this course will investigate high and late medieval Christianity in its social and its cultural context. Narrative and theological story lines to be pursued will include medieval monasticism and other new forms of religious life; heresy and its repression; scholasticism, the university and Gothic architecture; the bid for papal monarchy; means of Christianization; saints, relics, pilgrimage and other forms

of popular devotion; the decline of the late-medieval papacy and conciliarism; late-medieval heresy; Christianity and other world religions (especially Judaism and Islam); and late-medieval attempts at reform. We will also be strengthening our skills as interpreters of primary sources. Some attention will be paid to major historiographical issues. No prerequisites.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 2250.

## RELIGION 1461 GENDER, RELIGION AND SCRIPTURE

Class Number: 19660 Course ID: 203213

Spring 2018

Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza

M 4:00pm-6:00pm

This course is an introduction to the field of feminist biblical studies. We will discuss the intellectual history and institutional development of feminist biblical studies around the globe and explore different methods of analysis such as rhetorical, historical, queer, or intersectional kyriarchal analyses. We also will explore biblical women's stories such as Eve, Sarah, Hagar Mary of Magdala, or the slave girl Rhoda. Lectures, group meetings, discussions, and presentations seek to foster participatory, collaborative and democratic styles of learning.



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