Jewish Studies Courses at Harvard University

Spring 2019
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 November 20, 2018. 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
This course is a study in the relations between majorities and minorities in modern Europe, using the Jews as a focus. It will examine the ways in which the equal status of a minority is negotiated through cultural and political interaction, both subtle and blunt. It will further focus on the role that such negotiations have in the formation of identities of both the majority and the minority. Finally, it will examine the ways in which majorities can exercise control over minorities rendering them conditionally rather than fully equal participants in the national projects of the age.

**Related Sections:** Discussion TBA
ANE 120A INTRODUCTION TO THE HEbrew BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT 1: PENTATEUCH AND FORMER PROPHETS

Class Number: 21263 Course ID: 118849
Spring 2019
Andrew Teeter
TTh 10:30am-11:45am

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.

HEBREW 256 THE POETICS OF BIBLICAL COMPOSITION: FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF HEBREW NARRATIVE ART

Class Number: 21272 Course ID: 211312
Spring 2019
Andrew Teeter
T 3:00pm-5:00pm

A study of select narratives from the Hebrew Bible to function as case studies for exploring the nature of compositional artistry in this corpus. Particular attention will be given to stylistic and structural features, to principles of organization, to literary strategy and argumentation, to textual logic, and to overall expectations made of readers, both ancient and modern. These texts and underlying principles of design will be considered in the context of major debates within the current state of the field.

Course Notes: Offered jointly with the Divinity School as HDS 1423.

Recommended Prep: The course will presume basic proficiency with Biblical
Hebrew. A minimum of one year of Hebrew is prerequisite.

**HEBREW 236 THE SONG AT THE SEA: SEMINAR**

Class Number: 19552 Course ID: 120897
Spring 2019
Jon Levenson
Th 3:00pm-5:00pm


**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as HDS 1816.

**Recommended Prep:** An introductory course in the critical study of the Hebrew Bible and a solid command of Hebrew grammar (any period).

**CLASSICAL AND MEDIEVAL JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE**

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

Class Number: 18824 Course ID: 160331
Spring 2019
David Stern
TTh 10:30am-11:45am

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.

**COMPLIT 193 What’s Love Got to Do With It; Love Poetry of the Middle Ages and Early Modernity**

Class Number: 18745 Course ID: 108791
Spring 2019
Luis Girón Negrón
MWF 9:00am-10:15am

Does love have a history? This course will explore a particularly rich, multisecular episode in the literary history of this emotion: the efflorescence and varieties of love poetry, both lyrical and narrative, in Europe and the Middle East from the Middle Ages through the 16th century. Weekly discussions will center on close readings of selected love poems and versified narratives from a variety of literary traditions, including: Provençal troubadour lyric; French chansons, the Germanic Minnesang and the Galician-Portuguese cantigas (the question of amour courtois); Ibero-Romance and colloquial Arabic jarchas; the Italian dolce stil novo; the Petrarchan sonnet and its early modern heirs in Portugal, England and Spain; Arabo-Andalusian and Hispano-Jewish qaṣā’id and muwashshaḥāt, medieval Latin love lyric; Persian Sufi and Christian mystical love poetry; Dante’s *Vita nuova*; and selections from two other erotological classics in narrative verse, Libro de buen amor and *Roman de la Rose*. Discussions will be framed by an overview of both premodern discussions on love – how love is conceptualized at the intersection of philosophy, theology and medicine by Jewish, Christian and Muslim thinkers— and contemporary scholarly debates on the origins and development of medieval love literature.

**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 3725.
HEBREW 255 The Passover Haggadah
Class Number: 20935 Course ID: 210972
Spring 2019
David Stern
W 3:00pm-5:45pm

The Passover Haggadah is the Jewish book of redemption par excellence. As the
script for the seder (the ritual banquet on the first night(s) of Passover), the
Haggadah has changed and developed as the Jews have moved from one diasporic
center to another from Late Antiquity until the present day. In this course we will
study the history and development of both the seder and the Haggadah-- as a ritual,
as a text, and as a physical book. Readings will be drawn from the Bible, Mishnah,
the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds, the New Testament and early Christian
writers, medieval Haggadah manuscripts and early printed editions, as well as more
recent versions of the Haggadah from both Israel and America (including non-
traditional haggadot). We will deal extensively with the tradition of Haggadah
illustration, and will utilize Harvard’s extensive collection of Haggadot in both
Widener and Houghton Library. The focus of the course will be on the reading and
analysis of primary sources. No previous experience with Passover is required,
but students should have at least two years of Hebrew (Biblical or modern) and be
prepared to read texts in Hebrew. Any student with questions about their Hebrew
competence should contact Professor Stern.
Recommended Prep: Two years of Hebrew.
Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1641

MEDVLSTD 250 At Cross Purposes: The Crusades in Material Culture
Class Number: 16856 Course ID: 109230
Spring 2019
Evridiki Georganteli
T 12:30pm-2:45pm

Crusading expeditions in the Holy Land, Spain and Eastern Europe from 1096 until
the end of the Middle Ages shaped the political, socio-economic and cultural map of Europe and the Middle East. This course explores the multifaceted encounters between crusaders, Byzantines, Jews, Armenians and Muslims through the material traces they left behind: architecture, Byzantine objects dispersed across Western Europe, coins, sculptures, frescoes, and manuscripts from the East and the West.

**HLS 2980 MAIMONIDES’ CODE “MISHNEH TORAH”: JEWISH LAW AND LEGAL THEORY**

Class Number: 20598 Course ID: 208676  
Spring 2019  
Moshe Halbertal  
T 5:00pm-7:00pm  
*See full course description under Jewish Law (Harvard Law School)*

**HDS 4227 ADVANCED GREEK: JEWISH-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUES**

Class Number: 20345 Course ID: 208254  
Spring 2019  
Andrew Jacobs  
TTh 10:30am-11:45am  
This course aims to move students from an intermediate to advanced proficiency with Greek by studying select Christian, pagan, and Jewish texts primarily from the Hellenistic world of late antiquity. A primary purpose is to increase reading comprehension through prepared readings (with review of grammar when necessary). In this course we will be reading selections from Jewish-Christian dialogue texts from the second through seventh centuries: Dialogue with Trypho, Athanasius and Zacchaeus, Timothy and Aquila, Doctrine of Jacob Newly Baptized. We will be paying special attention the use of Scriptures, the construction of “Judaisms,” and discourses of conversion and resistance. Specific selections from texts will be chosen in consultation with the enrolled students.  
**Prerequisite:** HDS 4221 Intermediate Greek II or equivalent.  
**Course Requirements:** HDS 4221
MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE, HISTORY, AND CULTURE

RELIGION 1255 SELECTED WORKS OF TWENTIETH CENTURY JEWISH THEOLOGY
Class Number: 18628 Course ID: 119359
Spring 2019
Jon Levenson
TTh 10:30am-11:45am

A close reading of selected works of Jewish theology from the twentieth century, with special attention to the questions of God, Torah, and Israel in light of modernity the challenges and opportunities that it presents with regard to traditional Jewish practice, belief, and identity. Authors read will be drawn mostly from the following: Baeck, Buber, Rosenzweig, Kaplan, Soloveitchik, Heschel, Leibowitz, Fackenheim, and Wyschogrod. Jointly offered with the Divinity School as HDS 3668.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 3668

HIST 1008 THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
Class Number: 18165 Course ID: 203044
Spring 2019
Eyal Naveh
TTh 3:00pm-4:15pm

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

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**SOCIOL 1118 Migration in Israel and Comparative Context**

Class Number: 19620 Course ID: 207867  
Spring 2019  
Tally Amir  
W 3:00pm-5:00pm

With about sixty-five million persons forcibly displaced around the world, most nations have had to create or rethink policies on the admission and integration of migrants. This seminar will focus on migration to Israel from a comparative perspective. Israel, originally founded as the land of Jewish refugees, is struggling to determine who constitutes a “forced” migrant and how it might strike a balance between its legal and moral obligations toward such migrants and its other interests. The seminar covers a number of themes in migration policies such as the categorization and definition of a “forced” migrant; judicial review of immigration policy; detention; encampment; urban integration; and the rights of migrants (including education, cultural rights and employment) in a comparative context. Comparisons focus on the US, Australia and the EU. Readings for the course include Court decisions, International Law instruments, Domestic legislation and socio-legal articles, as well as sociological analyses.

**Class Notes:** Course offered 3-5pm and taught by Tally Amir.

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**HEBREW 255 The Passover Haggadah**

Class Number: 20935 Course ID: 210972  
Spring 2019  
David Stern  
W 3:00pm-5:45pm

* See full course description under *Classical and Medieval Jewish Literature, History and Culture*
From love-sick demons ("The Dybbuk") to crossdressing fiddlers ("Yidl mitn fidl"), the Yiddish “talkie” of the 1930s and 40s was dynamic medium for both preservation and innovation in Jewish culture. This “golden age” of Yiddish film was short but wide-ranging, with films produced in Soviet, US, and Polish contexts that explored themes of class struggle, immigration, tradition versus modernity, generational conflict, queerness, Jewish persecution, and the fate of Yiddish culture. This course will delve into the diversity of this tradition while also exploring its impact on later Yiddish films, from Israeli confrontations with the Holocaust to the rise of the Yiddish YouTube video and contemporary filmic depictions of the Hasidic world. No prior knowledge of Yiddish or film studies required.

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 HDS 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.

**Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4010B  
**Related Sections:** Discussion TBA

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

Class Number: 13243 Course ID: 123873  
Spring 2019  
Andrew Teeter and Eric Jarrard  
Schedule: TBA

Readings in prose and poetic books; review of grammar. Prerequisite: Classical Hebrew 120a or the equivalent. Jointly offered as HDS 4021.  
**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 4021.  
**Recommended Prep:** Classical Hebrew 120a or equivalent.  
**Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4021

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

Class Number: 13250 Course ID: 122693  
Spring 2019  
Jon Levenson and Matthew Percuoco  
Th 12:00pm-2:00pm

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 HDS 1626.  
**Recommended Prep:** Classical Hebrew 130a or equivalent.  
**Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1626
MOD-HEB BB ELEMENTARY MODERN HEBREW II
Class Number: 13459 Course ID: 159988
Spring 2019
Irit Aharony
MTWThF 9:00am-10:15am

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: 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.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4015B

MOD-HEB 120B INTERMEDIATE MODERN HEBREW II
Class Number: 12283 Course ID: 111756
Spring 2019
Irit Aharony
MTWThF 10:30am-11:45am

Continuation of Hebrew 120a.

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

Recommended Prep: Modern Hebrew 120a.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4041

MOD-HEB 130B ADVANCED MODERN HEBREW II
Class Number: 13143 Course ID: 126531
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 HDS 4043.

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

**Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4043

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Targumic Aramaic is designed to improve the student’s ability to work with ancient Aramaic texts. The Aramaic texts studied in this course will be selected from the major Targums – Targums Onqelos, Neofiti, Pseudo-Jonathan, and others.

Class-time will be devoted primarily to reading and analyzing the selected texts. In addition to emphasizing Aramaic vocabulary, morphology, and syntax, this course will explore the exegetical practices of the targumists in their respective Targums. Students will attain reading proficiency in Targumic Aramaic and experience the rich but complex literary nature of the Targums.

**Recommended Prep:** Two years of biblical Hebrew, or the equivalent; and one semester of Aramaic.

**Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4060

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Yiddish ab Elementary Yiddish II

Class Number: 13388 Course ID: 159871

Spring 2019

Sara Feldman
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.

**Recommended Prep:** No prerequisites.

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**Yiddish BB Intermediate Yiddish II**

Class Number: 12820 Course ID: 119875

Spring 2019

Sara Feldman

TTh 4:30pm-5:45pm

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.

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

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**Yiddish CB Advanced Yiddish II**

*This level will not be offered in Spring 2019*
**ADVANCED TOPICS IN JEWISH LAW AND LEGAL THEORY**

Professor Noah Feldman  
Spring 2019 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 with a copy to swhalen@law.harvard.edu and ecooper@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

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**MAIMONIDES’ CODE “MISHNEH TORAH”: JEWISH LAW AND LEGAL THEORY**

Professor Moshe Halbertal  
Spring 2019 seminar  
T 5:00pm - 7:00pm  
2 classroom credits

**Prerequisite:** None  
**Exam Type:** No exam.

The seminar will examine aspects of Maimonides’ legal theory through a careful examination of sections from his code of Jewish Law the Mishneh Torah, his
Commentary on the Mishna, The Guide of the Perplexed, and Maimonides’ responsa. Among the subjects that will be examined during the seminar: law and philosophy in the Mishneh Torah, Maimonides’ approach to concepts and structure of authority in Jewish law, Maimonides’ view of controversy in the law, and the relationships between law and politics.

Sources will be provided in English translation as well and no prior knowledge of Hebrew is required.

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

**ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES**

**CULTBLF 31 SAINTS, HERETICS, AND ATHEISTS: AN HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION**

Class Number: 18485 Course ID: 122258  
Spring 2019  
Jeffrey McDonough  
Schedule: TBA

Does God exist? What is the nature of evil and where does it come from? Are humans free? Responsible? Immortal? Does it matter? This course will explore foundational questions in the philosophy of religion through the study of classic works by Plato, Augustine, Al-Ghazali, Aquinas, Pascal, Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche and James. Students will have the opportunity to reexamine their own views and assumptions about religion in the company of some of the greatest thinkers of the past. (Key words: agnosticism, atheism, Christianity, faith, freedom, humanism, immortality, Islam, Judaism, meaning, Muslim, mysticism, reason, sin, soul)

**Related Sections:** Discussion TBA
The Middle East is home to many diverse peoples, with ancient and proud cultures, in varying stages of political and socio-economic development, often times in conflict. Now in a state of historic flux, the Arab Spring and subsequent regional tumult have transformed the Middle Eastern landscape, with great consequences for the national security strategies of the countries of the region. The primary source of the world’s energy resources, the Middle East remains the locus of the terror-WMD-fundamentalist nexus, which poses a significant threat to regional and international security, as does the rise of ISIS. The course surveys the national security challenges facing the region’s primary players (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, the Palestinians, Jordan, and Turkey) and how the recent upheaval has affected them. Unlike many Middle East courses, which focus on US policy in the region, the course concentrates on the regional players’ perceptions of the threats and opportunities they face and on the strategies they have adopted to deal with them. Students play the role of senior advisers to the actual regional leaders in power and write “real world” policy papers for them, from their perspective and given the strategic, political and personal constraints they face. The course provides an essential vantage point for all those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of the region, especially those with an interest in “real world” international relations and national security.

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

**HDS 1202 Introduction to the New Testament**

Class Number: 15628 Course ID: 113956

Spring 2019

Giovanni Bazzana

MW11:00am-12:00Pm

The course will address the questions: What is the New Testament? What work
does the New Testament do? We will examine various approaches including scripturalizing, minority Biblical criticism, and historical criticism. Topics include teachings of/by/about Jesus, Jews and Christians, empire and colonialism, the roles of women, Roman and US slavery, the politics of storytelling and canon formation, heresy, and sexualities/masculinities/gender. Jointly offered in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as Religion 1400.

**Class Notes:** Course has additional section hour to be arranged.

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**HDS 3081 God’s Nations: Religion, Nationalism and Modernity**

Class Number: 20430 Course ID: 208357

Spring 2019

Jocelyne Cesari

Th 12:00pm-2:00pm

The religious dimension of nationalism has been infrequently analyzed by historians and even less so by social scientists who have operated under the influence of theories of modernization and hence perceived nationalism and religion as incompatible. In the last three decades however, with the growth of religious claims in diverse national and international contexts, scholars have started to explore the connection between religion and nationalism. The course will address the historical evolution of religion and nationalism in Great Britain, France, Germany and the USA from the rise of the nation-state until today. It will also analyze the diffusion of the nation-state to non western regions and its consequences on the politicization of religion in Turkey, India, and Israel as well as atypical forms of religious nationalism like ISIS. This broad scope of religions and national cultures will allow us to look at specific topics like state and religion relationships, religiously based political parties and movements, populism, anti Semitism and islamophobia.