Remote Jewish studies Courses at Harvard University

2020-2021

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 25, 2020. 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

*Cover image courtesy of Kris Snibbe/Harvard University

FRSEMR 49G THE HOLOCAUST IN HISTORY, LITERATURE, AND FILM
Class Number: 18178 Course ID: 119999
Fall 2020
Kevin Madigan
T 9:45am-11:45am

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 freshmen to the 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. Here the seminar will use literary and cinematic resources as well as discursive theological ones. The seminar will also consider the historical question of the role played by the Protestant and Catholic churches and theologies in the Holocaust. The seminar will conclude with an assessment of the role played by the Holocaust in today’s world, specifically in the United States. 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 Requirements: Course open to Freshman Students Only
FRSEMR 62U ZOMBIES AND SPIRITS, GHOSTS AND GOULS: INTERACTIONS BETWEEN THE LIVING AND THE DEAD
Class Number: 14937 Course ID: 212697
Fall 2020
Shaye Cohen
Th 9:45am-11:45am

Virtually all the cultures and religions of the world, from ancient to contemporary times, have teachings and rituals about death. In this seminar we will deal with a subset of this very large topic, namely, the relationship of the living and the dead. The dead are often depicted as still living in some way and still in communication with us and our world. Are they friendly or hostile? Beneficent or malevolent? Think “undead” and “zombie” versus “saint” and “angel.” In this course we will look at some of the myriad ways that religions and cultures conceive of the relationship of the living with the dead. We the living care for the dying and the dead, and hope that the dead will care for us, but how this works exactly is the subject of much speculation. American secular culture, at least in its cinematic expression, has a vigorous belief in the afterlife, especially in having denizens of the afterlife, in the form of zombies, ghosts, and poltergeists, intrude on the world of the living. In our seminar we will survey this rich set of themes as expressed in literature, art, music, cinema, and philosophy.

Course Requirements: Course open to Freshman Students Only

BIBLICAL AND ANCIENT

ANE 120A INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT 1: PENTATEUCH AND FORMER PROPHETS
Class Number: 21631 Course ID: 118849
Fall 2020
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.
Class Notes: Course has additional section hour to be arranged.
Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1102

HEBREW 257 THE BOOK OF PROVERBS: SEMINAR
Class Number: 17158 Course ID: 215969
Fall 2020
Jon Levenson
Th 3:00pm-5:00pm

A critical discussion of the Book of Proverbs in its entirety and a close reading of (at least) major sections of it in Hebrew. Among the topics considered are questions of worldview, literary design, poetic technique, ancient Near Eastern antecedents and parallels, and the relationship of the theologies in Proverbs to those of other currents in ancient Israel. Prerequisites: an introductory course in the critical study of the Hebrew Bible and a very solid command of Hebrew grammar (any period).

Course Notes: Jointly offered in the Divinity School as HDS 1438

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1438

JEWISHST 139 JEWS AND JUDAISM IN THE ANCIENT WORLD
Class Number: 17140 Course ID: 123210
Fall 2020
Shaye Cohen
TBA

A survey of Jewish history in antiquity from the Persian period (5th century BCE) to the Byzantine period (5th century CE). Topics include: political accommodation and resistance, Hellenism, the Hasmoneans and Herod the Great, the effects of Roman rule, Pharisees, Qumran, Christians, unity and diversity, the destruction of the temple and its aftermath, the emergence of rabbinic Judaism, homeland and diaspora. All readings in translation.

Course Notes: Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1462.
Class Notes: Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ availability.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1462

RELIGION 1134 GENESIS: NARRATIVE ARTISTRY AND THEOLOGICAL MEANINGS
Class Number: 18470 Course ID: 112855
Fall 2020
Jon Levenson
TTh 10:30am-11:45am

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.
Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1417
A critical and exegetical study of Book of Daniel, based on a close reading of the text in Hebrew and Aramaic. Special attention will be given to large-scale compositional strategies and principles of literary organization, to textual logic, to analogical patterns, to inner-scriptural relationships, and to the nature and function of allusion within this book, with a view toward understanding the overall expectations made of readers, both ancient and modern. The text of Daniel and its underlying principles of design will be considered in the context of major critical debates within the current state of the field.

The course presumes basic proficiency with Biblical Hebrew. Minimum of one year of Hebrew required. No previous knowledge of Aramaic required.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1630.

Classical and Medieval Jewish Literature, History, and Culture

COMPLIT 186 Comparative Love: The Song of Songs in Western Tradition
Class Number: 18289 Course ID: 216309
Fall 2020
David Stern
W 3:00pm-5:45pm

The Song of Songs is, arguably, the greatest love poem in Western literature, but the nature of the love depicted in its verses has been disputed since the time the poem was committed to writing until today. Virtually every type of interpretation has been applied to the poem, from literalist to Jewish and Christian allegorical readings, philosophical and mystical exegeses, and nationalistic and political interpretations, not to mention the innumerable implicit meanings underlying the many poems and prose works that have imaginatively recreated the Song through allusion and intertextuality. This course will trace the interpretive career of this unique poem, and in the process explore such basic literary questions as the relation between literalism and allegoresis, the exploitation of literature by religion and other ideologies and its consequences, eros and gender as principles of desire, and the role of influence and appropriation in the history of the poem’s interpretation. Readings will include, in addition to the Song itself and select modern scholarship about it, selections from the Old Greek translation, classical Jewish interpretation (midrash and Targum), Origen, medieval Jewish commentaries and secular love poetry, Bernard of Clairvaux and other medieval Christian exegetes, the Zohar and Christian mystics, S.Y. Agnon, and Toni Morrison. All readings will be in translation. No previous knowledge of love required.

Jointly Offered with: Faculty of Arts & Sciences as JEWISHST 186
Harvard Divinity School as HDS 2054

HEBREW 113 Halakhah and Aggadah (Law and Lore) in Classical Judaism
Class Number: 17341 Course ID: 216075
Fall 2020
David Stern
TBA

Halakhah and Aggadah are typically considered the two main categories of classical Jewish thought and literature. Usually, but inadequately, translated as “law” and “lore,” the two categories have been understood in the course of Jewish history in various ways: as the prescriptive vs. the descriptive; as law vs. narrative; as the letter of the law vs. its animating spirit; as the serious vs. the playful sides of Judaism, or the rigorous vs. the comforting and consoling. Sometimes the two have been seen as rivals (with Aggadah usually treated as the less important), at other times as complimentary. This course will explore the two categories, their complicated relationship, and their intertwined existence, by studying their presence in a variety of classical Jewish texts from the Rabbinic period: Mishnah, Midrash Halakhah (Sifra) and Midrash Aggadah (Vayikra Rabba), the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmudim, and (if time permits) the medieval Jewish works, the Midrash on the Ten Commandments and the Story of the Jerusalemite. Our study of these texts will be framed by readings from Rabbinic, medieval, modern, and contemporaneous conceptualizations of Halakhah and Aggadah. Readings of primary sources will be in the original language, and students should have at least two years of Hebrew language study. Provisions will be made for different levels of language skills. No previous experience studying Rabbinic literature is required, and for students who have not previously studied Rabbinic texts, this course will also serve as an introduction to their modern critical study.

Class Notes: Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ availability.
Recommended Prep: At least 2 years of Hebrew language study.
Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1419

JEWISHST 186 Comparative Love: The Song of Songs in Western Tradition
Class Number: 21636 Course ID: 216646
Fall 2020
David Stern
W 3:00pm-5:45pm

*see full course description under COMPLIT 186, Classical and Medieval Jewish Literature, History, and Culture
A bastardized German, a jargon, a woman’s vernacular, an old world language, a
dying and ghostly tongue, a Hasidic language, a queer language, a radical lan-
guage—these are just a few of the ways that Yiddish has been labeled over its
one-thousand-year history. This course will trace the shifting politics attached to
Yiddish from its early modern beginnings as a language of translation between
Jewish and non-Jewish cultures to its postwar vacillation between a language of
mourning and nostalgia, Jewish American humor, Hasidic isolation, and contem-
porary Jewish radicalism. Through poetry, fiction, essays, and film, we will discuss
what it might mean to discover “the secret” language of the Jews” at the origins
of Jewish socialism and at the foundations of diaspora nationalism. All texts will be
read in translation.

Class Notes: Course timing will be determined in consultation with those enrolled
in the course.

Jointly Offered with: Faculty of Arts & Sciences as YIDDISH 107

COMPLIT 225 YIDDISH WORLDS
Class Number: 18402 Course ID: 216333
Fall 2020
Saul Zaritt
TBA

This graduate-level seminar will examine the global networks of Yiddish culture
and theorize the afterlives of Eastern European Jewry.

Class Notes: Course timing will be determined in consultation with those enrolled
in the course.

Jointly Offered with: Faculty of Arts & Sciences as YIDDISH 225

HIST 1008 THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE
Class Number: 16002 Course ID: 203044
Fall 2020
Derek Penslar
TTh 10:30am-11:45am

This course addresses controversies surrounding the history of Zionism and the
state of Israel. Central to these controversies are questions of comparison. Is Zion-
ism 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

HIST 2008A JEWISH HISTORY AS WORLD HISTORY: GRADUATE READINGS
SEMinar
Class Number: 19203 Course ID: 216479
Fall 2020
Derek Penslar
W 9:00am-11:00am

Although Jews have historically been dispersed throughout much of the world,
until recently modern Jewish historians have worked within the framework of the
nation-state. In this class we will read both older and newer works of Jewish his-

tory through a comparative, trans-national, and international lens. We will assess
the strengths and weaknesses of local, national, regional, and global approaches to
the study of the Jews of modern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and the
Americas. Aside from active participation in and facilitation of weekly meetings,
the course’s main requirement is a 20-page historiographical essay on a subject
chosen by the student and relevant to the course’s purview. Students must complete
both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to
receive credit.

MOD-HEB 241R ADVANCED SEMINAR IN MODERN HEBREW: ISRAELI
CULTURE: CINEMA & LITERATURE
Class Number: 12389 Course ID: 127670
Fall 2020
Irit Aharony
TBA

This course constitutes the final level of Modern Hebrew language studies. The
course offers representative readings and screenings from contemporary Israeli lit-

erature and cinema, and it forms bases of discussion on major cultural and linguis-
tic themes through academic readings.

Course Notes: Offered jointly with the Divinity School as HDS 4045. Not open to
auditors. Discussions, papers, movies and texts presented only in Hebrew. Course
sessions are 1 hour and 30 minutes long, with half an hour of conversation (per-
sonal and in group).

Class Notes: Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ avail-
ability. Course meets 3 hours a week plus 1 hour of conversation section.

Recommended Prep: Modern Hebrew 130b or equivalent.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4045
YIDDISH 107 THE POLITICS OF YIDDISH
Class Number: 19359 Course ID: 207574
Fall 2020
Saul Zaritt
TBA

*see full course description under COMPLIT 107, Modern Jewish Literature, History, and Culture

YIDDISH 225 YIDDISH WORLDS
Class Number: 19199 Course ID: 216477
Fall 2020
Saul Zaritt
TBA

*see full course description under COMPLIT 225, Modern Jewish Literature, History, and Culture

CLASSICAL HEbrew (BIBLICAL AND MODERN), AND YIDDISH LANGUAGE

CLAS-HEB AA ELEMENTARY CLASSICAL HEbrew I
Class Number: 12574 Course ID: 123023
Fall 2020
Andrew Teeter
TBA

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.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4010A

CLAS-HEB 120A INTERMEDIATE CLASSICAL HEbrew I
Class Number: 14324 Course ID: 116431
Fall 2020
Andrew Teeter
TBA

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.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1625

MOD-HEB BA ELEMENTARY MODERN HEbrew I
Class Number: 12591 Course ID: 114218
Fall 2020
Irit Aharony
TBA

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.

Class Notes: Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ availability. Course meets 5 hours a week plus 1 hour of conversation section.

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4015A

MOD-HEB 120A INTERMEDIATE MODERN HEbrew I
Class Number: 13622 Course ID: 110947
Fall 2020
Irit Aharony
TBA

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:** Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ availability. Course meets 5 hours a week plus 1 hour of conversation section. **Recommended Prep:** Modern Hebrew BA/BB sequence or passing of special departmental placement test. **Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4040

**MOD-HEB 130A ADVANCED MODERN HEBREW I**
**Class Number:** 12059 **Course ID:** 119630
**Fall 2020**
Irit Aharony
TBA

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. Course sessions are 1 hour and 30 minutes long, with half an hour of conversation (personal and in group).

**Class Notes:** Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ availability. Course meets 3 hours a week plus 1 hour of conversation section

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

**Jointly Offered with:** Harvard Divinity School as HDS 4042

**YIDDISH AA ELEMENTARY YIDDISH I**
**Class Number:** 12567 **Course ID:** 114058
**Fall 2020**
Sara Feldman
MTWThF 10:30am-11:30am

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:** Class time may be adjusted to take into account enrolled students’ availability.

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

**YIDDISH BA INTERMEDIATE YIDDISH I**
**Class Number:** 12131 **Course ID:** 119874
**Fall 2020**
Sara Feldman
TBA

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:** Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ availability.

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

**YIDDISH CA ADVANCED YIDDISH I**
**Class Number:** 12060 **Course ID:** 123432
**Fall 2020**
Sara Feldman
TBA

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:** Class time will be determined according to enrolled students’ availability.

**Recommended Prep:** Yiddish BB or permission of the instructor.
HLS 2437 ADVANCED TOPICS IN JEWISH LAW AND LEGAL THEORY  
Class Number: 22218 Course ID: 217028  
Fall 2020  
Noah Feldman  
Th 7:00pm-9:00pm  

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.  

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: This reading group will meet on the following dates: 9/10, 10/1, 10/22, 11/5, 11/19, and 12/3.

ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES

GOV 940F LAW AND POLITICS IN MULTICULTURAL DEMOCRACIES  
Class Number: 16056 Course ID: 128009  
Fall 2020  
Ofrit Liviatan  
TBA  

Examines the role of law in the governance of cultural diversity drawing on examples from the USA, Western Europe, India, Northern Ireland, 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 religious symbols and abortion.  

Class Notes:  
Course Format: Synchronous Seminar.  
Schedule: This course is open to students in all time zones. After registration day, the course will be scheduled based on the enrolled students’ time zones and course schedules. Students will be admitted to Gov 94 seminars through a departmental organized lottery. For more information, please visit the following link: https://undergrad.gov.harvard.edu/gov-94-seminars.

MEDVLSTD 250 AT CROSS PURPOSES: THE CRUSADES IN MATERIAL CULTURE  
Class Number: 18638 Course ID: 109230  
Fall 2020  
Evridiki Georganteli  
W 9:00am-11:45am  

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.

RELIGION 1529 THE HOLOCAUST AND THE CHURCHES, 1933-45  
Class Number: 18340 Course ID: 124910  
Fall 2020  
Kevin Madigan  
M 9:00am-11:00am  

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.  

Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 2293

RELIGION 2427 THE BOOK OF REVELATION: TEXT, HISTORY, AND INTERPRETATION  
Class Number: T8516 Course ID: 216371  
Fall 2020  
Giovanni Bazzana  
Th 12:00pm-2:00pm  

The course will be focused primarily on the Greek text of the Apocalypse of John, devoting time to the observation and discussion of issues relating to textual transmission, translation, interpretation, and theological hermeneutics. Through the additional reading of other ancient, modern, and contemporary texts the course will also approach the colorful and contested history of interpretation of this puzzling biblical book. Revelation will be posed within the ancient historical context of Jewish and Christian apocalypticism, but discussion in the course will range
through the many facets of Revelation’s history of interpretation, from antiquity to today, addressing contested issues such as its stance towards violence, its ambiguous treatment of empire and gender, or its controversial canonicity. Two semesters of Greek are required. If HDS courses will be offered online, the seminar will be split in two parts, one synchronous and one asynchronous. Jointly offered in the Divinity School as HDS 1560.

Course Notes: Jointly offered in the Divinity School as HDS 1560.
Recommended Prep: Two semesters of Greek are required.
Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 1560

REVELATION 2549 Women, Religion, and the Problem of Historical Agency
Class Number: 18275 Course ID: 113871
Fall 2020
Catherine Brekus and Ann Braude
T 12:00pm-2:00pm

This course examines recent scholarship on women in American religious history, focusing particularly on questions of narration, agency and power. We will ask several interrelated questions: How have historians integrated women into narratives of American religious history? Whose stories have they highlighted, and why? How have they conceptualized women as historical agents? We will read major interpretive works as well as theoretical accounts of gender, social structure, and power. Readings will explore the diversity of religious traditions in America, including Puritanism, Judaism, Mormonism, Catholicism, African-American Christianity, evangelicalism, and Islam. Jointly offered in the Divinity School as HDS 2186

Course Notes: Offered jointly with the Divinity School as HDS 2186.
Jointly Offered with: Harvard Divinity School as HDS 2186

FA C U L T Y  O F  A R T S  A N D  S C I E N C E S

SP R I N G  S E M E S T E R

G E N E R A L  E D U C A T I O N

GENED 1090 WHAT IS A BOOK? FROM THE ORAL EPICTO THE KINDLE
Class Number: 16806 Course ID: 212857
Spring 2021
David Stern
TBA

You have spent much of your life since kindergarten (and perhaps earlier) reading books; and you will spend much of your time at Harvard continuing to read them. But do you even know what a “book” is? Is it merely a conveyor, a platform, for presenting a text? Can a book have a use other than being read? Does the nature of the material artifact inscribed with words shape or influence the way you understand their meaning? Do people read a scroll differently than they do a book with pages? Or a digital text on a screen? Why does the physical book persist in the digital age? To answer these questions, we will study the many different material forms in which texts have been preserved—from tablets to e-books—and the technologies that have enabled their creation. We will also explore every possible aspect of the object we know as a “book,” from the title page to the index, and from the layout of a page to the use of illustrations and decorations—and what each of these features of the book can tell us about its historical role, how readers have used the book, and what it has meant to them. Books we will look at will range from the Bible to Vesalius, from Homer to Harold and His Purple Crayon. We will make regular use of the manuscripts and rare printed books in Houghton Library, even if remotely. If necessary, simulated contact with books as material objects will be the focus of the course. The capstone project of the course will be the creation of a (short) book by each student and an accompanying paper explaining its place in the history of the book in the West.

Related Sections: Discussion TBA
GENED 1095 IS WAR INEVITABLE?
Class Number: 16540 Course ID: 214413
Spring 2021
Derek Penslar
TBA

Why is there war? Will there always be war? This course tackles these questions through a historical overview of human conflict that incorporates approaches from International Relations, Psychology, Ethics, and Comparative Literature. The course begins by discussing the socio-biological roots of human aggression and altruism, and pre-modern justifications for war and attempts to place limits on its conduct. We will then move on to a series of case studies of modern wars, divided into six types - interstate, revolutionary, civil, colonial, separatist, and global. We will examine each type of war’s effects on fighters and non-combatants alike and repercussions for post-war society. We will see how each type of war has fostered different approaches – ranging from international humanitarian law, organizations like the League of Nations and United Nations, and anti-war protest movements –to the prevention, mitigation, or resolution of conflict. We will conclude with two final case studies: the Cold War (1947-1991) and “War on Terror” (2001 -), which have reduced war’s intensity but rendered it more difficult to eradicate and more potentially destructive.

Our readings will combine textbook overviews of wars and their aftermath, in-depth studies of specific topics, and primary sources such as works on military strategy and just war theory, representations of war in literature and cinema, and diaries and memoirs. Course requirements include a take-home midterm, a final examination, and two short papers based on the primary sources.

Related Sections: Discussion TBA

GENED 1149 ONE BOOK, TWO RELIGIONS, MANY TRUTHS
Class Number: 16507 Course ID: 120880
Spring 2021
Shaye Cohen
TBA

The Hebrew Scriptures, what Christians call the “Old Testament” and Jews call the “Bible,” are the basis of both Judaism and Christianity, and stand behind many debates in our contemporary culture wars. In this course we shall survey how this work of literature, through interpretation and re-interpretation, spawned and spawns a wide variety of truths. Implicit themes: What is truth? How do we know it when we see it? Can a text written long ago contain truths for contemporary society?

Related Sections: Discussion TBA

BIBLICAL AND ANCIENT

ANE 120B INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE/OLD TESTAMENT 2:
LATTER PROPHETS AND WRITINGS
Class Number: 14995 Course ID: 126065
Spring 2021
Andrew Teeter
TBA

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 HDS 1103.

HDS 1309 TOPICS IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS: EXEGESIS AT QUMRAN
Class Number: 18186 Course ID: 129105
Spring 2021
Andrew Teeter
T 3:00pm-5:00pm

This course explores the diverse functions of scripture within the literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls, focusing in particular on the forms and methods of interpretation attested, and considered in light of other varieties of interpretation in early Judaism. Sessions will be devoted to reading, translation and discussion of primary sources in Hebrew, as well as to discussion of relevant secondary literature. The course presumes facility in Biblical Hebrew, as well as the ability to read unpointed Hebrew texts. Jointly offered in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as Jewish Studies 149.

HDS 1808 THE BINDING OF ISAAC (AQEDAH): SEMINAR
Class Number: 17819 Course ID: 129138
Spring 2021
Jon Levenson
Th 3:00pm-5:00pm

An examination of Genesis 22 in multiple contexts - its settings in the Hebrew Bible and various forms of its afterlife in Second Temple Judaism, early Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism, and the Qur’an. Emphasis placed on the interpretation and expansion of the story in rabbinic midrashim, read in Hebrew. Some discussion of the use of the story in modern theology (especially Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling) and of rationalist and feminist critiques. Prerequisite: three years of Hebrew or the equivalent (not a course for those lacking a secure grasp of Hebrew grammar). Jointly offered in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as Hebrew 235.
**COMPLIT 211 MYSTICISM AND LITERATURE**  
Class Number: 17903 Course ID: 114368  
Spring 2021  
Luis Girón-Negrón  
TBA  
Examines trends, issues and debates in the comparative study of mystical literature. Close readings of primary works by Jewish, Christian and Muslim authors from the Middle Ages through the 16th century. Premodern authors include Saint John of the Cross, Saint Theresa of Ávila, Mechtild of Magdeburg, Hadewijch, Pseudo-Dionysius, Dante Alighieri, Bernard of Clairvaux, Margery Kempe, Bahya ibn Paquda, Solomon ibn Gabirol, Yehudah Halevi, Moses de León (Sefer ha-Zohar), Maulana Rumi, al-Hallaj, Ibn Farid, Ibn al-'Arabi, and Fariduddin Attar. Topics include poetry and mysticism; allegory, symbolism and Scripture; body and gender; apophasis vs cataphasis; exemplarity and autobiographism; language and experience. Also examines creative engagement of pre-modern mystical literature in selected works by modern authors (Borges, T.S. Eliot, Rilke), scholars of religion (Bernard McGinn, Moshe Idel, Annemarie Schimmel) and literary/cultural theorists (Michel de Certeau, Michael Sells).  
**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1468.

**HEBREW 255 THE PASSOVER HAGGADAH**  
Class Number: 17279 Course ID: 210972  
Spring 2021  
David Stern  
TBA  
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.  
**Course Notes:** Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 3802.

**RELIATION 1250 JUDAISM: TEXT AND TRADITION**  
Class Number: 18709 Course ID: 205396  
Spring 2021  
Jon Levenson  
TTh 10:30am-11:45am  
A general and wide-ranging exploration of the Jewish religious tradition, from its inception in biblical Israel though 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 178 WRITING JEWISH MODERNITY**  
Class Number: 17200 Course ID: 203093  
Spring 2021  
Saul Zaritt  
TBA  
This course will trace the ways in which Jewish writers, in multiple languages, responded to the challenges and opportunities of modernity: emancipation, acculturation, nationalism, antisemitism, industrialization and urbanization, migration and war, and the Holocaust. We will explore the creation of radically new modes of Jewish cultural expression and interrogate the simultaneous attempts to invent a unified Jewish literary tradition. We will read texts (in translation) by such writers as Franz Kafka, Sholem Aleichem, Isaac Babel, Devora Baron, S.Y. Agnon, Delmore Schwartz, and others.
This seminar will discuss the possibility of “Jew theory” as a method for theorizing the modern. Beginning with a survey of the history of Jewish studies and its place in the academy, the course will then examine how the figure of the Jew, as symbol and stereotype, enters the work of important thinkers of the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century—from Marx to Slezkin, from Rosezweig to Blanchot, Derrida, and Agamben. In parallel we explore the potential of new modes of “Jewish cultural studies” emerging over the last decades in Jewish studies.

Although Jews have historically been dispersed throughout much of the world, until recently modern Jewish historians have worked within the framework of the nation-state. In this class we will read both older and newer works of Jewish history through a comparative, trans-national, and international lens. We will assess the strengths and weaknesses of local, national, regional, and global approaches to the study of the Jews of modern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, and the Americas. Aside from active participation in and facilitation of weekly meetings, the course’s main requirement is a 20-page historiographical essay on a subject chosen by the student and relevant to the course’s purview. Students must complete both terms of this course (parts A and B) within the same academic year in order to receive credit.

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.”

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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, Belle Barth, Mel Brooks, Joan Rivers, Larry David, Sarah Silverman, Broad City, and Rachel Bloom.

Related Sections: Discussion TBA
the Divinity School as 4043.

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

**YIDDISH AB ELEMENTARY YIDDISH II**

Class Number: 12524 Course ID: 159871  
Spring 2021  
Sara Feldman  
TBA

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.

**YIDDISH BB INTERMEDIATE YIDDISH II**

Class Number: 12152 Course ID: 119875  
Spring 2021  
Sara Feldman  
TBA

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.

**YIDDISH CB ADVANCED YIDDISH II**

Class Number: 15091 Course ID: 124883  
Spring 2021  
Sara Feldman  
TBA

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.

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

**JEWISH LAW (HARVARD LAW SCHOOL)**

**HLS 2437 ADVANCED TOPICS IN JEWISH LAW AND LEGAL THEORY**

Class Number: 19098 Course ID: 217029  
Spring 2021  
Noah Feldman  
Th 7:00pm-9:00pm

**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.

**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

**ADDITIONAL COURSES RELEVANT TO JEWISH STUDIES**

**ANE 227 CRITICAL READINGS ON ANCIENT HISTORY**

Class Number: 17099 Course ID: 205397  
Spring 2021  
Gojko Barjamovic  
Th 3:00pm-6:00pm

A weekly seminar for graduate students (advanced undergraduates can apply) in which we read and discuss a selection of old and new key monographs (and a few key articles) relevant to the field of Ancient Studies. The seminar targets students in Assyriology, Classics, Divinity, Egyptology, Hebrew Bible and Religion, but others might also find it interesting and relevant. We rehearse skills in critical reading, writing scholarly reviews, debating, and (of course) engage with a massive...
amount of relevant literature that we would not otherwise find the time to read.

HDS 1553 The Bible and the Economy
Class Number: 17988 Course ID: 160239
Spring 2021
Giovanni Bazzana
MW 9:00am-10:15am

The course will examine biblical passages (stretching from the story of Joseph in Egypt to the image of the harlot in Revelation passing through Jesus’s parables) that have the socio-economic significance by placing them in their appropriate socio-historical contexts. Moreover, the course will show how the exegetical reflection on these texts has shaped the way in which societies and individuals have thought about economic relationships and has connected these issues to a wide array of contemporary theological options ranging from Liberation theology to Prosperity Gospel.

HDS 2291 Representation, Religion, and Tragedy: The Holocaust in Literature and Film
Class Number: 17803 Course ID: 104079
Spring 2021
Kevin Madigan
TBA

This course will focus on the relationship of the Christian churches to the Holocaust. After a brief historical overview of the Holocaust, the course will focus on the following themes: the evolution of classical Christian Jew-hatred to modern antisemitism; the complicity, resistance, compliance and confrontation of the Catholic and Protestant churches to the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe, with special attention given to the Vatican and the Holocaust; the role of religious motivation in rescue and resistance; theology after the Holocaust and the responses of the Christian churches to the Shoah; and representation of religion and the Holocaust in film, literature, memorial and religious practice. Jointly offered in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as Religion (TBD).

HDS 3034 The Jewish Experience in Modern America
Class Number: 18000 Course ID: 161229
Spring 2021
Liza Stern
TBA

Jews have been a religious and cultural presence in America since the colonial era, and the community of Jews in the United States today--some six million people--continues to make a significant contribution to the American religious landscape. This seminar will examine the history of the Judaic tradition in America and the vitality and variety of contemporary American Judaic life, from the arrival of the first Jews to the present, highlighting the emergence and continual development of the four branches: Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Reform. We will also examine the variety of ways in which Jews became part of the communal, social, and political landscape of America, and the roles they continue to play in American life today. We will then look at the practical aspects of working as Jewish professionals in American life and the different skills that are needed, whether one works in a congregational, campus, hospital, or organizational setting. Note: Not open to auditors.

HIST 12K Arabs, Jews, and “Arab Jews” in the Modern Middle East
Class Number: 17472 Course ID: 216117
Spring 2021
Caroline Kahlenberg
T 12:45pm-2:45pm

What has it meant to be an Arab, a Jew, or an “Arab Jew” in the modern Middle East? We will historicize these identities by tracing their shifting meanings in the late 19th and 20th-century Arabic-speaking world, from Morocco to Iraq to Yemen. We’ll examine everyday relationships and political encounters between Jews and Arabs in the context of the Ottoman Empire, British and French colonialism, Zionism and Arab nationalism, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Students will be assigned fiction literature, primary documents, podcasts, theoretical texts, visual sources, and films.

RELIGION 1400 Introduction to the New Testament
Class Number: 13639 Course ID: 113956
Spring 2021
Karen King
TBA

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.

Course Notes: Offered jointly with the Divinity School as 1202. Additional hour to be arranged.

RELIGION 1525 The Holocaust: Religion and Representation
Class Number: 14961 Course ID: 135951
Spring 2021
Kevin Madigan
TBA

This undergraduate seminar (intended mainly for concentrators) will focus the issue of representation of religion in filmic, literary and memorial representations of the Holocaust. After a brief historical overview of the history of the Holocaust, we will turn our attention to the following issues and themes: philosophical and theological reflections on the issues of representation, especially on the limits of traditional media to represent extremes of human evil and suffering; literary texts and films that are recognized as classics in attempting to mediate the experience of the Holocaust; issues of memory and postmemory; the aestheticization of trauma; God and evil; and the reception of cultural artifacts in Germany, Israel and the United States, particularly among religious communities.
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.

This course examines recent scholarship on women in American religious history, focusing particularly on questions of narration, agency and power. We will ask several interrelated questions: How have historians integrated women into narratives of American religious history? Whose stories have they highlighted, and why? How have they conceptualized women as historical agents? We will read major interpretive works as well as theoretical accounts of gender, social structure, and power. Readings will explore the diversity of religious traditions in America, including Puritanism, Judaism, Mormonism, Catholicism, African-American Christianity, evangelicalism, and Islam. Jointly offered in the Divinity School as HDS 2186.

Course Notes: Offered jointly with the Divinity School as HDS 2186.