Judaic Studies and JST instructor–taught course descriptions

JST 201 | Introduction to Judaism – Meir
Judaism is a religion of ancient ties to a foundational text, a land, a people, and a way of life. It is also a world civilization that has undergone surprising changes in its more than 3,000 year history. In this course we will explore the religious beliefs and practices of Judaism, from its Biblical origins to the variety of its modern forms. No prerequisites.

JST 317U / HST 317U | Jewish History I: From Antiquity to the Medieval Period – Spielman
When does the history of the Jews begin? How reliable is the Bible as a source for Jewish origins? What was life like for Jews living under Greek and Roman rule, during the time of Jesus, or under the first Christian and Muslim empires? This course will answer all these questions, covering the Jewish historical experience from its Biblical origins (circa 1000 BCE) through the end of the first millennium (1000 CE). We will examine diverse forms of Jewish life during antiquity and examine the boundaries of pre–modern Jewish cultural and religious identity. Special attention will also be paid to ancient Jewish literature, including texts from the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish Apocrypha, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Talmud. This class is the first in a two semester introduction to the study of Jewish history, religion and culture (no prerequisites are required). University Studies cluster: Interpreting the Past.

JST 318U / HST 318U | Jewish History II: From the Medieval Period to the Present – Weingrad, Meir
This course surveys Jewish history from approximately the year 1000 to the present, covering major developments in Jewish society and culture in the medieval Islamic and Christian realms, early modern Europe and the Mediterranean, and the modern world. Topics include the rise of the Spanish and northern European Jewish communities, trends in Jewish religious thought (including the emergence of kabbalah), expulsions from western Europe, new settlements in Ottoman Empire and Poland, changes in Jewish civil status in the modern age, Jewish migrations and political movements (including Zionism), the rise of U.S. Jewry, the Holocaust, and the establishment of the State of Israel. This class is the second in a two–semester introduction to the study of Jewish history, religion and culture, but the first half of the survey is not a prerequisite for this course. University Studies cluster: Global Perspectives.

JST 319U / HST 319U | Rabbinic Culture in the Roman World – Spielman
After the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 CE, Jewish society experienced a radical transformation. From the ashes of the now defunct cult in Jerusalem, a new form of Judaism emerged, rooted in the study and interpretation of sacred texts and centered around the life of the Rabbinic sage. A flourishing of literary activity during the first seven centuries of the Common Era produced the foundational texts of Rabbinic Judaism, the Mishnah, Midrash and Talmud, which continue to give shape to modern Jewish practice and belief. Through a survey of this rich and textured literature, this course will examine the roots of the Rabbinic movement. Asking critical questions about who these rabbis were and what they promoted as their core practices and beliefs, we will devote special attention to the ways these early rabbis related to other segments of ancient Jewish society, reacted to the emergence and spread of Christianity, and negotiated living in the predominantly pagan environment of the Greco–Roman city. University Studies cluster: Interpreting the Past.
JST 324U | Historical Introduction to the Hebrew Bible – Spielman
Curious about the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament? Where does it come from and what does it contain? What historical information can be learned from the Biblical stories of Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon? This course investigates these issues while surveying the contents of the Hebrew Bible, also known as the Old Testament. We will examine some of the more famous stories in the Hebrew Bible in an academic environment with special attention to its literary and historical developments. We will examine the connections between the Hebrew Bible and contemporary Ancient Near Eastern literature and compare their different world views. We will also discuss the various sources and traditions of Israelite religion and engage with Biblical ideas about community, sanctity, social justice, prophesy, wisdom, and the nature of human suffering. University Studies cluster: Interpreting the Past.

JST 325U | Retelling the Bible – Spielman
The stories that make up the Hebrew Bible were not only told, but recounted, reformulated and interpreted by different cultures, faiths and peoples from antiquity through the present day. This course will examine the first attempts at Jewish Biblical interpretation dating from the third century BCE though the sixth century CE. We will discuss a number of early genres of Biblical interpretation, including inter-Biblical interpretation, rewritten Bible, translation, pesher, allegory, allusion, midrash and liturgy. We will discuss the ways that Post-Biblical sources, including the Apocrypha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Rabbinic literature and a variety of Greco-Jewish authors, chose to represent some of the most famous Biblical stories and personages. These “retellings of the Bible” do far more than preserve ancient attempts to grapple with the questions and contradictions posed by sacred texts. They reveal the unique thoughts, anxieties and experiences of authors from throughout the ancient Mediterranean. University Studies cluster: Interpreting the Past.

JST/ENG 330U | Jewish & Israeli Literature – Weingrad
This course surveys modern Jewish literary creativity with an emphasis on works translated from Hebrew and Yiddish. Major Jewish writers such as Sholem Aleichem, H. N. Bialik, I. L. Peretz, and Nobel prizewinner S. Y. Agnon will be featured. University Studies cluster: Global Perspectives, Popular Culture.

JST 333U | Israeli Culture and Society – Spiegel
This course investigates the foundation and development of an Israeli national culture and its role in shaping contemporary Israeli society. How was a national culture created? What forces influence and challenge an Israeli national identity? What are the roles of competing voices in the cultural arena? Topics such as myth and memory, public and state events, music and dance, theater and architecture, will be examined. University Studies cluster: Popular Culture.

JST 335U | Sex, Love, and Gender in Israel – Spiegel
Examines intersections of gender and nationalism; the role of masculinity; conceptions of femininity, sex, love, and motherhood; and the impact of gender on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Investigates the history and experiences of a diverse array of women in Israel, including Jewish women, Israeli Arab and Palestinian women, and foreign workers.

JST 369U / HST 344U | Jews and Judaism in America since WWII – Weingrad
Survey of the Jewish experience in America from the postwar period to the present, considering political, cultural, and religious developments including suburbanization, the fading of immigrant memory, Jewish
identity and the Holocaust, politics and voting patterns, the impact of the counterculture, feminism, the relationship to Israel, and orthodoxy. *University Studies cluster: American Identities.*

**JST 378U / HST 378U | Pagans, Christians, and Jews – Spielman**
This course discusses the development and interaction of Roman paganism, Christianity and Judaism during the period of Late Antiquity. Topics will include education, philosophy, asceticism, ritual, religious law, the image of the holy man and the phenomenon of religious polemic in the Later Roman Empire (c. 250–600 CE). *University Studies cluster: Interpreting the Past.*

**JST 379U / HST 379U | History of Zionism – Spiegel**
This course will explore the ideas and visions that shaped the modern Israeli state. Zionism created a revolution in Jewish life. In this course, we will look closely at its birth, its development, its various forms, meanings and accompanying debates, many of which persist in the present day. We will investigate the Zionist movement in Europe in the nineteenth century, the variety and diversity of Zionist visions, and the movement’s growth in Palestine from the late nineteenth century up until the formation of the state of Israel. The course examines the roots of the Arab–Jewish conflict and the society and culture that the Zionist movement created in Ottoman and British Mandate Palestine. Incorporating a variety of sources, the class includes visual media, such as photography and film, as well as novels and memoirs. *University Studies cluster: Global Perspectives.*

**JST 380U / HST 380U | The Holocaust – Meir**
This course will introduce students to the Nazi-planned and executed genocide of European Jewry that has come to be known as the Holocaust. Although we will of course study the so-called “Final Solution” and the process of mass murder, the course aims to provide a broad and contextualized understanding of many aspects of the Holocaust. These include the German and European contexts for the rise of Nazism; the nature of antisemitism and its links to Nazi ideology and policy; the nature and definition of resistance; the question of the “bystanders”; and types of collaboration. The goal is to gain an understanding of the Holocaust as an aspect of many different kinds of history: Jewish history, German history, European history, the history of antisemitism, and perhaps also the history of human civilization (or the absence thereof). As time permits, we will also touch upon how the Holocaust is understood and “used” in contemporary society. *University Studies cluster: Global Perspectives.*

**JST 381U / HST 381U | Kabbalah: The Jewish Mystical Tradition – Meir**
Surveys the origins and development of the Jewish mystical tradition set against the context of Jewish religious, social, and intellectual history. Topics include mystical visions in ancient Jewish texts, medieval Kabbalah and the Zohar, the Sabbatean messianic movement, Hasidism, and contemporary uses of Kabbalah. *University Studies cluster: Interpreting the Past.*

**JST 388U | History of Modern Israel – Spiegel**
This survey course investigates the history of modern Israel, exploring social, political, cultural, and intellectual developments from 1880 to the present. Topics will include the analysis of Zionist ideologies and the development of the Zionist movement; political, cultural, and social developments before and after 1948; the Arab–Israeli conflict; and the social framework of Israeli society. *University Studies cluster: Global Perspectives.*
JST 399 | SPST: Contemporary Jewish Theology – Stone (Adjunct)
This course will confront ten vitally important concepts for contemporary Jewish theologians, including issues of gender, theodicy, and variations on the classic religious paradox: the idea that God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omnipresent (found everywhere), and omniscient (all-knowing). Twice weekly class sessions consist of readings on a new topic discussed every Monday and challenged every Wednesday. Thoughtful and engaged participation will be a key component of the course.

JST 430U | Messiahs & Messianism – Weingrad
Messianic ideas in Judaism and other religions. Can focus on specific messiah figures and movements, comparative messianisms, historical and conceptual development of messianic idea, and/or modern manifestations. Repeatable once with departmental approval. Prerequisites: 8 upper division credits in Judaic Studies, or related courses with permission of instructor.

JST 435 | Jewish & Israeli Dance History – Spiegel
This course examines the development and diversity of Jewish and Israeli dance, with an emphasis on the twentieth century. We will explore both social and concert dance forms and their impact on a variety of societies, focusing primarily on the United States, Israel, and Europe. We will investigate questions such as: what is the meaning of Jewish dance? How do Jewish and Israeli dance creations reflect and interact with the various societies from which they emerge? What do these dances tell us about Jewish life in different parts of the world? We will cover a broad range of topics including the world renowned Batsheva Dance Company in Israel; the development of Israeli folk dance; the works of American Jewish choreographers such as Jerome Robbins who choreographed Fiddler on the Roof; the role of dance at Jewish community centers and summer camps in the U.S.; Ethiopian Jewish and Yemenite Jewish dance companies in Israel. No previous coursework in Jewish studies or dance history is required: the course will provide an introduction to the topic and to how to view and approach dance. Honors students will develop a research paper on a topic of their choice. N.B. This course serves as an elective for the dance minor. It is also on the Advisor-approved list for International Studies’ Middle East Regional Focus.

HST 405E/505E | Colloquium on East European Jewish History: The Shtetl I – Meir
Eastern Europe was one of the great centers of Jewish civilization in the early modern and modern periods. This reading colloquium explores the society that Jews created, a world unto itself but also closely interlinked with the surrounding Slavic and Christian society. Topics include the structure of Jewish community, Jewish religious culture, socioeconomic patterns, individual and corporate identity, and modern political and literary developments from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. Geopolitical contexts will range from the early modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. This course is the prerequisite for the subsequent research seminar on the history of the shtetl (HST407/507E), offered in the Spring term. Although this colloquium can be taken as an independent course, history majors who take both it and the following 407 seminar on the shtetl will fulfill their two-seminar requirement (see 2010 new requirements for the history major). History majors who have taken this reading colloquium will have priority for enrollment in the 407 seminar on the shtetl.

HST 407E/507E | Seminar: The Shtetl II – Meir
The shtetl has been described variously as a pious Jewish town in Eastern Europe embodying the “tradition” of a centuries-old way of life; a place frozen in time, ravaged by pogroms, and perched on the edge of catastrophe; and a historical phenomenon that has become more metaphor and symbol than reality. This course explores the reality and the image of the shtetl — the small Jewish market-town in
Eastern Europe — from its origins in early-modern Poland to its modernization and transformation under the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Empires, through the catastrophe of World War I to its decline in the Soviet Union and interwar Poland and the destruction wrought by the Shoah (Holocaust). We will also discuss the images of the shtetl – both positive and negative – that developed both in Eastern Europe and the United States. Readings will include recent scholarship on the shtetl (including Jewish culture, religion, folkways, and economy and Jewish-Christian relations), the Russian imperial context, primary documents, and literary works in Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, and Polish (in English translation). We will also draw upon photographs, artwork, and films. Students will write a research paper on a topic of their choice using primary sources in translation; class time will involve intensive work with primary sources and workshopping of works in progress to support students’ ongoing research and writing.

HST 409/509 | Public History Sem: Museums & Memory in the US & Israel – Spiegel
This seminar examines the relationship between national history, memory, and museums in Israel and the United States. Incorporating field trips to local museums, the course investigates cultural debates that take place over the presentation of national history at public sites. Providing a comparative approach, the course explores the role of memory in shaping national identity, investigating questions such as: How is national memory formed? How does it operate in different national contexts? What are the politics of cultural memory in these two locales? No prerequisites are required.

HST 461/561 | Conservative Politics & American Jews – Weingrad
While the political tendencies of American Jews are famously liberal, Jews have also been at the forefront of conservative politics and policy discussion in the United States. This course looks at the involvement of Jewish intellectuals and activists in the American Right since the 1950s. We will look at Jews involved in the founding of National Review and the Young Americans for Freedom in the 1950s and 60s, the emergence of the neoconservatives in the 1960s and 1970s, Jewish libertarians and free market advocates such as Milton Friedman and Ayn Rand, and relationships between Jewish conservatives, black conservatives, and Christian conservatives. Readings include George Nash, The Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945, Murray Friedman, The Neoconservative Revolution, Norman Podhoretz, Ex-Friends, Brian Doherty, Radicals for Capitalism, and Ruth Wisse, If I Am Not For Myself.