

Jewish Studies

Overview

UC Berkeley has long been a national leader in Jewish Studies, especially notable for the innovative scholarship promoted in its graduate program. The Center for Jewish Studies provides a strong new focus and a vivid presence for the many varied activities associated with Jewish Studies on our campus. The center oversees our Designated Emphasis in Jewish Studies for graduate students and our undergraduate minor in Jewish Studies. It is home to our two annual endowed lecture series, it sponsors conferences and public lectures, it offers a congenial setting for graduate student colloquia, and it serves as an attractive meeting place for the many visiting scholars in the field who come to Berkeley each year.

Campus Partners

The Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israeli Law, Economy and Society (<http://www.law.berkeley.edu/JLILES.htm>) is an interdisciplinary initiative to expand Jewish and Israel Studies offerings at Berkeley coordinated by faculty in Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Comparative Literature, History, and Music, as well in the Law, Journalism, and Business Schools.

The Magnes Collection of Jewish Life and Art (<https://magnes.berkeley.edu/>) was established in 2010 at the Bancroft Library after the transfer of the Judah L. Magnes Museum to UC Berkeley. The Magnes is one of the world's preeminent Jewish collections in a university setting. It offers highly innovative and accessible resources to researchers on campus, enabling hands-on learning for students interested in Jewish Studies, and provides stipends for students working on Jewish culture.

The UC Berkeley Judaica collection (<http://jewishstudies.berkeley.edu/affiliates-resources/judaica-collection/>) supports the research of students involved in the graduate Jewish Studies Designated Emphasis, and the undergraduate minor, and instructional activities of faculty and students in a number of interdisciplinary fields. These include Near Eastern languages and literature; Talmudic studies, including the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds and subsequent texts and commentaries; rabbinic, medieval, and modern Jewish history throughout the world; modern Jewish thought; and comparative literature, including works in Hebrew, Yiddish, English, and other languages.

Undergraduate Program

Jewish Studies (<http://guide.berkeley.edu/undergraduate/degree-programs/jewish-studies/>): Minor

Graduate Program

Jewish Studies (<http://guide.berkeley.edu/graduate/degree-programs/jewish-studies/>): Designated Emphasis (DE)

Jewish Studies

Expand all course descriptions [+] Collapse all course descriptions [-]

JEWISH 39 Freshman and Sophomore Seminar 2 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

Freshman and sophomore seminars offer lower division students the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member and a group of peers in a small-seminar setting. These seminars are offered in all campus departments; topics vary from department to department and from semester to semester.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2 hours of seminar per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered. Final Exam To be decided by the instructor when the class is offered.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 390 Freshman and Sophomore Seminar 1.5 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2016

Freshman and sophomore seminars offer lower division students the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member and a group of peers in a small-seminar setting. These seminars are offered in all campus departments; topics vary from department to department and from semester to semester.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring:

5 weeks - 3-12 hours of seminar per week

6 weeks - 2.5-10 hours of seminar per week

8 weeks - 2-7.5 hours of seminar per week

10 weeks - 1.5-6 hours of seminar per week

15 weeks - 1-4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered. Final exam not required.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 39P Freshman and Sophomore Seminar 1.5 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2017

Freshman and sophomore seminars offer lower division students the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member and a group of peers in a small-seminar setting. These seminars are offered in all campus departments; topics vary from department to department and from semester to semester.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring:

5 weeks - 3-12 hours of seminar per week
6 weeks - 2.5-10 hours of seminar per week
8 weeks - 2-7.5 hours of seminar per week
10 weeks - 1.5-6 hours of seminar per week
15 weeks - 1-4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered. Final exam not required.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 39Q Freshman and Sophomore Seminar 1.5 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2017

Freshman and sophomore seminars offer lower division students the opportunity to explore an intellectual topic with a faculty member and a group of peers in a small-seminar setting. These seminars are offered in all campus departments; topics vary from department to department and from semester to semester.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring:

5 weeks - 3-12 hours of seminar per week
6 weeks - 2.5-10 hours of seminar per week
8 weeks - 2-7.5 hours of seminar per week
10 weeks - 1.5-6 hours of seminar per week
15 weeks - 1-4 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: The grading option will be decided by the instructor when the class is offered. Final exam not required.

Freshman and Sophomore Seminar: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 98 Directed Group Study 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2020, Spring 2020, Fall 2019

Organized group study on topics selected by upper division students under the sponsorship and direction of the Jewish Studies faculty.

Directed Group Study: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Freshman or sophomore standing

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-4 hours of directed group study per week

Summer: 8 weeks - 1.5-7.5 hours of directed group study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Offered for pass/not pass grade only. Final exam not required.

Directed Group Study: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 100 Introduction to Jewish Religion, Culture, and People 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Spring 2022

The course is intended to give Jewish studies minors a general introduction to the field through a survey of religious and cultural expressions of Jews across time and geographies. No previous knowledge of Judaism or Jewish Studies is necessary.

Introduction to Jewish Religion, Culture, and People: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Formerly known as: Jewish Studies 101

Introduction to Jewish Religion, Culture, and People: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 120 Special Topics in Jewish Studies 3 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Fall 2021

Course will focus on specific areas or topics related to creative arts and literature in Jewish studies through a combination of lectures, term papers, and examinations. Instructors and topics to vary from semester to semester. Consult Jewish Studies website for updated course descriptions.

Special Topics in Jewish Studies: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Special Topics in Jewish Studies: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 120A Special Topics in Jewish Languages and Literature 3 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2023, Spring 2022

Study of selected Jewish languages including Hebrew and Yiddish, and Jewish literature including prose, poetry, and drama, from various periods and geographic areas, in the context of time and place. Selections may vary from semester to semester depending on the interests and expertise of the instructor.

Special Topics in Jewish Languages and Literature: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit with instructor consent.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Special Topics in Jewish Languages and Literature: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 121 Topics in Jewish Arts and Culture 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Spring 2022

This course will address topics related to Jewish arts and culture with a format that includes lecture and lab hours.

Topics in Jewish Arts and Culture: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit with advisor consent.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture and 1 hour of laboratory per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 8 hours of lecture and 2 hours of laboratory per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Spagnolo

Topics in Jewish Arts and Culture: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 121A Topics in Arts and Culture 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

Course designed to permit regular and visiting faculty the flexibility to address topics that reflect their research interests and supplement regular curricular offerings. Consult department website each semester for specific descriptions.

Topics in Arts and Culture: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit with advisor consent.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 8-8 hours of lecture and 0-3 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Rotem

Topics in Arts and Culture: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 121B Arts and Culture in Israel 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2020

This course will provide an overview of Israeli art and culture and its place within the international cultural world. We will examine museums, theatre, visual art, popular music, and cinema, as they reflect the multi-cultural and pluralistic Israeli society.

Arts and Culture in Israel: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit with advisor consent.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 8 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Rotem

Arts and Culture in Israel: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 122 Topics in Judaism 3 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2023, Spring 2022, Spring 2021

A course on trends in Jewish religious, cultural, and social life. The course will study innovative and conservative aspects of thought, ritual, and belief in relation to contemporary life and traditional Jewish values in at least one country other than the United States.

Topics in Judaism: Read More [+]

Objectives & Outcomes

Course Objectives: This course will offer an opportunity for students to gain familiarity with a spectrum of diverse approaches to Judaism. This will include participation in current debates on topics such as spirituality, secularism, social justice, and discrimination.

Student Learning Outcomes: Students will have a better understanding of the variety of Jewish responses to contemporary social, political, and cultural life. They will learn how historically salient issues, covered in other Jewish Studies courses, are being addressed by Jewish leaders and communities.

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 7.5-7.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Topics in Judaism: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 122A Special Topics in Judaism 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

A course on trends in Jewish religious, cultural, and social life. Our understanding of the Hebrew Bible has been transformed in recent years due to insights from literary criticism, anthropology, archaeology, and historiography. This course explores the impact of these innovations and provides a multilayered introduction to the writings of the Hebrew Bible, focused on the mingling of memory, religion, and the literary imagination. Special Topics in Judaism: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 7.5-7.5 hours of lecture and 0-2.5 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Alternative to final exam.

Instructors: Alter, Hendel

Special Topics in Judaism: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 123 Israeli Society: Social Structure, Inequality, and Political Cleavages 3 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2017

This course will map Israel's social structure, identify its implications for social and economic inequality, and shed light on its role in structuring political loyalty, conflict and action. It will introduce students to relevant concepts and theories from sociology and political science, and findings from comparative research, that aid understanding of the Israeli case and place it in a broader perspective.

Israeli Society: Social Structure, Inequality, and Political Cleavages: Read More [+]

Objectives & Outcomes

Course Objectives: Expose students to a selection of research findings on specific sectors of society that shed light on their socioeconomic position, power resources, and characteristic forms of political action. Provide a comprehensive view of Israel's social structure and its implications for both inequality and politics.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of lecture per week

Summer: 6 weeks - 7.5 hours of lecture per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Shalev

Israeli Society: Social Structure, Inequality, and Political Cleavages: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 123A Muslim-Jewish Encounters: From the Beginnings of Islam to Today 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2021, Spring 2020

The course takes us far beyond contemporary tensions between Muslims and Jews, and deep into a more complicated history that spans the Mediterranean and beyond. We move through topics that include the earliest encounters between Muslims and Jews during the years of the rise of Islam; the historical impact and legacy of the dhimmi (the system of rights and restrictions that defined Jews' status for centuries under Islamic rule); the culturally fruitful shared experience of Jews and Muslims in Medieval Spain and the Ottoman Empire; the effects of French, British, and Italian colonialism in the modern Middle East; and the important conflicts over Zionism and Arab nationalism during the past century.

Muslim-Jewish Encounters: From the Beginnings of Islam to Today: Read More [+]

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 7.5-7.5 hours of lecture and 0-2.5 hours of discussion per week

8 weeks - 6-6 hours of lecture and 0-1.5 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Katz

Muslim-Jewish Encounters: From the Beginnings of Islam to Today: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 175B Jews in the Modern World 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

This course will examine the impact of modern intellectual, political, cultural, and social forces on the Jewish people since the eighteenth century. It is our aim to come to an understanding of how the Jews interpreted these forces and how and in what ways they adapted and utilized them to suit the Jewish experience. In other words, we will trace the way Jews became modern. Some of the topics to be covered include Emancipation, the Jewish Enlightenment, new Jewish religious movements, Jewish politics and culture, immigration, antisemitism, the Holocaust, and the state of Israel.

Jews in the Modern World: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Credit Restrictions: Students will receive no credit for JEWISH 175B after completing HISTORY C175B. A deficient grade in JEWISH 175B may be removed by taking HISTORY 175B.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 7.5-7.5 hours of lecture and 0-2.5 hours of discussion per week
8 weeks - 6-6 hours of lecture and 0-1.5 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Efron

Jews in the Modern World: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 178 History of the Holocaust 4 Units

Terms offered: Prior to 2007

This course will survey the historical events and intellectual developments leading up to and surrounding the destruction of European Jewry during World War II. By reading a mixture of primary and secondary sources we will examine the Shoah (the Hebrew word for the Holocaust) against the backdrop of modern Jewish and modern German history. The course is divided into three main parts: (1) the historical background up to 1933; (2) the persecution of the Jews and the beginnings of mass murder, 1933-1941; and (3) the industrialized murder of the Jews, 1942-1945. History of the Holocaust: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Credit Restrictions: Students will receive no credit for JEWISH 178 after completing HISTORY 178. A deficient grade in JEWISH 178 may be removed by taking HISTORY 178.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3-3 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Summer:

6 weeks - 7.5-7.5 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week
8 weeks - 5.5-5.5 hours of lecture and 0-1 hours of discussion per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam required.

Instructor: Efron

History of the Holocaust: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 198 Directed Group Study 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2020, Spring 2019, Spring 2018

Organized group study on topics selected by upper division students under the sponsorship and direction of the Jewish Studies faculty.

Directed Group Study: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Junior or senior standing

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-4 hours of directed group study per week

Summer: 8 weeks - 1.5-7.5 hours of directed group study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Offered for pass/not pass grade only. Final exam not required.

Directed Group Study: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 199 Supervised Independent Study and Research 1 - 4 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019

Subject matter will vary with topics related to Jewish Studies Supervised Independent Study and Research: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-3 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Undergraduate

Grading/Final exam status: Letter grade. Final exam not required.

Supervised Independent Study and Research: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 200 Advanced Topics in Jewish Studies 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2020, Spring 2019, Spring 2018

Graduate seminar will focus on specific areas or topics in Jewish studies through a combination of close reading of texts, student presentation, and informal lectures. Instructors and topics to vary semester to semester.

Consult department website for updated course descriptions.

Advanced Topics in Jewish Studies: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate standing or consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Advanced Topics in Jewish Studies: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 290 Modern Jewish Scholarship: History and Practice 4 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2021, Spring 2021

This seminar, specifically designed as the 'integrative course' for students pursuing the Designated Emphasis in Jewish Studies, will offer an in-depth introduction to some of the central trends and personalities in modern Jewish historiography. We will read (and read about) the founders of modern Jewish historiography, and then explore some contemporary trends in Jewish scholarship, according to the disciplinary affiliations of the students in the class. Students will need to write a 5000-word article to complete the course, using a bibliography that includes Jewish Studies materials. A subject-relevant seminar paper from another course may be used to fulfill this requirement, subject to approval by Jewish Studies faculty.

Modern Jewish Scholarship: History and Practice: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: This is the required integrative course for doctoral students pursuing the Designated Emphasis in Jewish Studies. It is open to other doctoral students by permission of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit when topic changes.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 2-3 hours of seminar per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Instructor: Efron

Modern Jewish Scholarship: History and Practice: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 296 Jewish Studies DE Dissertation Research and Writing Credit 1 - 12 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2011, Fall 2010, Spring 2010

The course is offered to graduate students in the Designated Emphasis (DE) in Jewish studies to provide course credit for conducting dissertation research and dissertation writing, only after the student has successfully advanced to candidacy.

Jewish Studies DE Dissertation Research and Writing Credit: Read More [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Advancement to doctoral candidacy

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-12 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Graduate

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Instructor: Kronfeld

Jewish Studies DE Dissertation Research and Writing Credit: Read Less [-]

JEWISH 299 Individual Study and Research - Jewish Studies 1 - 5 Units

Terms offered: Spring 2021, Spring 2014, Fall 2012

Topics and instructors will vary depending upon area of study. Special individual study for qualified graduate students only. Individual study and research, including fieldwork, in consultation with instructor on subject matter not covered in scheduled course offerings.

Individual Study and Research - Jewish Studies: [Read More](#) [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Graduate standing and consent of instructor

Repeat rules: Course may be repeated for credit without restriction.

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-5 hours of independent study per week

Summer: 8 weeks - 1.5-9 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Graduate

Grading: Letter grade.

Individual Study and Research - Jewish Studies: [Read Less](#) [-]

JEWISH 602 Jewish Studies DE Exam Preparation 1 - 8 Units

Terms offered: Fall 2012, Fall 2011, Spring 2011

The course is offered to graduate students in the Designated Emphasis (DE) in Jewish studies to provide opportunities for directed qualifying exam preparation prior to advancement to candidacy.

Jewish Studies DE Exam Preparation: [Read More](#) [+]

Rules & Requirements

Prerequisites: Advancement to doctoral candidacy

Hours & Format

Fall and/or spring: 15 weeks - 1-12 hours of independent study per week

Additional Details

Subject/Course Level: Jewish Studies/Graduate examination preparation

Grading: Offered for satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade only.

Jewish Studies DE Exam Preparation: [Read Less](#) [-]