

Jewish Studies (JST)

Course information contained within the Bulletin is accurate at the time of publication in June 2025 but is subject to change. For the most up-to-date course information, please refer to the Course Catalog.

JST 0802. Race & Identity in Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

Investigate the relationship between race and Judaism from Judaism's early period through today, looking both at how Jews have understood their own racial identity and how others have understood Jews' racial identity. You will explore the idea of racial identity in Judaism in order to examine the complex network of connections between racism and anti-Semitism, as you read primary and secondary texts in Jewish philosophy and history and in the study of race and racism. We hope to illuminate these complex issues as well as to engage with them on a personal and political level, examining the relationship between issues of race, religion, identity, and social justice and injustice, and inquiring into how we, as informed citizens in a global society, can affect change for the better. NOTE: This course fulfills the Race & Diversity (GD) requirement for students under GenEd and Studies in Race (RS) for students under Core. Students cannot receive credit for this course if they have successfully completed any of the following: Jewish Studies 0902 or Religion 0802/0902.

Course Attributes: GD, SF

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 0868. World Society in Literature & Film. 3 Credit Hours.

Learn about Israeli culture by taking a guided tour of its literature and film. You don't need to speak a language other than English to take this exciting course, and you will gain the fresh, subtle understanding that comes from integrating across different forms of human expression. Some of the issues that will be illuminated by looking at culture through the lens of literature and film include family structures and how they are changing, national self-perceptions, pivotal moments in history, economic issues, social change and diversity. NOTE: This course fulfills the World Society (GG) requirement for students under GenEd and International Studies (IS) for students under Core. Students cannot receive credit for this course if they have successfully completed any of the following: Arabic 0868/0968, Asian Studies 0868, Chinese 0868/0968, English 0868/0968, French 0868/0968, German 0868/0968, Hebrew 0868, Italian 0868/0968, Japanese 0868/0968, Korean 0868, LAS 0868/0968, Political Science 0868/0968, Russian 0868/0968, or Spanish 0868/0968.

Course Attributes: GG

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 0902. Honors Race & Identity in Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

Investigate the relationship between race and Judaism from Judaism's early period through today, looking both at how Jews have understood their own racial identity and how others have understood Jews' racial identity. You will explore the idea of racial identity in Judaism in order to examine the complex network of connections between racism and anti-Semitism, as you read primary and secondary texts in Jewish philosophy and history and in the study of race and racism. We hope to illuminate these complex issues as well as to engage with them on a personal and political level, examining the relationship between issues of race, religion, identity, and social justice and injustice, and inquiring into how we, as informed citizens in a global society, can affect change for the better. (This is an Honors course.) NOTE: This course fulfills the Race & Diversity (GD) requirement for students under GenEd and Studies in Race (RS) for students under Core. Students cannot receive credit for this course if they have successfully completed any of the following: Jewish Studies 0802 or Religion 0802/0902.

Cohort Restrictions: Must be enrolled in one of the following Cohorts: SCHONORS, UHONORS, UHONORSTR.

Course Attributes: GD, HO, SF

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2000. Special Topics in Jewish Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

The specific topic of this course varies from term to term. Please contact the Jewish Studies advisor or the instructor for more information.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 2109. Jewish Voices in Russian Culture. 3 Credit Hours.

In this course we will study the Jewish experience in the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and Post-Soviet Russia, with an emphasis on the 20th century, debunking many of the myths with which many students may have been familiar from the film "Fiddler on the Roof." We will read, in translation, excerpts from memoirs, works of literature and history, and view films, with subtitles by Jewish and non-Jewish scholars, authors, poets, and filmmakers about what Russians have called "The Jewish Question" for more than two centuries. We will also take up issues of anti-Semitism and xenophobia and consider them in the context of European and American history.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2403. Introduction to Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

This course introduces students to the beliefs, rituals, customs, and practices of the Jewish people in a historical context through an analysis of a variety of religious, cultural, and political texts and artifacts. Note: Formerly titled "What is Judaism?" Students who earned credit under the prior title will not receive additional credits for this course. This course is equivalent to REL 2403; students may receive credit for either JST 2403 or REL 2403.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2405. Introduction to Afro-Jewish Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will introduce students to the study of African and African-Diaspora Jews. Students will examine and critically assess the various past and present methods used to study Africana Jewish communities. The research and readings will provide students with a basic introduction to Afro-Jewish history, culture and religion. It will also analyze the effects of race and racism on the construction of Afro-Jewish identities.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2408. Jewish Secular Thought and Culture from Spinoza to Seinfeld: A History of Jewish Secularism. 3 Credit Hours.

Non-religious Jews come in all shapes and sizes: political radicals, philosophers, scientists, psychoanalysts, feminists, stand-up comics. Secular Jews helped establish the modern age, gave voice to the critique of religion, pushed for separation of Church and State, developed a vibrant Yiddish culture and founded the State of Israel. This course is a survey of issues in modern Jewish history from the philosophical critique of the Bible to tensions between religious and secular Jews in Israel. We will pay close attention to the thinkers who helped frame the transformations of Jewish self-understanding in the West: Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Marx, Freud, Einstein, Arendt...and Seinfeld. [Duplicate Credit Warning: The prior title for this course was "Jewish Secularism/Jewish Civilization I"; students who successfully completed that version of the course will not earn additional credits for this course.]

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2409. Secular Jewish Utopian Politics / Jewtopias: The Jewish Romance with Communism, Zionism, and America. 3 Credit Hours.

What is Jewish politics? Jews were involved with three grand political cultures in the 20th century: The Zionist Movement, Communism, and Liberal Democracy. The new "Promised Lands" for Jews in Europe, Russia, Israel, and America were secular and utopian. Through literature, manifesto, fiction and film this course will examine each of these movements and explore the dark side of the attempts to create perfect social justice—how those visionary dreams were tempered if not shattered. Readings will include: Theodor Herzl, Arthur Koestler, Michael Chabon, Michael Walzer, and Tony Kushner's *Angels in America*. [Duplicate Credit Warning: The prior title for this course was "Jewish Secularism/Jewish Civilization II"; students who successfully completed that version of the course will not earn additional credits for this course.]

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2447. Kabbalah and Mysticism. 3 Credit Hours.

Introduction to the basic concepts, worldview and psychology of the Kabbalah. Mystical experiences and spiritual practices of the Kabbalists are situated within the context of comparative mysticism.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2705. Anti-Semitism/Holocaust/Racism. 3 Credit Hours.

A history of anti-Semitism with a focus on the Holocaust and racism. This course will investigate the development and implementation of racial anti-Semitism in Germany and compare Nazi anti-Semitism with other forms of racism and anti-Semitism in Europe and America. It will also explore the connection between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism, the growth of neo-Nazism, and the complex relationship between American Jews and African Americans. NOTE: This course can be used to satisfy the university Core Studies in Race (RS) requirement. Although it may be usable towards graduation as a major requirement or university elective, it cannot be used to satisfy any of the university GenEd requirements. See your advisor for further information. Be advised that students will only receive credit once for JST 2705, REL 2705, or HIST 2705.

Course Attributes: RS, SI

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2706. Jewish Diaspora/Survey of Jewish History. 3 Credit Hours.

Jewish history from the destruction of the Second Jewish Commonwealth to the creation of the State of Israel. The course will examine minority status, migration, persecution, economic adaptation, gender roles in different environments, acculturation and identity. The survey includes: the medieval Jewish experience under both Christian and Islamic rule; the development of Jewish communities in Eastern Europe, Western Europe, and the United States; the changing role of Jewish women; the rise of Zionism; and the Holocaust.

Course Attributes: SI

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2779. Love Themes in Hebrew Literature. 3 Credit Hours.

The development of the different love themes from the "Song of Songs," through the golden age of Spain, Hebrew poetry in Italy, the Enlightenment, revival period, and Israeli literature. Among the themes will be great expectations, happiness and unity, and the happy hell of withered love. Changes in style, form, and content will be emphasized and recurring symbols will be discussed.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 2900. Honors Special Topics. 3 Credit Hours.

Course content varies each semester. Honors students can obtain a description of the current version at the Jewish Studies office, Mazur Hall, Room 641.

Cohort Restrictions: Must be enrolled in one of the following Cohorts: SCHONORS, UHONORS, UHONORSTR.

Course Attributes: HO

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 3000. Topics in Jewish Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

Course content varies each semester. Students can obtain a description of the current version at the Jewish Studies office, Mazur Hall, Room 641.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 3082. Independent Jewish Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

This is a course for advanced undergraduates to do sustained work with a professor they have already worked with in the program. The content and scope of the course is determined by the individual professor and the student with the approval of the director of Jewish Studies.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 3085. Jewish Studies Internship. 3 Credit Hours.

The Jewish Studies internship course is designed to enable Temple students to work in the Jewish community both to do hands-on work in a Jewish cultural, historical, communal or religious organization in Philadelphia's vibrant Jewish community and do a research project on some aspect of their work. With the director of Jewish Studies, the students will work out a set of readings appropriate to their individual research project.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 3182. Independent Study. 1 to 4 Credit Hour.

Students make arrangements with faculty in their departments to take an individual program of study. Course is by arrangement. Contact department chair for information.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 3221. Jewish Experience in America. 3 Credit Hours.

This course considers the evolution of the Jewish community in the United States from its colonial beginnings to the present day. Topics include: the immigrant experiences of various waves of migration; the development of the major religious movements within Judaism: Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist; the role of Jews in American life and politics; the changing roles of American Jewish women; American anti-Semitism; Black-Jewish relations; relationship between American Jews and Israel; assimilation and identity.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 3250. Topics: Jews & Film. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will vary by semester offering various approaches to issues of Jews and film. It will include topics such as: Eastern and Central European Jewish films; American Jews and Hollywood; films about Jews, Israeli film, and selected Jewish filmmakers and their works. NOTE: Sometimes, depending on the topic, this course will be cross-listed with Hebrew or Religion.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 3406. Women in Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

This interdisciplinary course will explore issues of gender in various Jewish texts and practices. Using feminist theory it will ask questions about how normative notions of Jewish masculinity and femininity have been constructed in different texts from different historical periods. Students will engage in close readings of contemporary and ancient texts.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 3408. Israel in the Middle East. 3 Credit Hours.

Law, geography, education, religion, politics, eastern and western communities, and culture examined by experts in three fields. NOTE: This course will be offered in English.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 3411. The Philosophies of Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

Close study of works by one or more Jewish and political philosophers, stressing their relevance to an understanding of contemporary politics and issues of Jewish identity, culture, and religion.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 3571. Israel, History, Politics and Society. 3 Credit Hours.

Development of Israel and its relationship with its Arab neighbors. Includes a discussion of the evolution of Zionism, the growth of Arab nationalism, the creation of the Jewish State, the plight of the Palestinian refugees, and an evaluation of peace prospects in the Middle East.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 3711. Israelis and Palestinians. 3 Credit Hours.

The course explores the Israeli/Palestinian relationship, beliefs and feelings from the beginning of the 20th century till today, as it is represented in both Israeli and Palestinian literature and art. A strong emphasis is on the development of the image of the other in each group and its connection to self identity. NOTE: The course will be conducted in English. Previously titled "Mideast Literature in Translation."

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 3720. Topics in Hebrew Culture. 3 Credit Hours.

Topics from Hebrew culture, which are of general and current interest based on reading Hebrew texts in translation. Lectures, audiovisual presentations, and large and small group work used to explore the significance of the texts.

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 3900. Honors Special Topics. 3 Credit Hours.

Course content varies each semester. Honors students can obtain a description of the current version at the Jewish Studies office, Mazur Hall, Room 641.

Cohort Restrictions: Must be enrolled in one of the following Cohorts: SCHONORS, UHONORS, UHONORSTR.

Course Attributes: HO

Repeatability: This course may be repeated for additional credit.

JST 4096. Independent Study in Jewish Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

Intensive study under individual guidance in a specific area suggested by the student and approved by the faculty advisor from the Jewish Studies faculty. NOTE: Capstone course. This course is required for all Jewish Studies majors.

Course Attributes: WI

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 4406. Ancient Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will look at the processes and stages involved in the formation of the Torah/Pentateuch (the books of Genesis-Deuteronomy), the formation of the Talmud (the anthology of Rabbinic thought), and the historical, social, and intellectual forces that shaped both. While the Jewish religious tradition typically sees the Torah as written by Moses, the critical perspective adopted by the course will look at how different scribal and priestly groups in ancient Israel contributed to a work that would only later be regarded as authored by Moses. Likewise, while traditional Judaic religion views the Talmud as a direct outgrowth of the Torah, this course will explore the diverse factions, debates, and battles between groups that either accepted or rejected the Torah in various forms, leading up to the emergence of the Rabbinic movement and the preservation of different views within their literature. Note: Prior to summer 1, 2016, the course title was "Secular Study of Ancient Jewish History: Between the Torah and the Talmud." Duplicate credit warning: Students who took JST 4406 or REL 4406 under the previous title will not earn additional credits for this course.

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.

JST 4411. Secularism: Jewish and Muslim Women. 3 Credit Hours.

In its three-hundred-year history as a Western concept, secularism is often defined as the opposite of religion. Religious women have alternately found western secularism to be a source of liberation (as it grants them greater civil rights) and a source of oppression (as it putatively shrinks the religious sphere). In creating feminisms through Jewish and Muslim experience, feminisms that are both secular and religious, these religious women have complicated the meanings of secularism. They have also challenged the notion that feminism is necessarily secular. This course looks at examples of Jewish and Muslim women's lives and feminist thought in the US, Europe, and the Middle East. The course will compare and contrast the feminism of these two groups of religious women, in order to more fully understand the role of concepts like secularism, feminism, and religion. NOTE: Students will earn credit only once for either JST 4411, GSWS 4411, or REL 4411.

Course Attributes: SI

Repeatability: This course may not be repeated for additional credits.