

# CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES (CJST)

## **CJST114F Netflix and Shul: Jews on TV (FYS)**

Jews have always been an inseparable part of the small screen--first, mainly (but not only) as writers and producers, and gradually as characters and protagonists. Today, American television is more Jewish than ever. Jews changed TV. But did it also change them? This course will study the long history of Jews and Jewishness in American Television. Each class will revolve around one episode of a show and discuss how it reflects on different aspects of Jewish life--Jewish humor, Jewish crime, Jewish Upward mobility, Jewish guilt, the Jewish mother, Jewishness and whiteness, antisemitism, and more. In keeping with the Jewish tradition, we will obviously ask many questions, including the most complex one: What does "Jewish" mean?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

## **CJST150F Four Bar Mitzvahs and a Funeral: Being Young and Jewish in America (FYS)**

How is the American Jewish experience viewed from the perspective of Jewish children and young adults? This course will discuss depictions of Jewish coming-of-age in American popular culture. We will examine various age groups--from elementary school to college; and through various art forms--literature, film, and television ("Are You There God? It's Me Margaret," "The Plot Against America," "An American Tail," "Wet Hot American Summer," "A Serious Man," "Superbad," "Booksmart," "Glee," "The O.C.," "Big Mouth," "Never Have I Ever," among others). Analyzing these works together will illuminate different facets of Jewish American life including immigration, assimilation, education, tradition, family, anti-Semitism, and more. They will also allow us to broach more universal questions surrounding representation, identity, and the complex relationship between popular culture and society.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

## **CJST151F What is Religion? JewBus, Museums, and the First Amendment (FYS)**

Why did the FBI assault the Branch Davidians' compound near Waco, Texas, thinking it was a cult, while those inside viewed the government as serving the anti-Christ? Can one be Buddhist and Jewish at the same time? Are museums religious spaces? Does secularism protect religion from the government or the government from religion? This class will introduce you to the ways in which we study religions by reading critical case studies, including those about Muslims debating the hijab, the treatment of sacred objects in museums, and freedom of religion court cases. This is not a survey of world religions, and once you've taken What is Religion?, you'll know why we don't teach that at Wes. You will also have a critical set of intellectual tools for understanding the role of religion in the contemporary world.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI151F**

Prereq: **None**

## **CJST165F Anne Frank's Diary and its Legacy (FYS)**

Since its publication, "The Diary of Anne Frank" has become one of the bestselling non-fiction books of all time. Moreover, it has inspired numerous adaptations in different forms: films, stage plays, TV series, graphic novels and more. In this course, we will closely read the original diary, and engage with various incarnations, asking: Why did the world iconize Anne Frank, and is it a lionization or an appropriation? What does this global phenomenon tell us about the legacy of the Holocaust and of that of Anne Frank, and, finally, what does Anne Frank's diary tell us about the world?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

## **CJST175F Constructing the Human: Humans and Animals in the Hebrew Bible (FYS)**

How do we define "humanness" and what assumptions do we make about our own distinctions between "humans" and "animals" when we define humanness? This course will look at the process of constructing the human category in the ancient world and Hebrew Bible and then compare that process to our own modern conceptions of humanness. In what ways are they similar and in what ways are they different? How can ancient examples of the human category inform our own ethical understandings of what it means to be human?

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI175F**

Prereq: **None**

## **CJST202 Constructing the Human: Humans and Animals in the Hebrew Bible**

How do we define "humanness" and what assumptions do we make about our own distinctions between "humans" and "animals" through this definition? This course will look at the process of constructing the human category in the ancient world and Hebrew Bible and then compare that process to our own modern conceptions of humanness. In what ways are they similar and in what ways are they different? How can ancient examples of the human category inform our own ethical understandings of what it means to be human?

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI202, ENV5202**

Prereq: **None**

## **CJST203 Jews & Judaism: Race, Religion, Culture**

What is a Jew? Are Jews white? Must a Jew believe in God? What is at stake when defining someone as a Jew? Using sources ranging from the Hebrew Bible to contemporary films, this course examines various facets of Jewish life, paying special attention to contesting definitions of Jewishness as race, religion, and culture. Building on a chronological discussion of Jewish history, we will ask theoretical questions such as the relation between gender and biblical interpretation, the relevance of religious law in contemporary society, and the challenges of diasporic thinking to national sovereignty.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI203**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST214 Refugees & Exiles: Religion in the Diaspora**

Recent years have seen the on-going tragic refugee crisis, with millions of people being displaced because of war and ecological disasters. This course deals with the meaning of refuge, exile, and diaspora through three perspectives: philosophical, historical, and literary. What does it mean to be forced to leave one's home? How is it possible to make sense of such a tragedy? What creative power can diaspora muster to the rescue of culture? In our search for answers, we will examine a variety of case studies including the contemporary refugee crises in the Middle East, the border between the United States and Mexico, the black transatlantic, and the destruction of the temple in the Hebrew Bible. This course is a project-based Service Learning in which all assignments are geared toward the final project, in which each student will produce a radio show based on an analysis of a refugee crisis of their choice. These shows will air on WESU 88.1 FM Middletown. To learn more and listen to previous seasons of last year's radio shows visit <https://reli213.site.wesleyan.edu>

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI213**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST216 Jesus Through Jewish Eyes**

In this course, we explore the visual and textual representations of the vexed relation between Jews and Christians throughout history. Looking at the various ways in which Christianity and Judaism define themselves vis-à-vis the other allows us to understand what mechanisms of cultural appropriation, subversion, and hidden polemics are at work. Special attention will be given to the figure of Jesus as a point of artistic and theological contention. How do artistic representations change our understanding of religious themes? What is at stake for each religion in the encounter with the other? What are the political implications of theological debates? Is this dialogue needed, or even possible, in our post-secular age?

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI216**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST217 The Cinema of Steven Spielberg**

Last year, Steven Spielberg released his most personal film, *The Fabelmans*, cementing his position as the most prolific Jewish-American filmmaker of our time. This course will study Spielberg's illustrious career and how he changed American filmmaking and American society. In light of his new biographical film, it will also examine how his Jewishness informed his work: sometimes as a text, in films such as *Schindler's List* and *Munich*, and sometimes as subtext, in films such as *E.T.* and *West Side Story*. This rich body of work will allow us to explore the intersection of many different subjects: film and history, tradition and modernity, childhood and adulthood, Jewishness and otherness, and how a nice Jewish boy became a national treasure.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST217F The Cinema of Steven Spielberg (FYS)**

Three years ago, Steven Spielberg released his most personal film, *The Fabelmans*, cementing his position as the most prolific Jewish-American filmmaker of our time. This course will study Spielberg's illustrious career and how he changed American filmmaking and American society. In light of his new biographical film, it will also examine how his Jewishness informed his work: sometimes as a text, in films such as *Schindler's List* and *Munich*, and sometimes

as subtext, in films such as *E.T.* and *West Side Story*. This rich body of work will allow us to explore the intersection of many different subjects: film and history, tradition and modernity, childhood and adulthood, Jewishness and otherness, and how a nice Jewish boy became a national treasure.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST218 Netflix and Shul: Jews on TV**

Jews have always been an inseparable part of the small screen--first, mainly (but not only) as writers and producers, and gradually as characters and protagonists. Today, American television is more Jewish than ever. Jews changed TV. But did it also change them? This course will study the long history of Jews and Jewishness in American Television--from *The Goldbergs* in the 40's through *Seinfeld* and *Mad Men* in the 90's and 00's to *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Russian Doll* today. Each class will revolve around one episode of a show and discuss how it reflects on different aspects of Jewish life--Jewish humor, Jewish crime, Jewish Upward mobility, Jewish guilt, the Jewish mother, Jewishness and whiteness, antisemitism and more. In keeping with the Jewish tradition, we will obviously ask many questions, including the most complex one--What does "Jewish" mean?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST219 The Environment, The Bible, and Moral Debate**

The environment is a pressing concern for many people and is the center of much modern debate. Within this debate, many people draw on biblical texts for a source of religious or moral superiority. These biblical texts have been used to support many different, and often contradictory, arguments within the environmental debate. So what does the bible actually say about the environment? Is there a singular "biblical" view about what the environment is and how one should treat it? This course aims to look at how the bible has been used in environmental debate and then look at the texts cited, analyzing both in a modern and ancient context.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI217, ENVS217**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST221 Jewish Identity in the Ancient World**

Jewish Identity is not monolithic but instead, wonderfully, varied, and diverse. The Hebrew Bible gives a multitude of accounts of how many different identities within the course of history came to be and through analyzing these accounts, this course will aim to answer the questions of: What did Jewish Identity look like in the time period of ancient Israel? What variety of identities can be seen in the Hebrew Bible itself? What key historical events aided in the development of different identities in the ancient world? What was the process of identity formation in the ancient world? Is that process of identity formation different than how one might construct identity today? Is it right to even speak of Jewish Identity in 600-700 years in which the Hebrew Bible was written?

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI223**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST222 Identity and Jewish Literature: Sexuality, Race, and Gender**

What, if anything, is Jewish literature? What, if anything, does it tell us about the history of the people called Jews? This course explores those questions through a variety of sources from Jewish writers, including Sholem Aleichem, Cynthia Ozick, Franz Kafka, I.B. Singer, and others (flexible based on student interest). Through these readings, we will explore how Jewish literature relates to broader questions of sexuality, race, gender, colonialism, etc., as well as specific questions of Jewish history, like the Holocaust and the state of Israel. All works will be read in translation and no previous knowledge of Jewish studies or Judaism is required.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **RELI222, FGSS222**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST223 Israeli Women Filmmakers and the Israeli Society**

Historically, women filmmakers account for only around seven percent of the films produced in Israel, reflecting the marginalization of the female voice in the local society, culture, and discourse. However, in the last decade, they have finally moved to the center stage to create some of our time's most successful and essential Israeli films. This course will discuss Israeli women's cinema from artistic and historical vantage points. Students will engage in critical thinking and use film theory and terminology to analyze the featured films, and to contextualize them in the broader context of Israeli history. This analysis will reveal recent shifts in Israeli society, including how women find their place in the army, how they fight the patriarchal religious institutions, and how they turn the Israeli His-tory into the Israeli Her-story. Furthermore, the course will touch on more universal questions on narrative structure, representation, and the male and the female gaze.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST224 The Holocaust in Contemporary Popular Culture**

How to describe the indescribable and to speak the unspeakable? Long after the end of World War II, filmmakers still grapple with these questions, and their answers vary ethically and aesthetically. This course will discuss depictions of the Holocaust in contemporary popular culture. We will touch on graphic novels, TV sketches, and social media, but mainly focus on film. While the time frame will be limited to mainly the last two decades, we will explore a vast range of texts including: Hollywood fare and East European art-house movies; gritty dramas and dark comedies; reenactments of real-life events and alternative history. From Hipster Hitler to the Jojo Rabbit, from "Inglorious Basterds" to "Son of Saul," what all these examples share is an artistic and thematic audacity. We will examine how they try to propose new and unsettling answers to old but ever-vital questions: How did the Holocaust happen and might it happen again?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **GRST224**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST225 Angels in America, Devils Wearing Prada & How Jews Became (Almost) Mainstream**

For many years, the mantra in American showbiz was "write Yiddish, cast British." The writers were Jewish, as were the humor and sensibilities of their work, yet the characters were often depicted as WASPs. This dynamic began to shift between the late 1980s and early 2000s, marking a transformative period for Jewish representation in American media. Adam Sandler performed "The

Chanukah Song" on SNL; Seinfeld became the first sitcom with a Jewish lead character to top the Nielsen ratings; the Jewish American epic Angels in America won a Tony Award before being adapted into an Emmy-winning limited series; and a Jewish scientist helped save the world in the blockbuster Independence Day. Jewish protagonists and themes became increasingly prominent in other iconic shows and films of the era. However, this transition was neither smooth nor absolute. For example, network executives pushed Seinfeld to minimize the Jewishness of all its characters except the lead; Friends obscured the Jewish identity of its protagonists; and the best-selling novel The Devil Wears Prada lost its Jewish elements when adapted for the screen. This course examines how and why Jews became mainstream, cool, and "sexy"; but only to a certain extent; while exploring the limits of Jewish acceptance in American culture. We will analyze how media representations grapple with themes such as assimilation, interfaith marriage, faith, and guilt. These discussions will also serve as a basis for addressing broader issues of representation and stereotyping. Most importantly, the course will center on two critical questions: What does it mean to be Jewish? And what does it mean to be Jewish in America?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST230 Antisemitism in Popular Culture**

Antisemitism is a complex subject. This course employs popular culture to study it. We will explore a wide range of texts from different periods. Some promote Antisemitism, and some challenge or combat it. We will examine how bigots use the media to spread hate, how Jews and their peers use it to challenge jew hatred, and how popular culture sometimes subconsciously perpetuates harmful stereotypes. We will discuss how humor and satire are utilized to tackle serious issues. We will also see how popular culture views Antisemitism in the broader context of White supremacy and violence directed at other minority groups. Most importantly, we will ask -- what can we learn from the media on Antisemitism, and what can Antisemitism teach us about the media?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST231 The Holocaust in Art-House Cinema**

Theodor Adorno famously wrote in 1949 that "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric," but what about making movies? Some prominent filmmakers agreed with Adorno and refused to make films about the Holocaust, on the grounds that it was an immoral and impossible task. Other directors turned the tragedy into commercial entertainment, didactic sermons, or action-filled blockbusters. This course will focus on the filmmakers who sought a middle ground. They argued that the Holocaust is a story that cannot but must be told, and they experimented with the medium of film to find ways to tell it without exploiting its horrors. Throughout the semester, we will watch classics like Night and Fog, recent films like Zone of Interest and The Brutalist, iconic epics like Shoah and Come and See, and lesser-known films. Through this challenging body of work, we will inquire if and how it is possible to describe the indescribable and speak the unspeakable. We will examine what films can teach us about the Holocaust and what the Holocaust can teach us about filmmaking. Finally, we will question whether these films are truly distinct from Hollywood's war and genocide narratives -- are they also not manipulative? Are they also not barbaric?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST233F Holocaust Remembrance in Germany: The Third Generation (FYS)**

Remembering the Nazi past is a fundamental aspect of postwar German culture. In this course, we will trace the Holocaust's aftermath in contemporary German literature and thought. We will pay close attention to the socio-cultural and historical-political changes in attempts to glean new meanings from a past that is both omnipresent and highly evanescent. It will be our particular concern to encounter versions of Jewish identity and attempts to prescribe different narratives. We will focus especially on contrasting the creative works of the immediate postwar period and "the third generation." These contemporary writers explore a historical trauma that has become an integral part of specific Jewish-German identity. At the same time, their temporal and personal distance to the actual events necessitates new imaginative approaches to the past. Careful readings of literary, theoretical, journalistic, and historical texts, as well as personal discussions will enable us to critically think about the challenges and limits of how to write about the Holocaust 70 years after it occurred, and how the difficulties in doing so might inform other kinds of writing about historical and personal trauma. Students need to read Olga Grjasnowa's "All Russians Love Birch Trees" prior to the start of the course. Students will have Zoom class discussions and intensive peer-feedback-driven writing practice.

Offering: **Crosslisting**Grading: **OPT**Credits: **1.00**Gen Ed Area: **HA-GRST**Identical With: **GRST233F**Prereq: **None****CJST234 Israel in Therapy: Society Under the Influence of TV Series**

The course deals with the prototypes of the Israeli character as they appear in the original Israeli TV series *In Treatment*, and other Israeli TV series, such as *Florentine* and *A Touch Away*. We will compare the structure and the characters of the series to other dramatic Israeli series, examine the appearance of the characters, and discuss the similarities and differences between the roles they perform. In addition, we will examine the role of television drama series as a tool to define and characterize our societies, and also look over the five characters that appear in the first season of *In Treatment*, define them, and examine the five prototypes of the Israeli character they represent.

The instructor is the co-creator and head screenwriter of the original version of the TV series *In Treatment* as well as the Center for Jewish Studies distinguished Visiting Professor.

Offering: **Host**Grading: **A-F**Credits: **1.00**Gen Ed Area: **HA-CJST**Identical With: **FILM311**Prereq: **None****CJST234F Instances of Collective Memory (FYS)**

Both history and fiction tell stories. They evaluate facts, construct contexts, and foreground patterns and associations—all using language as their primary tool. In this course, we will analyze key moments in the formation of collective and cultural memories in 20th-century history, philosophy, and literature. We will think about how individual memory and collective remembrance connect, how larger stories are built up from archives and personal stories, and how these narratives are shaped by changes in the world around them. We'll pay special attention to how the World Wars and the Cold War are memorialized and to the importance of these narratives to contemporary Jewish identity and remembrance in Germany, Israel, and the United States.

Offering: **Crosslisting**Grading: **OPT**Credits: **1.00**Gen Ed Area: **HA-WRCT**Identical With: **WRCT117F, GRST234F**Prereq: **None****CJST241 Anne Frank's Diary and its Legacy**

Since its publication, "The Diary of Anne Frank" has become one of the bestselling non-fiction books of all time. Moreover, it has inspired numerous adaptations in different forms: films, stage plays, TV series, graphic novels, and more. In this course, we will closely read the original diary, and engage with various incarnations, asking: Why did the world iconize Anne Frank, and is it a lionization or an appropriation? What does this global phenomenon tell us about the legacy of the Holocaust and of Anne Frank, and, finally, what does Anne Frank's diary tell us about the world?

Offering: **Host**Grading: **A-F**Credits: **1.00**Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**Prereq: **None****CJST244 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament)**

The Hebrew Bible is one of the most influential texts in the world. From antiquity to the present, it has served as a source of philosophical, literary, and artistic reflection. It is a fascinating document, combining narrative, poetry, law, prophetic proclamations, and puzzling parables. What kind of book is the Hebrew Bible? Who wrote it and why? How do we approach such a text across the distance of time? Through a systematic reading from the very beginning, we will place the Bible in its historical context while giving special attention to the philosophical and literary questions it raises: Is obedience to authority always justified? Why do good people suffer unjustly? What is God's gender? In answering these and other questions, you will gain an understanding of the ways contesting interpretations make authoritative claims.

Offering: **Crosslisting**Grading: **OPT**Credits: **1.00**Gen Ed Area: **HA-RELI**Identical With: **RELI201, MDST203, WLIT281**Prereq: **None****CJST248 Designing Reality in Israeli Documentary Film**

In the last decade, Israeli documentary films have crossed borders not just geographically but also by their form and style. They are bold, courageous and provocative. They have been participating in prestigious international film festivals, receiving important awards and mostly bringing the Israeli audience back to the cinema, having a crowd power like fiction films. So what makes Israeli documentary films a "hot property"? In this class we will look for the answers by watching and discussing 14 Israeli documentary films (among them "Paper Doll," "In Satmar Custody," "Presenting Princess Shaw," "No.17"). The course will raise questions about reality and the construction of reality in Israeli documentary films.

Offering: **Host**Grading: **A-F**Credits: **1.00**Gen Ed Area: **HA-CJST**Prereq: **None****CJST249 From Black and White to Colors: Israeli Cinema, a Melting Pot Fragmented**

The course will focus on Israeli cinema as a reflection of a society that was founded as a melting pot for all Jews and became sectorial. Israeli cinema originated as a tool for establishing a unified national identity evolved over the years into a means of expression for ethnically defined subcultures within society. During the course, the students will explore past and contemporary films and will follow the shift they represent in the current Israeli experience turning away from the original Zionist core into several isolated groups distinguished

by ethnicity, traditions, and language. We will examine Moroccan, Persian, Georgian, Russian, Yiddish, Ethiopian, Arab, etc. films produced in Israel by local filmmakers digging deep into the experience of immigration, seclusion, rediscovering their roots, and even expressing yearnings to the countries of origin.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST250 Eyes Wide Shut: The Eternal Presence of the Absent Arab in Israeli Cinema**

The course will focus on contemporary Israeli cinema and how it reflects shifts in local society; mainly the ways in which a new national identity and culture are being forged at the expense of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict--which is marginalized, repressed, sublimated, or left out altogether. As this concerns mainly the Hebrew-speaking cinema, we will also discuss the emergence of an unprecedented wave of Arab-speaking Israeli-Palestinian cinema, which is thematically groundbreaking. This introduction to the new generation of Israeli filmmakers, who differ dramatically from their predecessors, will help us better understand the ever-changing Israeli society. Watching closely, we will discover that the conflict is always present in the Israeli experience, even when it is seemingly absent. An optional CLAC course, which is conducted in Hebrew and carries a full credit, is offered to students with advanced Hebrew skills. The course will include visits from scholars in the field, watching movies in Hebrew and/or with Hebrew subtitles and students' presentations.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST252 The Five Rachels: Jewish Women in Contemporary American Culture**

The course will focus on five iconic contemporary female TV characters, actors, and creators; American, Jewish, and incidentally--or not--sharing the same name: Rachel. Rachel Green ("Friends"), Rachel Berry ("Glee"), Rachel Menken ("Mad Men"), and Rebecca Bunch ("Crazy Ex-Girlfriend"), played by Rachel Bloom, and Midge Maisel ("The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"), played by Rachel Brosnahan. These five complement each other and offer us a panoramic view of the American Jewish female experience: discrimination, inclusion, the generational gap, and their relationship with Israel. In addition, they allow us to explore the three most common stereotypes associated with the Jewish woman: the Jewish nose, the Jewish mother, and the Jewish American princess. We will discuss the conflicts and the societal shifts these characters embody, and how they define themselves, their Jewishness, their femininity, their unique surroundings, and place in history.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **RELI252**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST253 Jews and Therapy in Films, Books and Television**

Popular culture features many depictions of therapy. More often than not, these representations have some kind of Jewish relation: the creators of the media are Jewish, the therapist is Jewish, the patient(s) are Jewish, or all of the above. From Freud's iconic psychoanalytic couch to potato couches watching shows about his legacy, this course will examine the long-time connection between Jews and treatment. We will read books, watch romantic and horror films, binge on limited series, and ask: what can we learn from therapy about Jewish culture and history, and what can Jews teach us about therapy?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST254 Four Bar Mitzvahs and a Funeral: Being Young and Jewish in America**

How is the American Jewish experience viewed from the perspective of Jewish children and young adults? This course will discuss depictions of Jewish coming-of-age in American popular culture. We will examine various age groups from elementary school to college, and through various art forms--literature, film, and television. Analyzing these works together will illuminate different facets of Jewish American life including immigration, assimilation, education, tradition, family, anti-Semitism, and more. They will also allow us to broach more universal questions surrounding representation, identity, and the complex relationship between popular culture and society.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST272 Ethics After the Holocaust**

The philosopher Theodor Adorno declared, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." The Holocaust is a challenge to our understanding of modern society, ethics, and what it means to be human after Auschwitz. In this course, we will investigate how the Holocaust orients contemporary discussions on questions of guilt, forgiveness, and evil. What does it mean to remember, to forgive, and to forget? Can one ethically represent the Holocaust in art? We will explore these questions using various sources, including works by Hannah Arendt, Adorno, and Emmanuel Levinas, as well as museums, memorial sites, and cinematic representations.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI272, GRST266**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST272F Ethics After the Holocaust (FYS)**

The philosopher Theodor Adorno declared, "To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric." The Holocaust is a challenge to our understanding of modern society, ethics, and what it means to be human. We will engage films, graphic novels, art, and philosophical works as we try and grapple with the contemporary presence and relevance of the Holocaust. Are comparisons of other genocides to the Holocaust helpful or offensive? Was the Holocaust a lapse into barbarism or a dark side to the logic of modernity? We will see how thinkers such as Hannah Arendt, Emmanuel Levinas, and Martin Buber grappled with these and related questions such as the problem of evil, the meaning of suffering, and the presence of God in the death camps.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI272F, GRST266F**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST280 The Jewish Mother**

What is a "Jewish Mother"? Is it a technical definition--a mother who is Jewish, a Jew who is a mother? Or is it a more abstract notion--a character trait, a mindset, an attitude? What are the qualifiers required to be crowned (or not) as a "Jewish Mother"? This course will examine how the "Jewish Mother" depiction evolved and became a stock character in American culture. We will engage with different forms of content, from different periods and perspectives: feature films, TV series, pop music, novels, and non-fiction books. Through these texts, we will



discuss how daughters and sons view and confront their mothers, and how they reflect on the mother's presence or absence with anger, frustration, confusion, longing, admiration and gratitude. Finally, we will compare the depiction of the "Jewish Mother" to other non-Jewish matriarchs and ultimately ask: in current popular American culture, are all mothers actually "Jewish Mothers"?

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST281 Political Fantasies of Zion**

Palestine, Zion, Judah, the Promised Land. A small piece of land in the Middle East has a very long and contested history full of religious meaning for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Some imagine the State of Israel as an island--"the only democracy in the Middle East" or the only Western state in the region--surrounded by a hostile environment. The geographical area, by contrast, has often been portrayed as a crossroad, a place where cultures clashed, merged, and exchanged ideas.

In this class, we will examine this tension between a physical and imagined space, between political reality and idea, by recovering alternative Zionist, non-Zionist, and anti-Zionist visions of the Zion. Jewish statehood is a very recent phenomenon. Throughout the modern period, the vast majority of Jews lived under empires, whether Habsburg, French, Romanov, British, or Ottoman. How did the imperial experience shape Jewish religious and political views? What role does the imagination of Zion play in today's political context? Reading political pamphlets, poetry, maps, artworks, and utopian fiction, we will pay attention to the construction of the Zionist idea not just in political Zionism but also in contrasting visions including Canaanism, cultural Zionism, diaspora nationalism, a Jewish-Arab federation, a binational state, and the rejection of statehood as heresy. In the last part of the class, we will look at recent contemporary issues from the news, e.g., the agreements between the State of Israel and the United Arab Emirates, or government corruption in Israel, in order to see how these ideas of Zion are still present in today's discourse.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-CHUM**

Identical With: **CHUM281, RELI281**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST295 Religion in Dungeons and Dragons**

As a fantasy roleplaying game, Dungeons & Dragons has been prevalent for over 40 years. In this game, players partake in fantastical journeys, slaying beasts, completing quests, and interacting with divine beings. Though not often discussed, religion has played an important role in Dungeons & Dragons since its creation: clerics pray to their gods and invoke physical changes in the world, strange cults organize and perform perverse rites, summoning ancient beings for evil. There have been many different editions of Dungeons & Dragons, and each treats these religious elements in a different way. This course answers the questions, "What role does religion play within Dungeons & Dragons and how does the presentation of religion within Dungeons & Dragons map onto scholarly trends within Religious Studies?"

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI295**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST311 Pain and Punishment in the Hebrew Bible**

The Hebrew Bible has many graphic depictions of pain and punishment; some inflicted upon the Israelites and many inflicted by the Israelites themselves. Many of the laws of the Hebrew Bible describe the proper ways to inflict punishment and many of those same laws describe the ways in which someone might be absolved of punishment. This course aims to answer the questions of: What role did pain and punishment play in the ancient world? How was the physical experience of either connected to religious experience? In what ways was pain, and often disgust, utilized to either connect or separate someone from the divine? What is the relationship between divinity, power, physicality, and punishment? In asking these questions, this course will demonstrate that, much of the time, spirituality, devotion, and religiousness, need not be divorced from the physical world and need not be considered metaphysical qualities.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI311**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST312 Judaism in the Time of Jesus**

This course is designed to help us understand the emergence of Judaism--its practices and beliefs, as a philosophy, a way of life, a religion--from the formation of the Hebrew Bible (ca. 400 BCE) to the parallel development of rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity (ca. 100 CE). We will be concerned with the creation of community and its institutions, the rise of sectarianism and claims of normativity, the creation of the Bible as scripture and various modes of its interpretation, the relationship of early Judaism to ancient Israelite religion and society, and relations between Jews and Judaism to gentiles and gentile culture. Attention will be given to the creativity of Jewish literature, its common setting in times of oppression, and its place in the religious heritage of Judaism and Christianity.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI312**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST314 Curating Religion: Museums, Monuments, and Memorials**

Museums, monuments, and memorial sites have long been important sites for public reckoning with the past. But they are not only about the past, they represent present struggles about the meaning of history and the possibility of imagining different futures. In this multidisciplinary class, we will work as a group to examine diverse case studies in which religion and memorial culture intersect in acts such as curation, representation, conservation, and repatriation. Visiting exhibitions and working with Wesleyan's collections, some of the questions we will ask include: What are the ethics of the treatment of objects in museums and of repatriation? How does space shape religious experience in an arguably secular setting? How do monuments invoke religious imagery and symbolism in their construction of history? In what ways does placing something behind a glass case give it a religious aura, and in what ways does it drain an object of its sacralty?

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-RELI**

Identical With: **RELI313, ANTH314**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST315 Hebrew in the Media: From National Literature to International Films and TV Shows (CLAC 1.0)**

This new language course is offered as an enrichment opportunity to students with intermediate or advanced Hebrew skills who are interested in improving

all their language skills and/or acquiring additional linguistic and cultural preparation for study abroad in Israel. Cultural activities including participating in the 23rd Annual Contemporary Israeli Voices 2025 and Lunch and Learn meetings with native speakers are part of the course. In addition, special writing workshops with internationally renowned Israeli scholars will be integrated into the course curriculum. The course explores the changes in Israeli society as it moves from national ideological literature to the exploration of new multicultural media such as films and TV shows and thus gaining international fame and inspiring widespread emulation. The course may be repeated for credit. This course is part of Wesleyan's Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) initiative sponsored by the Center for Global Studies. For more information, please check <http://wesleyan.edu/cgs/eventsprograms/clac/index.html>.

The course counts toward the minor in Jewish and Israel Studies.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **CGST323, HEBR315**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST319 Crisis, Creativity, and Modernity in the Weimar Republic, 1918--1933**

Born in defeat and national bankruptcy; beset by disastrous inflation, unemployment, and frequent changes of government; and nearly toppled by coup attempts, the Weimar Republic (1918--1933) produced some of the most influential and enduring examples of modernism. Whether in music, theater, film, painting, photography, design, or architecture, the Weimar years marked an extraordinary explosion of artistic creativity. New approaches were likewise taken in the humanities, social sciences, psychology, medicine, science, and technology, and new ideas about sexuality, the body, and the role of women were introduced. Nevertheless, Weimar modernism was controversial and generated a backlash that caused forces on the political right to mobilize to ultimately bring down the republic. This advanced seminar explores these developments and seeks to understand them within their political, social, and economic contexts to allow for a deeper understanding of Weimar culture and its place within the longer-term historical trajectory of Germany and Europe. This perspective allows for an appreciation of the important links between Weimar modernism and Imperial Germany, as well as an awareness of some of the important continuities between the Weimar and Nazi years.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **SBS-HIST**

Identical With: **HIST319, GRST264**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST321 Dialogues of Love: A Close Reading**

Towards the end of the fifteenth century amidst the burgeoning cultures of the Italian Renaissance in Naples, Genova, and Venice, the exiled Ibero-Sephardic philosopher and physician Judah Abravanel (Leone Ebreo) composed a philosophical work on erotic ethics as a dialogue between love (Philone) and wisdom (Sophia). "The Dialogues of Love" (1535) presented early modern readers with an erotic cosmology which drew upon Ancient and Medieval texts including Plato, Neo-Platonism, Neo-Aristotelianism, Kabbalah, and scriptural commentary. Widely translated, read, and reprinted throughout the sixteenth century, this text animated literary and cultural life throughout sixteenth-century Europe, finding its way into the work of poets and fiction writers such as Miguel de Cervantes. This course engages this unique and breathtaking work of early modern philosophy through a close reading of a Renaissance cosmos staged as a lovers' courtship.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-COL**

Identical With: **COL321, RL&L321, MDST321**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST353 Race, Ethnicity, and Religion in Medieval Literature**

Why do white supremacists celebrate the European Middle Ages as a lost era of racial and religious purity? This course approaches that question by considering the emergence of medieval ideas of race, ethnicity, and religious difference. We will also think through the meaning of these categories in medieval studies. Our focus will be on a selection of texts dealing with encounters--real and imaginary--of Western European Christians with cultures from the Mongol Empire to the Jewish communities in their own territories. The readings will begin historically with the Crusades and the gruesome chronicles written by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish authors. We will move on to religious polemics, travel accounts, and romances: fictions that re-imagine the past in terms of exoticized sexuality, racial transformation, cannibalism, and nationalist fantasy.

Offering: **Crosslisting**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-ENGL**

Identical With: **ENGL353, MDST353**

Prereq: **None**

#### **CJST401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate**

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

#### **CJST402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate**

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

#### **CJST411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate**

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

#### **CJST412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate**

Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

#### **CJST413 Israeli Cinema (CLAC 1.0)**

This Hebrew course will be linked to the film course, taught in English, entitled CJST 250: Eyes Wide Shut: The Eternal Presence of the Absent Arab in Israeli Cinema. This course is targeted toward students with very advanced knowledge of the Hebrew language. Students will mostly view the same films as the parent class, with special attention to the Hebrew language. We will analyze, discuss, and write on each of the films. The focus of the course will be to map the cultural and social changes in Israeli society reflected in the transformation in format and themes of Israeli films. Scholar visits will be part of the course, and students will attend a few cultural enrichment activities. This course may be repeated for credit. This course is part of Wesleyan's Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) initiative; for more information, see <https://www.wesleyan.edu/cgs/eventsprograms/clac/index.html>.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **OPT**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-CJST, SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **CGST413, HEBR413**

Prereq: **None**

**CJST414 Israeli Cinema (CLAC 1.0)**

This most advanced Hebrew course can be taken either as a language enrichment course to the parent course, CJS223: Israeli Women Filmmakers and Israeli Society, or taken by itself independently as an advanced Hebrew course. The focus of the course will be studying films made by female filmmakers. Students will analyze, discuss, and write on the films with special attention to mapping the cultural and social changes in Israeli society as well as changes in films' formats and themes. Conversing in Hebrew with Israeli film directors and scholars during Lunch and Learn Meetings as well as attending the screening of films in Hebrew in the 19th Annual Ring Family Wesleyan University Israeli Film Festival and writing reflective papers on films will provide a cultural and social framework for the course. In addition, the course will include special workshops delivered by renowned Israeli filmmakers and scholars. The course may be repeated for credit. This course is part of Wesleyan's Cultures and Languages Across the Curriculum (CLAC) initiative sponsored by the Center for Global Studies. For more information, please check <http://wesleyan.edu/cgs/eventsprograms/clac/index.html>.

The course counts towards the Minor in Jewish and Israel Studies.

Offering: **Host**

Grading: **A-F**

Credits: **1.00**

Gen Ed Area: **HA-CJST, SBS-CJST**

Identical With: **CGST414, HEBR414**

Prereq: **None**