CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES (CJST)

CJST153 Ethnicity, Race, and Religion in the Middle Ages
This course concerns the invention of premodern ideas of ethnicity and race. Our focus will be on a selection of medieval texts dealing with the encounters—real and imaginary—of Western European Christians with other cultures, from the Celtic borderlands to the Mongol Empire. The readings will begin historically with the Crusades and the (often grisly) chronicles written by Christian, Muslim, and Jewish authors. Other genres will include religious polemics, autobiographical narratives of religious conversion, and travel accounts by missionaries, spies, and colonial propagandists. We will also read some later "romances" that re-imagine the crusades in terms of exoticized sexuality, racial transformation, cannibalism, and nationalist fantasy.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL153
Prereg: 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 the television show Transparent, 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: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI203
Prereg: None

CJST210 Jews & America
This course will investigate why Jews came to America and how they and their children adapted to their new home. It will explore American Jews’ relations with other groups, including the Irish Americans, African Americans and the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant elite, and Jews in other parts of the world. Finally, the course will consider Jews’ quite significant impact on the American economy, politics, society, and culture. Although it will begin with the colonial era, the course will focus primarily on the 19th and especially the 20th centuries.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST210
Prereg: None

CJST214 Refugees & Exiles: Religion in the Diaspora
Recent years have seen the ongoing tragic refugee crisis, with millions of people being displaced because of war and ecological disasters. That this crisis also has religious overtones is evident by the so-called travel ban in the United States or the rhetoric used by right wing leaders across Europe. This course deals with the meaning of refuge, exile, and diaspora through three perspectives: philosophical, historical, and literary. A variety of case studies—including the contemporary refugee crises in the Middle East, the black transatlantic, and the destruction of the temple in the Hebrew Bible—will raise for us various questions: What does it mean to be violently forced to leave one’s home? How is it possible to make sense of such a tragedy? What ethical responsibility do we have toward refugees? What creative power can diaspora muster to the rescue of culture? Assignments in this course will be based on an analysis of a refugee crisis selected by the students.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI213
Prereg: 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
Prereg: None

CJST221 From Literature to Cinema and Back: What Happens When Literary Works Are Adapted to Films
Israeli literature has a long history of the written word behind it, which sometimes serves as a burden for Hebrew writers. Israeli cinema, on the other hand, has no tradition of visual representation behind it, no iconic conceptual history. So what happens when a major literary work is adapted to film? Does the film maintain the same approach to the issues that the novel is confronting, or does it find new ways to deal with the subject, reconfiguring the perspective and the hierarchy of its inner elements?
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 0.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereg: 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

Center for Jewish Studies (CJST)
CJST236 Revival of the Israeli Cinema
This course will analyze the possible reasons for the current revival of Israeli cinema. We will explore the history of Israeli filmmaking in the context of the changes that the political and social climates in Israel have undergone over the years, focusing on the developing cinematic styles and the rises and falls of various cinematic movements. Selected Israeli films will be examined and discussed. This course will be taught by an Israeli film director.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereq: None

CJST238 Political Thought and Politics of Israel
Israel was founded as a state of the Jewish people. What political principles and practices are distinctive to it, and what ideas does it share more generally with modern political thought? Are there Israeli ideas of time, space, citizenship, virtue, equality, diversity, liberty, and justice? We will also look at Israel's basic laws, electoral system, political parties, and legislative and judicial decisions to see whether and how they form a political community.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: OPT
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-GOV
Identical With: GOVT394
Prereq: None

CJST240 When Private Meets Public in Israeli Documentary Films
Israeli documentary films reflect freedom of speech and democracy, but that wasn't always the case. The films that Israeli filmmakers were commissioned to create in the very early 1950s had to reflect the official voice of the Israeli establishment. There was no room but to serve the cause of building a nation in a state that had just been established. The year 1967 marked the beginning of a new era when, for the first time, the Israeli public broadcaster was on air, yet some daring films that were made back then were censored and have never been shown. Modernist documentaries of filmmakers David Perlov and David Greenberg opened the field to various voices; when the 1973 war broke, the consensus in Israeli society fell apart, and critical and radical documentaries started to be produced. The major revision happened when Channel 2 was licensed and the New Israeli Foundation for Cinema and TV was founded. Both paved the road for individual voices that could, from then on, tell very personal stories (no longer serving the establishment) and deconstruct controversial social and cultural subject matters.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereq: None

CJST241 Judaism(s): Religion, Power, and Identity in Jewish History
This course will offer students an intensive survey of the major currents in Jewish social, political, intellectual, and religious history, while focusing in particular on what it means to be a Jew in the 21st-century. The course explores how Jews are a culture, ethnicity, nation, nationality, race, religion, and more and how Jewishness gets constructed differently across different times and contexts. The course looks both locally and globally at the plurality of Jewish identities. Students will read primary historical texts from prominent Jewish thinkers and writers, as well as texts written about Jews by non-Jews.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI

CJST242 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 of the Hebrew Bible, we will place it in a historical context and learn to appreciate it as a core text of Judaism. Special attention will be given to the broader questions raised by the text: Is obedience to authority always justified? Why do good people suffer unjustly? What gender is God? In answering these and other questions, you will gain an understanding of the ways contesting interpretations make authoritative claims.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: RELI201, MDST203
Prereq: None

CJST243 Jewish Graphic Novels
This course will explore issues in Judaism and the Jewish experience through the medium of the graphic novel. Students will not only gain proficiency in critically reading graphic novels and sequential art, they will also gain a grasp on some of the major issues in Jewish history including (but not limited to) immigration, life in America, the Holocaust, and Israel/Palestine.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Identical With: RELI217
Prereq: None

CJST244 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

CJST272 Thinking After the Holocaust
The Holocaust is an epoch-making event that challenges many ideas about the modern world, human nature, and God. In this course, we examine some of the difficult questions raised in the aftermath of this catastrophe: Can one adequately represent such a catastrophe in words and images? What is the relation between modern bureaucracy and genocide? How have Jewish thinkers answered the question: Where was God during this dark period? Is it possible to forgive such atrocities, and if so, who has the right of forgiveness? In our search for answers, we will engage various sources, including philosophical and theological texts, films, and memorial sites.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
CJST278 American Jewish Humor
This course is a look at American Jewish history through one particular lens—that of the peculiar phenomenon of Jewish humor. There is a long history of Jews and humor that has nothing to do with the immigrant experience in America, but the immigrant experience in America nonetheless has a great deal to do with the humor that has been produced by Jews in this country, particularly in the 20th century. We will read some historical background on American Jews and some humor theory as our foundation for our understanding of film viewings, short stories, stand-up comedy performances, and musical recordings. By looking at the way Jewish humor changed throughout the 20th century, we should, in the end, be able to chart the way the lives of American Jews were changing and have a deeper understanding of the American Jewish experience.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: RELI278, AMST292
Prereq: None

CJST308 Funny, You Don't Look Jewish: Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Judaism
This course will give advanced students the opportunity to engage deeply with critical current issues in Judaism, including race, gender, and sexuality. In both the U.S. and Israel, issues of Jewish whiteness (or not), straightness (or not), and maleness (or not) dominate conversations about the direction Judaism will take in the 21st century and how Judaism can remain relevant in an increasingly globalized and secularized world.
Students in this course will read contemporary scholarship on those who have been traditionally pushed to the margins of Judaism and will be asked to wade into murky ethical waters as they think about the power of naming and who has the authority to determine "in" and "out."
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI308, FGSS313
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