The Center for Jewish Studies offers interdisciplinary courses in Jewish and Israel studies. All courses (required and elective) are counted toward the Certificate in Jewish and Israel Studies. The Center for Jewish Studies courses and workshops are taught by its core and affiliated faculty, as well as by distinguished visitors and scholars including film directors and internationally acclaimed writers and artists. The Center for Jewish Studies offers an innovative Hebrew program based on a unique model of incorporating language skills with cultural events, and all Hebrew courses are counted toward the Israeli track in the Certificate for Jewish and Israel Studies. In addition, the Center for Jewish Studies offers Wesleyan and the general community rich and innovative events and series linked to other departments, programs, and colleges at the University. Among them, the annual Contemporary Israeli Voices series in the fall, the annual Ring Family Wesleyan University Israeli Film Festival in the spring, the annual Samuel and Dorothy Franke Memorial Lecture, and the annual Jeremy Zwelling Lecture. To be engaged with the larger Wesleyan community, the Center for Jewish Studies sponsors WESeminars presented by its faculty.

FACULTY

Dalit Katz
BA, Hebrew University; MA, Hebrew University
Adjunct Associate Professor of Religion; Director, Center for Jewish Studies

CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES

CJST153F Ethnicity, Race, and Religion in the Middle Ages (FYS)
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, autobiography, 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 nationalistic fantasy.
Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL153F
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: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: SBS-RELI
Identical With: RELI203
Prereq: 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
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. 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: RELI214
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

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
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: FILMS311
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
Identical With: RELI204
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-RELI
Identical With: RELI217
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 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-CJST
Identical With: RELI201
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
Identical With: MDST203, RELI201
Prereq: None

CJST249 From Black & 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

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 and other 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
HEBREW

HEBR101 Elementary Hebrew I
This first part of a two-semester course is designed to develop the basic language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension, and basic Hebrew grammar. Emphasis is on modern Israeli Hebrew. No previous knowledge of Hebrew is required. Multimedia and authentic resources will be incorporated into class work. Independent lab work, as well as participation in cultural and literary enrichment activities by Israeli scholars, is required.
Offering: Host
Grading: Amp Graded
Credits: 1.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereq: None

HEBR102 Elementary Hebrew II
This course is a continuation of HEBR101 with emphasis on enlarging vocabulary, grammar, composition, and further developing language skills. Multimedia resources and computer programs will be used to enhance listening and comprehension. Exposure to cultural material will also be included. Independent lab work, as well as participation in the Israeli film festival, is required.
Offering: Host
HEBR201 Intermediate Hebrew I
This course follows HEBR101 and 102. Emphasis is divided among the four basic language skills: reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension. Instruction of Hebrew grammar will be enhanced. Multimedia resources as well as computer programs will be used in the appropriate cultural context. Lab work with digitized films is required. Visits by Israeli scholars will be integrated into course curriculum.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereq: HEBR101

HEBR202 Intermediate Hebrew II
This course is a continuation of HEBR201 with more advanced grammar and increased emphasis on speaking as well as reading more complicated texts, including literary texts. Various multimedia resources, computer programs, and the Internet will be used to enhance listening, composition, and comprehension skills. Exposure to appropriate cultural material such as Israeli films will also be included. Participation in all activities related to the Israeli film festival is required as part of the course curriculum.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereq: HEBR102

HEBR211 Hebrew Literature
This seminar will survey contemporary Hebrew poetry, prose, plays, and films with emphasis on aspects of sociohistorical issues and the ways in which modern Hebrew literature enriches and brings deeper understanding of collective Jewish experiences and shapes the reality of modern Israel. The course will seek to increase the fluency and complexity of the students’ expression and comprehension and generate a greater appreciation of the uniqueness of the language. Literary scholars’ visits will be incorporated into the curriculum.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereq: HEBR201

HEBR401 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

HEBR402 Individual Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

HEBR407 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

HEBR408 Senior Tutorial (downgraded thesis)
Downgraded Senior Thesis Tutorial - Project to be arranged in consultation with the tutor. Only enrolled in through the Honors Coordinator.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

HEBR409 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

HEBR410 Senior Thesis Tutorial
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: A-F

HEBR411 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

HEBR412 Group Tutorial, Undergraduate
Topic to be arranged in consultation with the tutor.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT

HEBR492 Teaching Apprentice Tutorial
The teaching apprentice program offers undergraduate students the opportunity to assist in teaching a faculty member’s course for academic credit.
Offering: Host
Grading: OPT