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, the annual Jeremy Zwelling Lecture, and the center’s newest series, Jewish Cultures of the World. To be engaged with the larger Wesleyan community, the Center for Jewish Studies sponsors WESeminars presented by its faculty.

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

Nitzan Gilady
Silverberg Scholar in Residence in Jewish Studies

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
Prereq: None

CJST210 Jews & America
This course will focus primarily on the 19th and especially the 20th centuries. 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 “Muslim 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
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
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

CJST234 Israel in Therapy: Society Under the Influence of TV Series

This 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

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 T
Identical With: G OVT394

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
Identical With: RELI204
Prereq: None

CJST242 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): From Canaan to Canon

This course will offer students an introduction to the Hebrew Bible, or Tanakh, one of the three core scriptures of Judaism. The Hebrew Bible not only provides the mythic prehistory of both humanity and the Jewish people, it is also one of our best and most complete texts for understanding the world of ancient southwest Asia and the people who inhabited it. Approaching the Bible from a historical, critical hermeneutic allows students to analyze the information on the page as a separate data set from the religious or theological meaning of the page to various groups.
In addition to reading selections from all three sections of the Tanakh, students will also read noncanonical or apocryphal texts and discuss the reasons why these texts were not included in the Tanakh, although some of them are included in versions of the Old Testament. Students will also read various secondary texts to help them better understand issues of biblical authorship, the archaeology that helps us better understand the world of the Bible, and the social and political pressures that shaped the text into what we know today.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-RELI
Identical With: RELI201, MDST203
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-CJIST
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
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJIST
Prereq: None

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
Gen Ed Area: SBS-HIST
Identical With: HIST319, GRST264, CHUM319, RELI319
Prereq: None

CJST351 Debate and Destruction: Jews and Christians in the Middle Ages
This course will consider relations between the Jewish minority and their Christian neighbors in England before the Jews’ expulsion in 1290. We will also look at how the Jews are depicted in subsequent Christian writing. We will read texts originally written in Hebrew, French, and Latin (all in translation) as well as English, giving us a sense of the conversations that took place between two groups that were both inextricably bound together and set apart by centuries of conflict and persecution. Among the issues we will explore are the popularity of Jewish-Christian debate as a literary form, the Crusades, gender roles and gender fluidity, Jewish and Christian apocalyptic programs, and the curious afterlife of Jews in Middle English literature.

Offering: Crosslisting
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.00
Gen Ed Area: HA-ENGL
Identical With: ENGL351, MDST351, RELI351
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

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
Grading: A-F
Credits: 1.50
Gen Ed Area: HA-CJST
Prereq: HEBR101

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: Amp Graded
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: HEBR201

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 detects 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: HEBR202

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