JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM

Director, Professor David Freidenreich
Program Steering Committee: Professors David Freidenreich (Religious Studies), Véronique Plesch (Art), Raffael Scheck (History), and Robert Weisbrot (History); Associate Professors Damon Mayrl (Sociology) and John Turner (History); Assistant Professor Rachel Isaacs (Jewish Studies); Visiting Assistant Professor Kerry Sonia (Religious Studies)

The Jewish Studies Program creates transformational learning opportunities for students of all backgrounds by cultivating hands-on collaboration, mutual respect, concern for marginalized voices, and the dignity of high expectations. Through the study of Jewish traditions and experiences past and present, students gain a deeper understanding of how people construct and maintain communities, balance acculturation with the preservation of distinctiveness, and navigate challenges associated with prejudice, privilege, oppression, inequality, and injustice. Students also explore the evolution of cultural, ethnic, and religious identities as well as the interpretation of shared texts and practices. Jewish Studies courses develop broadly applicable skills associated with critical reading, reflective thinking, and effective communication. The program emphasizes personal mentorship and courses with civic engagement or global travel components.

Inspired by the rabbinic dictum, “learning leads to action,” the Jewish Studies Program works closely with the Center for Small Town Jewish Life to create teaching and leadership development opportunities for students as well as public programs for the Colby community and the people of Maine. Students and faculty members participate in interdisciplinary, campus, and public conversations, applying insights from Jewish Studies scholarship to contemporary challenges. Though a major in Jewish studies is not offered, interested students are encouraged to consult the director about an independent major.

Requirements for the Minor in Jewish Studies

A minimum of six Jewish studies courses, including the two core courses (Religious Studies 181 and 182) and one three- or four-credit course at the 300 or 400 level. Minors may count two two-credit courses or independent studies as the equivalent of a single course toward the requirement of six Jewish studies courses. Jewish Studies 125 does not count toward the minor. Minors may petition to receive credit toward the Jewish studies minor for up to three courses taken at other colleges and universities.

Successful completion of the minor requires a 2.00 average for all requirements above.

Courses listed below are described in the appropriate department sections of this catalogue.

Courses from Other Departments Approved for the Minor in Jewish Studies

Government
- 251 Israelis and Palestinians: Conflict and Accommodation
- 252 Introduction to Politics of the Middle East

History
- 421 Research Seminar: Debating the Nazi Past

Religious Studies
- 143 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament
- 144 Introduction to the New Testament
- 181 Conceptions of Jews and Judaism
- 182 Jews, Judaism, and the Modern World
- 221 The Jews of Maine
- 223 Religion in the Modern State of Israel
- 285 Faith, Class, and Community
- 322 Food and Religious Identity
- 346 Jews of Germany, Past and Present
- 387 Anti-Judaism and Islamophobia in Christian/Western Thought

Course Offerings

[JS121]  Entartete (Degenerate) Musik  Listed as Music 121.  Three credit hours.  A, I.

JS125f  Hebrew I  The first of three consecutive courses designed to develop fluency and accuracy in Modern Hebrew. Through an interactive approach to language learning, students gain communicative proficiency and a greater understanding of Israeli society. Videos, audio, and web materials introduce students to the nuanced and rich connections between Hebrew and Jewish culture in Israel and around
the world.  

**JS126s Hebrew II** The second of three consecutive courses designed to develop fluency and accuracy in Modern Hebrew. Students will deepen their knowledge of Hebrew grammar and further develop the facilities for written and oral communication in Hebrew. Delves more deeply into Israeli culture through media and literature. Prerequisite: Jewish Studies 125 or equivalent.  

**Four credit hours.**  ISAACS

**JS127f Hebrew III** The third of three consecutive courses designed to develop fluency and accuracy in Modern Hebrew. Students will deepen their knowledge of Hebrew grammar and further develop the facilities for written and oral communication in Hebrew. Delves more deeply into Israeli culture through media and literature. Prerequisite: Jewish Studies 126 or equivalent.  

**Four credit hours.**  ISAACS

**JS143f Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament** Listed as Religious Studies 143.  

**Four credit hours.**  L.  SONIA

**JS144s Introduction to the New Testament** Listed as Religious Studies 144.  

**Four credit hours.**  L.  SONIA

**JS181f Conceptions of Jews and Judaism** Listed as Religious Studies 181.  

**Four credit hours.**  H, I.  FREIDENREICH

**JS182s Jews, Judaism, and the Modern World** Listed as Religious Studies 182.  

**Four credit hours.**  H, I.  FREIDENREICH

**[JS219] Violence and Religion through the Centuries** Listed as Religious Studies 219.  

**Four credit hours.**

**[JS221] The Jews of Maine** Listed as Religious Studies 221.  

**Four credit hours.**  H.


**Two credit hours.**

**[JS226] Community Organizing and Social Justice** For decades, ordinary citizens have exercised their power on a local and state level using the principles of congregation-based community organizing (CBCO). In this hands-on introduction to the principles of CBCO, students will learn how to organize to build power and create political change. With special attention to the Jewish texts that underlie this work, we will focus on the history of Jewish involvement in social justice movements as a case study for making change. Guest speakers from across the country will share their experiences.  

**Three credit hours.**

**JS251f Israelis and Palestinians: Conflict and Accommodation** Listed as Government 251.  

**Four credit hours.**  S.  DENOEUX

**JS252f Introduction to Politics of the Middle East** Listed as Government 252.  

**Four credit hours.**  S.  DENOEUX

**[JS283] Golden Diaspora: Modern American Jewish History** Listed as History 283.  

**Four credit hours.**  H, U.

**JS285s Faith, Class, and Community** Listed as Religious Studies 285.  

**Four credit hours.**  U.  FREIDENREICH

**JS297f Contemporary Challenges in Israeli Society** Explores three major tensions that have emerged in Israel's pursuit of joining a democratic world order while ingathering Jewish exiles: (1) competing nationalisms, namely Zionism and Palestinian nationalism; (2) the integration of Jewish ethnic minorities into a shared Israeli identity; and (3) the relationship between religion and state. In excavating Israel's contemporary challenges, students will explore disagreeing worldviews and identify how tensions between competing values underpin conflict more broadly. This course focuses on Israel's internal landscape, within the boundaries of its internationally-recognized borders.  

**Four credit hours.**  I.  COHEN FISHER


**Four credit hours.**  S.

**[JS323] Holocaust in French Cinema** Listed as French 323.  

**Four credit hours.**

**[JS346] Jews of Germany, Past and Present** Listed as Religious Studies 346.  

**Four credit hours.**  H, I.

**[JS387] Anti-Judaism and Islamophobia in Christian/Western Thought** Listed as Religious Studies 387.  

**Four credit hours.**  I.

**JS397f Vienna 1900: Works from a Major Private Collection** Listed as Art 397.  

**Four credit hours.**  PLESCH
JS398s  The West Bank: Power, Politics, and Identity  Explores the settlement enterprise and its impact on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Students will analyze competing claims of indigeneity and settler colonialism, unpack how conceptions of power and powerlessness inform Jewish-Israeli and Palestinian narratives, and examine how the settlements create tension within Jewish-Israeli society. Students will conduct independent research that contributes to the discourse about power, politics, and identity in the West Bank. This course includes optional travel to Israel/Palestine during spring break, where students will meet with major stakeholders in Israeli and Palestinian society.  
Prerequisite: Permission of instructor.  
Four credit hours.  
COHEN FISHER

JS421f  Research Seminar: Debating the Nazi Past  Listed as History 421.  
Four credit hours.  
H, W3, I.  
SHECK

JS491f, 492s  Independent Study  One to four credit hours.  
FACULTY