Jewish Studies Winter 2018 Course Descriptions

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

COMM_ST 395-24: Topics in Israel Studies: Media and Minorities: Israel as a case study
E. Daskal, TTH 11:00 – 12:20pm
(See JWSH_ST 280-7 for description)

GERMAN

GERMAN 366-20: Yiddish Culture and the Holocaust
M. Moseley, MW 2:00 – 3:20pm
(See JWSH_ST 366 for description)

HEBREW

HEBREW 111-2: Hebrew I
H. Seltzer, MTWTH 11:00-11:50am

This is a course in elementary modern Hebrew. The course is designed to develop all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and an explicit knowledge of Hebrew grammar. Class work centers on learning new vocabulary and grammatical structures. These are introduced and exercised orally in anticipation of dealing with written dialogues and essays. Drills in the texts and on audio files expand and reinforce the new material. Independent lab work is part of the coursework.

HEBREW 121-2: Hebrew II
H. Seltzer, MTWTH 1:00-1:50pm

This is an intermediate level course in Hebrew. The purpose of the course is to enlarge the student's vocabulary and to reinforce and expand his/her knowledge of Hebrew grammar in order to improve conversational and writing skills as well as the ability to handle literary texts from biblical to modern.

HEBREW 216-2: Hebrew III: Topics in Hebrew Literature
H. Seltzer, TTH 9:30-10:50am

This is an advanced level course in Hebrew. Literary works ranging from the Old Testament to contemporary Hebrew prose and poetry will be read, discussed and analyzed orally and in writing. Northwestern students should have completed and received credit for Hebrew 121-3. New students must have permission of the instructor.
HISTORY

HISTORY 203-2: Jewish History II: 1492-1789
Y. Petrovsky-Shtern, MW 11:00 – 12:20pm

In 1492, the Spanish Catholic Kings issued a decree that banished Jews from the Iberian Peninsula allowing those who converted to stay. In 1789—1791, the French Revolutionary Parliament accepted Jews as legal citizens ushering in the era of Jewish emancipation. This course explores three centuries of radical changes that triggered the rise of more tolerant political and religious treatment of and attitude toward Jews.

HISTORY 349: History of the Holocaust
B. Frommer, MW 3:30 – 4:50pm (sections on THF)

This course examines the Holocaust of European Jews from its origins through its aftermath in the context of Nazi Germany’s murderous campaigns against other groups of victims, including the disabled, sexual minorities, Roma, and Slavs. We will read first-hand accounts and analyze primary documents written by victims and perpetrators as we seek to understand the causes, consequences, and extent of the genocidal policies of Germany and its Axis Allies from the rise of the Nazis to their ultimate defeat. From Vichy France in the West to the occupied Soviet territories in the East, the persecution, expropriation, and murder of millions involved civilians and state officials at all levels of government. With a special focus on Eastern Europe, where the greatest number of Jews lived, and nearly all of the murdered perished, we will explore questions of local complicity, the motives of perpetrators and of those who sought to impede them, and the responses of the region’s Jews and other victims to the onslaught. The course will end with a consideration of the fate of the survivors and the attempts by postwar European states to identify and punish the perpetrators of and profiteers from the Holocaust.

HISTORY 393: Holocaust Memory
D. Greene, MW 3:30 – 4:50pm

What did Americans know about the persecution and murder of Europe’s Jews as it occurred? How did Americans respond at the time? And how has the Holocaust been remembered in the United States? These questions are at the heart of this course on the Holocaust and memory. We will examine these questions through both primary and secondary sources as well as through historic and documentary films.

JEWISH STUDIES (JWSH_ST)

JWSH ST 210: Jewish Studies: An Overview
C. Sufrin, W 5:30 – 8:30pm

Jewish Studies encompasses the study of Judaism, Jewish history, Jewish culture and the lives of contemporary Jews. This course offers an introduction to the field through seminar-style discussions with members of NU’s Jewish Studies faculty. Students will become familiar with the methodologies scholars use to research, understand, and analyze Jewish culture while gaining knowledge of specific topics in Jewish Studies. Open to students of all backgrounds interested in a better understanding of the academic study of the humanities.
JWSH_ST 278: Tales of Love and Darkness: Modern Hebrew Literature
M. Moseley, TTH 2:00 – 3:20pm

The course aims to explore the poetic, the ideological and the gender implications of the interwoven themes of eros and isolation in Hebrew Literature from the turn of the 19th century to the present day. In doing so, we shall study the migration of these themes along with Hebrew literature itself from Europe to Palestine and ultimately the State of Israel. Has the rebuilding of the national “Home” brought the uprooted man his long lost masculinity? And how did the female writer incorporate/become incorporated by the “Talush” narrative? How do we account for the longevity of this sad and pathetic figure? This course provides an excellent introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature per se: we shall read classic texts by M.Y. Berdichevsky, Y.H. Brenner, S.Y. Agnon, alongside contemporary texts by A.B Yehoshua and David Grossman and others.

JWSH_ST 280 – 7: Topics in Israel Studies: Media and Minorities: Israel as a case study
E. Daskal, TTH 11:00 – 12:20pm
(also COMM_ST 395-24)

This course examines the relationship between media and minorities with a focus on the Israeli case. The course is divided into three parts. The first part will be dedicated to the study of the relationship between media and minorities using Kellner’s (2015) triangular perspective for analyzing cultural products: text, audience, and production. The second part of the course will be devoted to the study of the Israeli case while focusing on three main characteristics of Israel: Israel as an immigrant society, in which different minority groups live; Israel as a Jewish ethnic democracy, in which a large Palestinian minority resides; and Israel as a country, which was founded on the cultural ethos of a melting pot. The final section of the course will integrate the first two parts through analyses of empirical studies that have examined the issue of minorities in Israeli media, while addressing all three aspects - text, audience and production. The discussion, in this part, will touch upon the following conflicts in Israel that exist between: women and men, immigrants and Sabras, Jews and Arabs, Ashkenazim and Mizrahim, the geo-economic center and the periphery, and between the religious and secular.

JWSH_ST 366: Yiddish Culture and the Holocaust
M. Moseley, MW 2:00 – 3:20pm
(also GERMAN 366-20)

Modern Yiddish secular culture, language and literature was all but destroyed in its Eastern European homelands by the Nazis. Thus, after the Holocaust, secular Yiddish literature and culture endured as a spectral haunted remnant, a branch severed from the trunk doomed to extinction.

This course examines Modern Yiddish Literature written before the Holocaust that is uncanny in its premonitions of disaster; Yiddish literature written during the Holocaust--especially The Warsaw and Vilna ghetto diaries; the outpouring of Yiddish literary responses to the Holocaust from immediately after the event to the end of the twentieth century.

The literature examined remains a dark continent for the majority of scholars of both the Holocaust and of modern Jewish culture. Thus, this course serves also as an introduction to a magnificent literature in its own right.
RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RELIGION)

RELIGION 339-20: The “Occidental-Oriental” Divide in Israel
J. Ringel, MW 3:30 – 4:50

Israel is one of the few countries in the world in which the varieties of cultures from the “East” meet a variety of cultures from the “West” in such a way as to create a complex reality that affects all of society. This course will focus on the divide between “Eastern” (Sephardic/Mizrahi) Jews and “Western” (Ashkenazi) Jews in Israel by tracing this divide’s role in Israeli history and politics and its future trajectory. In doing so, we hope to explore how Israel’s failures and successes can shed light on the US’ relationship to the culture and politics of the “East.”

RELIGION 339-21: Reading the Talmud
B. Wimpfheimer, MW 11:00 – 12:20pm

The Talmud is one of the most important works of Jewish literature. For the last millennium, Talmud study has been a central part of Jewish religious and cultural practice. Despite the splintering of Judaism into different denominations, Jews the world over are unified by their commitment to studying Talmud. The Talmud is an unusual work of literature, and it has been credited as an influence on codes of law, sermons, modern works of Jewish literature, and even Seinfeld. This course will explain the Talmud’s import and durability within Jewish culture while introducing students to the rigors of legal analysis that lie at the heart of most Talmudic passages. The course is ideal for those interested in religion, law, logic games and questions of textual interpretation. The course will study the Talmud entirely in English translation; there is neither a language prerequisite nor an expectation of prior experience reading the Talmud.