Judaic Studies (JUST)

Courses

JUST 1600 Jews in the Islamic World, 632 C.E. - 1948 C.E. (4 Credits)
This course deals with Jewish history in the Islamic world from the death of Muhammad to the establishment of the state of Israel. Students are exposed to the political, social, and economic histories of various Jewish communities, many of which no longer exist, in numerous Islamic empires and/or political units. While studying these communities we also compare the treatment of Jews under Islamic rule to the treatment of Jews under Christian rule and the treatment of Christians under Islamic rule. Cross listed with HIST 1600. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

JUST 1610 The History of the Crusades: 1095-1300 (4 Credits)
This course traces the origins and development of the Crusading movement as well as its impact on Christian, Muslim, and Jewish society in Europe and the Middle East from the 11th through the 14th centuries C.E. This course also examines ideas of Christian/Muslim/Jewish difference in this period. We pay special attention to primary source material. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with HIST 1610.

JUST 2014 Religious Existentialism: Christian and Jewish (4 Credits)
Existentialism focuses on the human experience of living, often with a focus on the sheer freedom of the human condition. Religious existentialism subtly modifies this picture through its own vision of human freedom as the ultimate encounter between the human subject and God (with "God" understood in various ways). The religious existentialist in this sense philosophically explores that which is most-fully-human as a moment of relation and encounter between self and that which is beyond self. Starting with Sartre's non-religious statement of existentialism in Existentialism is a Humanism (1946), we go on to examine the Christian and Jewish existentialisms of Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Tillich (1886-1965), Buber (1878-1965), and Heschel (1907-1972). In the course of our reflections, we compare non-religious with religious approaches to basic questions about self, God and world, and we consider the relationship between Christian and Jewish existentialist approaches to these questions. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross-listed with PHIL 2014 and RLGS 2014.

JUST 2030 Spaces of Memory: Texts and Contexts of Argentina’s Dirty War (4 Credits)
From 1976-1983, the Argentine military government engaged in a campaign of terror against its citizens, some of whom were suspected of dissidence and subversion while many others were considered a threat "by association" to the stability of the regime. It is estimated that during the seven years of this "Dirty War" some 30,000 civilians were “disappeared,” abducted by the government and sent to secret spaces where they were detained, tortured, and eventually killed. This course, taught in Buenos Aires, explores the construction of memory in both texts and physical spaces touched by the violence, repression and disappearance in Argentina. It will further examine anti-Semitism during the military dictatorship. While at the time of the military Junta, the Jewish population of Argentina was estimated at just over 1% and it accounted for an estimated 10% of those who disappeared during the “Dirty War.” The report of the National Commission of the Disappeared (CONADEP) attests to a particular brutality in the treatment of prisoners of Jewish origin, as Jews were not only tortured, but the torture they were subjected to often took on an anti-Semitic form. We will also examine the role of memory in reconstructing discourses; testimonial literature and the modern and postmodern views of representation; narratives of exile and dispersion; and points of convergence between this literature and other survivor testimonial narratives, particularly those of the Shoah. We will have the opportunity to meet with writers and activists whose work is informed by the atrocities of the “Dirty War,” and visit the Organization of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, and public spaces of memory, such as the Parque de la Memoria, the ESMA, the AMIA building, the Baldosas, etc.

JUST 2040 Israel Between Wars: History and Society (4 Credits)
Through historical sources, documentaries, movies and scholarly research, this course examines the major wars and clashes between Israel and its neighbors in the years 1948 to 2011. In this way, we examine in depth the complexities of Israel's relationship with their Arab neighbor states with a particular focus on the details of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

JUST 2050 Jewish Philosophy (4 Credits)
This course sets out to explore the self and the sacred in Jewish tradition by exploring the nature of faith and reason, the call to ethical response, and the meaning of divine revelation in multiple Jewish philosophical voices across the ages, including Philo, Saadya, Halevi, Maimonides, Soloveitchik, Buber, Rosenzweig, and Levinas. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with PHIL 2050.

JUST 2104 The Bible as Literature (4 Credits)
The Bible has been one of the most important works in all of Western society. In this course we read the Bible as a masterpiece of literature. Rather than focusing on theological questions about this work as inspired scripture, we instead focus on its rich literary qualities and explore some ways in which these stories have influenced modern society. Reading select passages, we discuss its literary genres, forms, symbols and motifs, many of which are important in literature today. Of the latter, we encounter stories of creation and hero tales, parables, apocalyptic literature, and themes of paradise and the loss of Eden, wilderness, covenant, and the promised land. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with ENGL 2104 and RLGS 2104.
JUST 2107 Culture and Conscience in Vienna (4 Credits)
This course focuses on the cultural and social history of the city of Vienna as the hub of politics, cultural, and religion for Central Europe with special attention to its religious heritage as the seedbed for its rich cultural traditions. The course examines how the city's religious heritage, particularly Judaism, shaped its rich cultural heritage and the birth of modernism. A special segment of the course is devoted to the Nazi period and the Holocaust, including a study of the resistance of religious groups. The course concludes with a history of the post-Nazi period with attention to the development of Vienna as the hub of international social justice projects. The class is taught in seminar format and combines lectures with site visits to major cultural and historical sites around the city. The course consists of a weekly colloquium that discusses in a moderated format the implications, religious, social, and cultural issues, and common experiences of students engaged in international service learning as part of a faculty-led international service learning quarter-long program in Vienna, Austria. Cross listed with HIST 2107, RLGS 2107.

JUST 2201 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (4 Credits)
The legacy of the Hebrew Bible has been great for both Western and world culture. In this course, we read the books of the Hebrew Bible critically as literature, as religious text and as a source of sociological knowledge. The students gain a general overview of the narrative and historical development of the text while simultaneously being introduced to the various modes of biblical interpretation. Emphasis is placed on situating the literature and religious expression of the Bible within its ancient Near Eastern milieu. Cross listed with RLGS 2201.

JUST 2202 New Testament (4 Credits)
This course takes a multifaceted approach (historical, literary, and critical) to the writings that comprise the Christian New Testament. The New Testament are read as a collection of primary documents that chronicle the primitive Church's slow and often painful process of self-definition. In these writings it is possible to discern the tension that arose because of the strong religious and cultural ties early Christianity maintained with Palestinian Judaism, from which it emerged as a sectarian or reform movement. The careful reader also finds evidence of the new religion's encounter with the Greco-Roman world from whose variegated ethos and culture it borrowed considerably on the way to becoming an important religious force in the first century. In exploring the New Testament, then, we attempt to recover something of the sense of what it meant to be a Christian in New Testament times. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with RLGS 2202.

JUST 2242 American Jewish History (4 Credits)
This course will explore how the American Jewish experience developed and changed over time, from the colonial period to modern times. It will begin with the first group of Jews who arrived in 1654 in what is now New York and focus on successive waves of immigration, continuing through World War II, and the post-war period. We will explore the varied ways in which the immigrants and subsequent generations constructed their American Jewish identities, as well as such pivotal issues as acculturation, assimilation, and ethnic tensions. One of the major goals of the course is to encourage clear and effective writing, as well as to expose students to primary and secondary sources and offer tools to help evaluate evidence. Primary source materials relevant to each unit will be analyzed and reviewed at each class session. Cross listed with HIST 2242.

JUST 2245 History of the Modern Jewish Experience (4 Credits)
Concepts, documents, movements and practices of modern Jewish history. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with RLGS 2201.

JUST 2300 The Arab-Israeli Conflict: 1881-2000 (4 Credits)
This course aims to introduce students to the political, social, and cultural history of the Arab-Israeli conflict from the initial Jewish migration to Palestine in the 1880s through the Oslo Accords. Cross listed with HIST 2300.

JUST 2310 The Modern Middle East: 1798-1991 (4 Credits)
This course traces the history and development of the modern Middle East from Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 through the First Gulf War in 1991. We pay special attention to the impact of colonialism and Great Power diplomacy on the region. Cross listed with HIST 2310.

JUST 2320 US Foreign Policy in the Middle East (4 Credits)
This course aims to introduce students to both Middle Eastern history and American Foreign Policy by exploring the politics and culture of U.S. involvement in the Middle East in the post-WWII period. In doing so this course pays special attention to the impact of the Cold War in the Middle East, American policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, the role of oil in American foreign policy, American responses to the rise of Islamist movements, the impact of media and culture on the formulation of America's Middle Eastern policies, and U.S. relations with dictatorial governments in the Middle East. Cross listed with HIST 2320.

JUST 2350 Israeli Culture Through Film: Society, Ethnicity, and Inter-Cultural Discourse (4 Credits)
This course presents Israeli society and culture development as reflected in Israeli films from the 1950s to present day Israel. Topics include history and collective memory, ethnicities and the experiences of immigration, Israelis in their spatial Mediterranean/Middle-Eastern context and Judaism in its old and new representations. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

JUST 2360 Israeli Society Through Film: Narratives of the Holocaust, War and Terror in Israeli Life (4 Credits)
This course analyzes fundamental aspects of Israeli-Jewish collective identity through a consideration of the trauma of the Holocaust, and explores the representation of these issues in Israeli film from the 1960s to today. The course presents and analyzes narratives of human experience in traumatic times and their after-effects via cinematic perceptions of Holocaust survivors and their offspring, the relationship between the Israeli native Sabra and the Holocaust survivor, the impact of war on soldiers and their families, and the Israeli experience of terror. Screenings of Israeli film is a central part of the course. All films are in Hebrew with English subtitles. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. No prerequisites.

JUST 2410 Religious Diversity in Israel (4 Credits)
Through religious, sociological and historical sources, as well as documentaries, movies and scholarly readings, this course examines religious diversity in Israel since its establishment in 1948 to current events today. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with RLGS 2410.
JUST 2700 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-5 Credits)
Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 2701 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-5 Credits)
Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 2702 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-5 Credits)
Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 2704 Topics in Judaic Studies (4 Credits)
Topics vary, reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 2741 American Jewish Literature (4 Credits)
This course surveys over 100 years of American Jewish immigrant narratives beginning with the great exodus of Eastern European and Russian Jewry at the end of the 19th century and ending with recent arrivals from Israel and the former U.S.S.R. Canonical works by central authors reveal the great successes of Jewish immigrants alongside their spiritual failures. A selection of memoir, novels, short stories, and poetry in English and in translation from Hebrew and Yiddish demonstrate the multilingual character of the Jewish experience in America. While helpful, no knowledge of Jewish languages, religious tradition, or cultural practice is necessary to succeed in this course. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with ENGL 2741.

JUST 2742 Modern Hebrew Literature (4 Credits)
This course offers a survey of some of the most significant works of modern Hebrew literature available in translation. Students consider how the development of Hebrew literature has contributed to the formation of contemporary Israeli identity, and how the conflicts that define the turbulent history of Israel are treated in works by canonical authors. The selection of diverse voices and literary materials exposes students to the soil political, and historically changes wrought by the rise of modern day Israel. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with ENGL 2742.

JUST 2743 Jewish Humor: Origins and Meaning (4 Credits)
Writers, scholars, and comedians all claim to locate an identifiable strain of “Jewish humor” running from the Bible through to today’s literary humorists and provocative stand-up comics. This course takes humor seriously in an effort to reveal the development of “Jewish humor” in America from a comparative context. But is there such a thing as Jewish humor? And if so, what are its sources and characteristics? Does it exist across cultures and in different linguistic communities? Through lectures, discussion, exercises and papers, students gain a broad understanding of the history, psychology, and philosophy of humor as it relates to Jewish arts and letters in America. This course is cross-listed with ENGL 2743.

JUST 2745 Israeli Television and Cinema: Representing Cultural Diversity in Israeli Life (4 Credits)
The course goals are three-fold: a) to facilitate students’ communicative competence in Hebrew across the interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes through constant immersion in Hebrew, b) to expand students’ knowledge and understanding of Israeli society and culture while interacting solely in Hebrew, and c) to help students develop a lifelong interest in learning the Hebrew language and its culture. Screening of Israeli films is a central part of the course. All the films are in Hebrew. The course is not open to native speakers of Hebrew. Cross listed with HEBR 2745. Prerequisite: HEBR 2003 or equivalent.

JUST 2991 Independent Study (1-5 Credits)

JUST 3001 Judaism (4 Credits)
A literary and historical journey through Judaism. This course examines the “Jewish story” from its roots to its modern-day manifestations, focusing on select, classic Jewish texts in their historical contexts. From them, students explore Jewish tradition and practice and actively engage with and in the vivid interpretive imagination of the authors of Judaism throughout the ages. Cross listed with RLGS 3001.

JUST 3010 Aspects of Modern Hebrew (4 Credits)
This course is designed for students who have successfully completed Intermediate Hebrew. It facilitates communicative competence in Hebrew across interpretive, interpersonal and presentational modes through constant immersion in Hebrew. It also expands knowledge of Israeli culture while interacting solely in Hebrew. This course is not open to native speakers of Hebrew. Cross listed with HEBR 3010. Prerequisite: HEBR 2003 or equivalent.

JUST 3023 Great Thinkers: Maimonides-Politics, Prophecy and Providence (4 Credits)
Using “The Guide for the Perplexed” as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the central figures in medieval philosophy and Jewish thought. Our study includes analyses of his ideas on: principles of faith, human perfection, intellectual vs. “imaginational” approaches to truth, pedagogy and politics, reasons for the commandments, the nature of God and divine will, the limits of human knowledge, the mechanics of prophecy, and the parameters and implications of providence. Cross listed with PHIL 3023 and RLGS 3023. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.
JUST 3024 Maimonides: Greek, Islamic, and Christian Encounters (4 Credits)
Using the "Guide of the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), a central figure in the history of philosophy and in the history of Jewish thought. In this course, we examine in depth the relationship between Maimonides' core ideas and various Greek, Muslim and Christian thinkers, including: Aristotle, Plotinus, al-Farabi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), al-Ghazali, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), and Aquinas. Topics to be explored include: what is "metaphysics"?; God's unity and essence as existence itself; the mystery of knowing and not knowing God (including a consideration of God's ways as well as "negative theology"—viz. the extent to which we do not know God); God as pure intellect; the nature of the cosmos and the "separate intellects"; creation vs. eternity vs. emanation: philosophical and religious perspectives on the origins of the universe and implications for "living in the world with/out God." In our study, we will also address the methodological implications of cross-religious and cross-language analyses, and how to spot and address (in your own work and in the work of others) tacit cultural biases at play in the interpretive process. Cross listed with PHIL 3024 and RLGS 3024. Prerequisite: Junior standing or instructor's permission.

JUST 3102 Early Judaism (4 Credits)
This course traces the development of Judaism in history and literature from the Babylonian Exile and the end of the biblical period through the origins of Rabbinic Judaism and the completion of the Babylonian Talmud (c. 650 CE). However, special emphasis is placed on Jewish culture in the late Second Temple period (c. 200 BCE to 100 CE) and its impact on the early Christian movement, including Jewish literature from the time of Jesus, lost texts of the Bible, new evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the few surviving historical sources of the Second Temple Period. In addition, students analyze how the Bible came to be and understand how sacred texts and their interpretations eventually became the new center of both Judaism and Christianity. Cross listed with RLGS 3102.

JUST 3146 Great Thinkers: Levinas (4 Credits)
Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995), famous for his arresting and original idea of "ethics as first philosophy," is an important figure in the histories of phenomenology, metaphysics, and theology. In this course, we set out to explore Levinas' insights on ethics, alterity, and infinity, including the connection of his ideas to Plato, Descartes, Kant, and Husserl, as well as his critical responses to Heidegger and his positive contributions to Derrida. In this course, we work through Levinas' two major works, Ethics and Infinity and Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence, as well as a number of shorter writings—including material from his Talmudic commentaries. Themes to be covered include: Being, Goodness, Risk, Ethics, Alterity, Transcendence, Law, Judaism, Gift, Forgiveness, Politics, Theology, and Justice. This course is cross-listed with PHIL 3146.

JUST 3150 The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls (4 Credits)
This course includes an advanced study of the Dead Sea Scrolls with a particular focus on the Bible as it appears in the Qumran library. We will discuss the variant versions of the Bible, some of which were previously unknown before the discovery of the Scrolls, and how the findings of the Scrolls may question the idea of "Bible" itself in the context of the late Second Temple Judaism. Further, we will place particular emphasis on studying the way biblical texts were engaged, interpreted and even written by the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this way, we shall explore the origins of biblical interpretation and how the notion of the Bible came to be. Cross listed with RLGS 3150. Prerequisites: One year of Hebrew language or equivalent or by special permission of the instructor.

JUST 3151 Dead Sea Scrolls (4 Credits)
The Dead Sea Scrolls represent one of the greatest manuscript finds of the twentieth century and have been said to be the most important discovery in biblical archaeology. These scrolls offer a rare window into early Judaism and Christianity and offer us the earliest and most important witnesses to the (Hebrew) Bible. This course covers the Dead Sea Scrolls in their historical, literary and religious context in English translation, together with relevant scholarly research. Cross listed with RLGS 3151.

JUST 3152 Philosophy Meets Mysticism: A Greek, Jewish and Islamic Neoplatonic Journey (4 Credits)
Neoplatonism is a unique genre - somewhere between philosophy and mysticism. In this course, we investigate some of the leading themes of Neoplatonism, tracing the Greek ideas of Plotinus (the third century "father of Neoplatonism") into later Jewish and Islamic textual traditions. As part of our journey, we investigate a host of philosophical writings, including the Theology of Aristotle and the Liber de Causis, as well as works by Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, Ibn Tufayl, Avicenna, Isaac Israeli, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and Abraham Ibn Ezra. Themes to be covered include emanation and creation, apophatic discourse, divine desire, the theological significance of imagination, inward reflection, and the call to virtue. Cross listed with PHIL 3152. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

JUST 3215 Modern Jewish Philosophy (4 Credits)
Covering a range of modern thinkers from the seventeenth to the late-twentieth century, topics include reason and revelation, human autonomy and responsibility, aesthetics, post-Holocaust theology, responses to Kant, responses to Heidegger, ethics, and the quest for authenticity. Cross listed with PHIL 3215. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor permission.

JUST 3405 Postmodern Visions of Israel (4 Credits)
This course investigates how representations of Israel as a modernist utopia have been replaced in contemporary literature with images of Israel as a dystopia. The class discusses the historical context that gave rise to visions of an idealized Israel, and the role the Hebrew language played in consolidating and connecting narration to nation. Next the class considers how belles-lettres from recent decades have reimagined Israel as a series of multilingual “multiverses.” A selection of fiction translated from Hebrew forms the core of class reading. Theoretical exploration of postmodernism help us conceptualize the poetics of postmodern literature. No knowledge of Israeli history or Jewish culture is necessary to succeed in this course. This course is cross-listed with ENGL 3405.
JUST 3600 United States - Israeli Relations, 1948-Present (4 Credits)
This course deals with the history of United States-Israeli relations from 1948 - 2011. Some of the key topics covered include: the U.S. decision to recognize Israel; cultural foundations for U.S. support of Israel; Christian Zionism; the origins of the U.S.-Israeli "Special Relationship"; the Cold War in the Middle East; U.S. peacemaking successes and failures; the role of the pro-Israeli lobby; and the impact of September 11, 2001 on U.S.- Israeli relations. Cross listed with HIST 3600.

JUST 3700 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-4 Credits)
Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 3702 Colloquium in Jewish Studies (1-4 Credits)
Topics in Judaic Studies reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 3703 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-4 Credits)
Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 3704 Topics in Judaic Studies (1-4 Credits)
Topics vary reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of the department and studies of the faculty.

JUST 3740 Bodies and Souls (4 Credits)
This course examines the unique place of the body in biblical religion. We ask how the Bible and its interpreters have shaped current views on sex and the gendered body in Western society. How has the Bible been (mis)used in relation to current understandings of the physical body? Is the saying that a "human" does not have a body, but is a body as true for the Hebrew Bible as the Christian New Testament? How has Judaism and Christianity (de)valued sexuality, procreation, and celibacy? How do the biblical traditions shape our modern opinions about the ideal physical body and body modifications? How can we understand "out-of-body" experiences and notions of death and afterlife in Western religion? Students are encouraged to interpret the Bible and their own beliefs from a uniquely embodied perspective. Cross listed with GWST 3740, RLGS 3740.

JUST 3743 Modern Jewish Literature (4 Credits)
Stories, novels and memoirs by 20th-century Jewish writers; consideration of issues of generation, gender and idea of Jewish literature as a genre. Cross listed with ENGL 3743.

JUST 3890 Religion and Diaspora (4 Credits)
When forced to leave a homeland, displaced communities frequently turn to religion to maintain identity and adapt to--or resist--new surrounding culture(s). This course examines the role of religion and identity in three Jewish and Christian communities living in diaspora and poses questions such as: What is the relationship between religion and (home)land? How have the biblical themes of exodus, diaspora, promise and restoration been applied to contemporary experiences? And how have our American stories been interpreted through the lens of the Bible? As part of the service learning component, students have the opportunity to work with religious and immigrant aid organizations in the Denver community. Cross listed with RLGS 3890.

JUST 3891 Justice: A Biblical Perspective (4 Credits)
This course explores the ways in which the Bible has been applied to questions of social justice in contemporary society. In addition to studying major theological and philosophical theories of justice, students read a variety of biblical texts related to major issues of social and economic justice such as world hunger, the poor, revolution, just war theory and pacifism, environmentalism, and the role of government. This course includes a service-learning component. Cross listed with RLGS 3891.

JUST 3982 Internship (1-5 Credits)

JUST 3991 Independent Study (1-5 Credits)
Prerequisites: HEBR 1003 or JUST 1003 or equivalent and instructor's permission.

JUST 3992 Directed Study (1-5 Credits)