The Judaic Studies Program offers an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the history, religion, social experience, and culture of the Jewish people. By bringing a variety of fields and disciplines to bear on its subject, the program intends to convey to students the complex interaction of forces that create and express Jewish ethnic and religious identity. Students completing the program will have a broad knowledge of the field along with the tools necessary for continued study of Jewish civilization in all its manifestations.

Program Faculty
Jay Geller, PhD
Samuel Rosenthal Professor of Judaic Studies; Professor, Department of History; Director, Judaic Studies Program

Judith Neulander, PhD
Lecturer, Department of Religious Studies

Undergraduate Program
Minor
The minor consists of a minimum of five or six courses, according to the following scheme, to be chosen in consultation with the program director.

A. Introduction to Judaic Studies
   JDST 101  Jews and Judaism
   
   B. Nine additional credit hours of courses that have a JDST cross-listing.
   
   Alternatively, students may take six credit hours of JDST courses, plus three credit hours from one course on the following list:

   ENGL 365E  The Immigrant Experience
   HBRW 201  Intermediate Modern Hebrew I
   HBRW 202  Intermediate Modern Hebrew II
   HBRW 301  Advanced Modern Hebrew I
   HBRW 302  Advanced Modern Hebrew II
   HBRW 399  Independent Studies
   HSTY 257  Immigrants in America
   POSC 379  Introduction to Middle East Politics

C. Two semesters of Hebrew (HBRW 101 and HBRW 102)
   
   Students who place out of the 100-level HBRW courses must take an additional course from B above.

Total Units:

20

Courses
JDST 101. Jews and Judaism. 3 Units.
This course provides an introduction to Jewish religion, culture, history, and life. It does not presuppose any previous study of Judaism or experience with Judaism, and it prepares students for additional coursework in Judaic studies, Jewish history, or religious studies with an emphasis on Judaism. Required for the minor in Judaic Studies. Offered as JDST 101 and RLGN 213. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 173. Introducing Judaism. 3 Units.
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Judaism. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in Jewish religious tradition, exploring forms of it in a diversity of cultural contexts around the world. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: Festivals and Holy Days, Women and Gender, Jewish Ethics. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Offered as RLGN 173 and JDST 173. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 218. Jews in Early Modern Europe. 3 Units.
This course surveys the history of Jews in Europe and the wider world from the Spanish expulsion through the French Revolution. Tracking peregrinations out of the Iberian Peninsula to the British Isles, France, Holland, Italy, Germany, Poland-Lithuania, the Ottoman Empire, and the American colonies, it examines the diverse ways Jews organized their communities, interacted with their non-Jewish neighbors, and negotiated their social, economic, and legal status within different states and empires. What role did Jews play and what symbolic place did they occupy during a period of European expansion, technological innovation, artistic experimentation, and religious and political turmoil? What internal and external dynamics affected Jewish experiences in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries? Through a selection of inquisitorial transcripts, government records, memoirs, and historical literature, we will explore topics such as persecution, conversion, messianism, toleration, emancipation, and assimilation. Offered as HSTY 218, JDST 218, and ETHS 218. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 220. Jewish Traditional Art and Architecture. 3 Units.
Tradition and transformation in Jewish artistic expression over time and across space. Course will begin with biblical period and continue down to the present day in Israel and America. Examination of how concepts such as “Jewish” and “art” undergo change within the Jewish community over this period. Offered as ARTH 220 and JDST 220. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 223. Religious Roots of Conflict in the Middle East. 3 Units.
The course is about the rhetoric and symbols used by various voices in the Middle East in the ongoing debate about the future shape of the region. For historical and cultural reasons, much of the discourse draws on religious symbolism, especially (although not exclusively) Islamic, Jewish and Christian. Because of the long and complex history of the region and the religious communities in it, virtually every act and every place is fraught with meaning. The course examines the diverse symbols and rhetorical strategies used by the various sides in the conflict and how they are understood both by various audiences within each community and among the different communities. Offered as JDST 223 and RLGN 223. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.
JDST 228. The Jewish Image in Popular Film. 3 Units.
This course will explore film as social practice from the flickering silent era, through Hollywood’s Golden Age, to the techno-dazzle of today. Standing at the confluence of society, history, ideology and culture, students will come to understand how popular film is shaped by, and how it actively shapes, the constant reconstruction of Jewish identity in the American mainstream. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 233. Introduction to Jewish Folklore. 3 Units.
Exploration of a variety of genres, research methods and interpretations of Jewish folklore, from antiquity to the present. Emphasis on how Jewish folk traditions and culture give us access to the spirit and mentality of the many different generations of the Jewish ethnic group, illuminating its past and informing the direction of its future development. Offered as ANTH 233, RLGN 233, and JDST 233. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 254. The Holocaust. 3 Units.
This class seeks to answer fundamental questions about the Holocaust: the German-led organized mass murder of nearly six million Jews and millions of other ethnic and religious minorities. It will investigate the origins and development of racism in modern European society, the manifestations of that racism, and responses to persecution. An additional focus of the course will be comparisons between different groups, different countries, and different phases during the Nazi era. Offered as HSTY 254, RLGN 254, ETHS 254, and JDST 254. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 268. Women in the Bible: Ethnographic Approaches to Rite and Ritual, Story, Song, and Art. 3 Units.
Examination of women in Jewish and Christian Biblical texts, along with their Jewish, Christian (and occasionally Muslim) interpretations. Discussion of how these traditions have shaped images of, and attitudes toward, women in western civilization. Offered as RLGN 268, WGST 268, and JDST 268.

JDST 280. Religion and Politics in the Middle East. 3 Units.
An in-depth look at the relationship between politics and religion in the Middle East. Students will spend the first week on the CWRU campus and the last three weeks in Israel, where time will be divided between classroom teaching, guest lectures, and “field trips” to important sites. Students will have the opportunity to interact directly with members of the region’s diverse religious groups within the political, social, and cultural contexts in which they live. A final research paper will be required. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Offered as JDST 280 and RLGN 280.

JDST 314. Mythologies of the Afterlife. 3 Units.
This course provides a multidisciplinary approach to the idea of an afterlife, and its manifestation in diverse cultures. We will examine the way varying views of the afterlife influence religion, popular culture and palliative care, and how human creativity has shaped the heavens, hells, hauntings and holidays of diverse populations over time and across space. Students will come to see the afterlife as an integral part of human history and experience, not only because it helps people die with better hope, but because it helps them to live more richly. Offered as RLGN 314 and JDST 314.

JDST 326. The Holocaust and the Arts. 3 Units.
This course explores artistic output during the Holocaust, as well as responses to the Holocaust in various forms, including music, art, architecture, film, and literature. Offered as MUHI 326, JDST 326, HSTY 326 and RLGN 326. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 341. Jewish Urban History. 3 Units.
This course examines the relationship between Jews and the modern urban environment. It seeks to answer questions such as: How did the modernization of cities affect Jews and Jewish communities? In what ways did Jews contribute to modern urban cultural and social forms? What is Jewish urban space, is it unique, and how is it remembered later on? Are there differences between the patterns in Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas? Offered as HSTY 341 and JDST 341. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 350. Jewish Ethics. 3 Units.
An exploration of Jewish moral and ethical discourse. The first half of the course will be devoted to studying the structure and content of classical Jewish ethics on issues including marriage, abortion, euthanasia, and social justice. Students will read and react to primary Jewish religious texts. The second half of the course will focus on various modern forms of Judaism and the diversity of moral rhetoric in the Jewish community today. Readings will include such modern thinkers as Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel. Offered as JDST 350, RLGN 350, and RLGN 450. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar.

JDST 371. Jews under Islam and Christianity. 3 Units.
This course examines the social and political status of Jews under Muslim and Christian rule since the Middle Ages. Themes include interfaith relations, Islamic and Christian beliefs regarding the Jews, Muslim and Christian regulation of Jewry, and the Jewish response. Offered as HSTY 371, JDST 371 and RLGN 371. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 389. History of Zionism. 3 Units.
This course seeks to elucidate the major strands of Zionism, their origins, how they have interacted, and their impact on contemporary Israeli society. These may include political Zionism, cultural Zionism, socialist (labor) Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, and religious Zionism. This course will also examine the differences in the appeal of Zionism to Jews in different places, such as Western Europe, Eastern Europe and the United States. Offered as HSTY 389 and JDST 389. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

JDST 392. Independent Study. 1 - 3 Units.
Up to three semester hours of independent study may be taken in a single semester.