Hebrew Language and Literature

Objectives

The Hebrew Language Program of the Department of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies offers instruction in Hebrew language and literature and in the teaching of Hebrew language. The Hebrew program is the largest in the United States, averaging 600 students per year and offering a range of 40 courses. Our program allows students to acquire an advanced level of proficiency and a strong background in Hebrew culture and literature. Courses are taught by faculty whose fields of specialization include Biblical studies, post-Biblical and Talmudic literature, modern Hebrew literature and culture, Israeli film and theater, and Hebrew language.

Undergraduate Major

Undergraduate students are welcome to participate in the Hebrew program as majors, minors, or to simply take individual courses as well as to fulfill University language requirements. An undergraduate major in Hebrew will prepare students for graduate school and professions in education, business, journalism, diplomacy, and other fields.

Graduate Program in Hebrew

The degree of Master of Arts in teaching Hebrew is offered to provide teachers and students with the knowledge and training to become teachers of the Hebrew language at all levels, i.e., elementary, secondary, post-secondary, and adult education. This program emphasizes the different areas that any Hebrew teacher should master to teach in a variety of frameworks. These include the theoretical knowledge of learning and teaching Hebrew, as well as hands-on experience in teaching. We are committed to equipping each student with the necessary tools to confront the challenges of teaching Hebrew at a variety of levels. This program is the first of its kind in the United States and addresses the urgent need for qualified Hebrew teachers in Jewish education.

How to Become an Undergraduate Major

Students who wish to major in Hebrew must complete the language requirement no later than by the end of their second year at Brandeis. In addition, they must complete the following three prerequisites: (1) Any fourth semester Hebrew course excluding HBRW 41a (formerly HBRW 42a). Exemptions will be granted only to those students who place out on the basis of the Hebrew placement test administered by the Hebrew program at Brandeis. (2) One course in classical Hebrew: HBRW 122a (formerly 101a), 122b (formerly 101b), or NEJS 10a (formerly 72a) (3) One course in modern Hebrew literature: HBRW 123a (formerly 110a), 123b (formerly 110b), 143a (formerly 111a), or 143b (formerly 111b). Any course taken to fulfill the prerequisites may NOT count toward the major. Students are required to meet with the undergraduate advising heads in NEJS and Hebrew to develop a course of study in order to fulfill the program requirements and personal interests.

How to Be Admitted to the Graduate Program

The general requirements for admission to the Graduate School of Arts and Science, as specified in an earlier section of this Bulletin, apply to candidates for admission to this program.

In addition, applicants must have achieved at least advanced-mid level in Hebrew language, according to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines. Advanced-mid competence is defined as the ability to function successfully and effectively in most formal and informal settings, with ease and accuracy. This ability must be reflected in the four skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening comprehension.

Applicants must present two letters of recommendation and a statement of purpose and must be interviewed by the director of the program.

Program of Study

Our two-year program focuses on different skills that we believe professional Hebrew educators should master. Theoretical and methodological learning, as well as hands-on experience and rigorous field training are emphasized. The curriculum consists of 12 courses and two semesters of practicum training. Seven of the 12 required courses focus exclusively on different aspects of teaching and learning the Hebrew language. Such courses focus on theories of language acquisition, instructional methodologies, curriculum development, development of teaching materials, learner assessment, classroom management, and conducting research. The remaining course requirements include enrichment courses such as biblical texts, modern Hebrew literature, the history of the Hebrew language, as well as courses that prepare students to teach specifically in Jewish settings.

The practicum training component of the curriculum, which closely accompanies the coursework, provides students an opportunity to practice their teaching, in formal and informal education, as well as in different settings such as day schools, afternoon schools, elementary, and high schools.

Faculty

See Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.

Requirements for the Undergraduate Major

The major consists of seven semester courses, which may not overlap with courses taken to fulfill the language requirement and additional prerequisites. These seven courses are to include the following:

A. NEJS 5a (formerly NEJS 1a) [Foundational Course in Judaic Studies].
B. Two Advanced Composition and Grammar Study. HBRW 161b (formerly HBRW 106b) [Advanced Hebrew Conversation] and HBRW 167b (formerly HBRW 108b) [The Revival of Modern Hebrew].
C. Two NEJS courses (in addition to those courses listed above) with at least one from each of the following categories:
1. Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew: NEJS 10a (formerly 72a), 25a (formerly 53b), 114a, 114b, 115a, 117b, 118b, 121b (formerly 131b) 122b, 123b, 126a (formerly 120b), 126b, 127b, and 170a (formerly 125b).

2. Modern Hebrew literature: NEJS 177a (formerly 139b), 178a, and 180b.

D. At least one additional elective from the following courses:
HBRW 121a (formerly 103a), 123a (formerly 110a), 123b (formerly 110b), 141a (formerly 105a), 143a (formerly 111a), 143b (formerly 111b) or 143b (formerly 111b), 144a (formerly 109a), 144b (formerly 111b), 146a (formerly 107a), 164b (formerly 104b), 166b (formerly 107b), 168a (formerly 119a), 168b (formerly 119b), or 170a (formerly 104a) or any of the NEJS courses listed above.

E. Either HBRW 97a or b (Senior Essay) or HBRW 99d (Senior Thesis—a full-year course) count toward the eight required courses; the essay or thesis must be written in Hebrew.

Candidates for departmental honors must have a 3.50 GPA in Hebrew courses prior to the senior year.

Evaluation of Transfer Credits

A. No more than two courses taken at special programs for overseas students may be applied toward the major. Students are encouraged to seek advanced approval from the department’s undergraduate advising head for all courses intended for transfer credit.

B. Credit will not be granted for Ulpan courses, but students may take the Hebrew Placement Test to place out of the Hebrew language requirement.

Requirements for the Minor

The minor consists of a sequence of five semester courses in Hebrew, two of which may be taken at other universities. At least one of the five courses must be a writing-intensive course in Hebrew.

A. One course in Modern Hebrew Literature: HBRW 123a (formerly 110a), 123b (formerly 110b), 143a (formerly 111a) or 143b (formerly 111b), NEJS 177a (formerly 139b), 178a, and 180b.

B. One course in Biblical or Rabbinic Hebrew: HBRW 122a (formerly 101a), 122b (formerly 101b), ARBC 10a and 20b, NEJS 10a (formerly 72a), 25a (formerly 53b), 114a, 114b, 115a, 117b, 118b, 121b (formerly 131b), 122b, 123b, 126a (formerly 120b), 126b, 127b, and 170a (formerly 125b).

C. Three additional courses selected from the following HBRW 41a (formerly 42a), 44b, 49b (formerly 41b), 121a (formerly 103a), 123a (formerly 110a), 123b (formerly 110b), 141a (formerly 105a), 143a (formerly 111a) or 143b (formerly 111b), 144a (formerly 109a), 146a (formerly 107a), 161b (formerly 106b), 164b (formerly 104b), 166b (formerly 107b), 167b (formerly 108b), 168a (formerly 119a), 168b (formerly 119b), 170a (formerly 104a) or any of the NEJS courses listed above.

D. HBRW 123a (formerly 110a), 123b (formerly 110b), 143a (formerly 111a) or 143b (formerly 111b), 146a (formerly 107a), 161b (formerly 106b), 164b (formerly 104b), 166b (formerly 107b), 167b (formerly 108b), 170a (formerly 104a) may satisfy the writing intensive requirement. Not all of the courses are given in any one year. Please consult the Course Schedule each semester. Courses that satisfy the requirement in a particular semester are designated “wi” in the Course Schedule for that semester. Students may double count these courses for requirements in sections A-D.

F. By department rule, a maximum of two semester course credits taken at other universities may be accepted toward the minor in Hebrew Language and Literature. Each course transferred from another university must have the approval of the Hebrew program advisor for all courses intended for transfer credit. For courses taken in Israeli universities, one Brandeis semester credit will be given for a three-hour per week one-semester course; a two-semester, two-hour per week course; or two, two hour, one-semester courses. Credit is not granted for Ulpan courses.

Students are encouraged to declare their interest in a Hebrew minor by the end of their junior year.

Requirements for the Master of Arts in Teaching Hebrew

Residence Requirement and Program of Study
Ordinarily, two years of full-time residence at a normal rate of work of seven courses each year are required. Successful completion of 14 courses is required: eight required courses, two semesters of practicum training, and four elective courses (one course from each of the four elective areas listed below).

Required Courses
HBRW 167b (formerly HBRW 108b) [The Revival of Modern Hebrew], NEJS 101a (formerly 108b) [Comparative Grammar of Semitic Languages], HBRW 168a (formerly HBRW 119a) [Proficiency Based Instruction in Hebrew, Part I], HBRW 168b (formerly HBRW 119b) [Proficiency Based Instruction in Hebrew, Part II], HBRW 203a [Assessing the Learning and Teaching of Hebrew], JCS 222b [Teaching Jewish Texts], JCS 234b [Curriculum, Theory, and Development], JCS 235a [The Culture of Jewish Educational Settings].

Required Practicum courses:
HBRW 301a Practicum I, HBRW 301b Practicum II

Elective courses [four must be taken, one from each area below]:

Psychology
PSYC 130b Life Span Development: Adulthood and Old Age
PSYC 132a Children’s Play and the Developing Imagination

Jewish Education
JCS 206b Informal Education in Jewish Settings
JCS 215a The Developing Learner in a Jewish Educational Setting
JCS 236a Teaching and Learning in Jewish Classrooms

Biblical Texts in Hebrew
HBRW 122a and 122b (formerly HBRW 101a and 101b) Introduction to Classical Hebrew
NEJS 72a Texts from the Hebrew Bible
NEJS 110b The Hebrew Bible: Meaning and Context
NEJS 114a The Book of Amos
NEJS 114b Biblical Ritual, Cult, and Magic
NEJS 115a The Book of Deuteronomy
Courses of Instruction

[1-99] Primarily for Undergraduate Students

HBRW 10a Beginning Hebrew
Six class hours and one additional lab hour per week.
For students with no previous knowledge and those with a minimal background. Intensive training in the basics of Hebrew grammar, listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. Several sections will be offered. Usually offered every semester.
Staff

HBRW 20b Intermediate Hebrew
Prerequisite: HBRW 10a or the equivalent as determined by placement examination.
Only one 20-level Hebrew course may be taken for credit. Four class hours and one lab hour per week.
Continuation of HBRW 10a, employing the same methods. Intensive training in Hebrew grammar, listening, comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing. Several sections offered every semester.
Staff

HBRW 29b Intermediate Hebrew I: Honors
Prerequisite: HBRW 10a or the equivalent as determined by placement examination.
Only one 20-level Hebrew course may be taken for credit. Four class hours and one lab hour per week.
This course is designed for honor students who wish to excel in the language. Students are admitted upon recommendation of the director of the Hebrew Language Program. Usually offered every year in the spring.
Staff

HBRW 34a Intermediate Hebrew II: Aspects of Israeli Culture
[ fl ]
Prerequisite: Any 20-level Hebrew course or the equivalent as determined by placement examination. Two 30-level Hebrew courses may be taken for credit. Four class hours and one lab hour per week.
A continuation of HBRW 20b. An intermediate to mid-level course, which helps students to strengthen their skills at this level. Contemporary cultural aspects will be stressed and a variety of materials will be used. Usually offered every semester.
Staff

HBRW 35a Conversation and Writing Skills
(formerly HBRW 31a)
[ fl ]
Prerequisite: HBRW 20b or the equivalent as determined by placement examination.
This course is recommended for students who have not previously studied Hebrew at Brandeis and have been placed at this level. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 31a in previous years. Four class hours and one lab hour per week.
An intermediate-level course designed to improve the linguistic and writing skills of students who have an extensive background in the language but lack the academic skills to fulfill the language requirements or to pursue a higher level Hebrew or Judaic studies. Usually offered every year in the fall.
Staff

HBRW 39a Intermediate Hebrew II: Honors
[ fl ]
Prerequisite: HBRW 29b or permission of the instructor. Four class hours and one lab hour per week.
A continuation of HBRW 29b. Designed for honor students who wish to excel in Hebrew. Students are admitted upon recommendation of the director of the Hebrew Language Program. Usually offered every year in the fall.
Staff

HBRW 41a Intensive Conversational Hebrew I
(formerly HBRW 42a)
[ fl hum ]
Prerequisite: Any 30-level Hebrew course or the equivalent. Enrollment limited to 18.
Students may take this course and HBRW 44b for credit. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 42a in previous years. Four class hours per week.
For students who have acquired an intermediate knowledge of Hebrew and who wish to develop a greater fluency in conversation. This course does not satisfy the language requirement for the NEJS major or the major in Hebrew. Usually offered every year in the fall.
Staff

HBRW 44b Advanced Hebrew: Aspects of Israeli Culture
[ fl hum ]
Prerequisite: Any 30-level Hebrew course or the equivalent. Students may not take this course and HBRW 49b for credit. Four class hours per week.
This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have not previously studied Hebrew at Brandeis and have been placed at this level. Contemporary cultural aspects are stressed; conversational Hebrew and reading of selections from modern literature, political essays, and newspaper articles. Required for NEJS majors and is recommended for others who wish to study Hebrew beyond the foreign language requirement. It is a prerequisite for many upper level Hebrew courses. Usually offered every semester.
Ms. Ringlein

HBRW 49b Advanced Conversation and Writing Skills: Honors
(formerly HBRW 41b)
[ fl hum ]
Prerequisite: Any 30-level Hebrew course, or the equivalent, or placement by the director of the Hebrew Language Program. Students may not take this course and HBRW 44b for credit. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 41b in previous years. Four class hours per week.
A four semester course that prepares honors students for advanced-level courses. Intended for students who have completed HBRW 35a or 39a or by recommendation. Usually offered every year in the spring.
Staff

HBRW 97a Senior Essay
Signature of the instructor required. Usually offered every semester.
Staff

HBRW 97b Senior Essay
Signature of the instructor required. Usually offered every semester.
Staff

HBRW 98a Independent Study
Signature of the instructor required. Usually offered every year in the fall.
Staff
An intermediate to mid/high-level conversation course for students who wish to improve their speaking skills before entering more advanced-level courses. Role playing, vocabulary building, and guided speaking activities develop conversational skills for various situations. Reading and discussion of contemporary texts assist in vocabulary building. Usually offered every year.

Ms. Azoulay

**HBRW 122b Introduction to Classical Hebrew II**  
(formerly HBRW 101b)  
Prerequisite: Any 40-level Hebrew course or its equivalent, as determined by the director of the Hebrew Language Program. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 101b in previous years. Four class hours per week.

An intermediate to mid/high-level course that focuses on the representation of the Holocaust and the generational relationships in Modern Hebrew prose and poetry. Students are expected to acquire better fluency in reading, writing, and conversation. Usually offered every year.

Ms. Hascal

**HBRW 123b Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature II**  
(formerly HBRW 110b)  
Prerequisite: Any 40-level Hebrew course or its equivalent, as determined by the director of the Hebrew Language Program.

An advanced-level course that enhances advanced language skills through a survey of early Israeli literature and poetry (1950-75), while stressing the various trends and reactions to different aspects of Israeli daily life during this period. Usually offered every second year. Will be offered in the spring of 2004.

Ms. Hascal

**HBRW 123d Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature III**  
(formerly HBRW 110c)  
Prerequisite: Any 40-level Hebrew course or its equivalent, as determined by the director of the Hebrew Language Program.

An advanced-level course that enhances advanced language and literary skills. Surveys the later Israeli Literature and...
Poetry (1975-present). Stresses the various trends and reactions to different aspects of Israeli daily life during this period. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.

Ms. Hascal

HBRW 144a Hebrew Drama—Language through Creativity and Action
(formerly HBRW 109a)

Prerequisite: HBRW 121a or b, 122a or b, 123a or b or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 109a in previous years. Four class hours and two additional weekly hours of lab work are required. Helps improve Hebrew language skills at the intermediate-high/advanced level by focusing on various creative aspects such as improvisations, drama, performance, and other acting techniques such as movement, imagination, and other basic skills necessary to act out scenes from various plays in the Hebrew language. Writing assignments and self-critique enhance the students’ skills in language acquisition. The course culminates in the writing of one-act plays in Hebrew along with a theatrical performance and production. Usually offered every year in the fall. Will be offered in the fall of 2005.

Ms. Hascal

HBRW 146a The Voices of Jerusalem
(formerly HBRW 107a)

Prerequisite: HBRW 121a or b, 122a or b, 123a or b, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 107a in previous years. Four class hours per week. Aims to develop students’ language proficiency through analysis of selected materials that depict the unique tradition, history, politics, art, and other features related to Jerusalem. Usually offered every second year in the fall. Last offered in the fall of 2002.

Ms. Hascal

HBRW 161b Israel Today-Advanced Conversation and Writing
(formerly HBRW 106b)

Prerequisite: HBRW 141a, or 143a or b, or 144a, or 146a, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 106b in previous years. Four class hours per week. For advanced students who wish to enhance proficiency and accuracy in writing and speaking. Plays, essays, current articles from Israeli newspapers, and films provide the basis for written assignments and discussions. Usually offered every spring.

Ms. Lavie

HBRW 164b Israeli Theater
(formerly HBRW 104b)

Prerequisite: HBRW 141a, or 143a or b, or 144a, or 146a, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 104b in previous years. Four class hours and two lab hours per week. An advanced course that enhances advanced language skills through reading and analysis of plays. The student’s creativity is developed through participation in acting and creative writing lab. In reading plays, students can also participate in Hebrew acting lab. Usually offered every second year in the fall. Will be offered in the fall of 2004.

Ms. Azoulay

HBRW 166b Portrait of the Israeli Woman
(formerly HBRW 107b)

Prerequisite: HBRW 141a, or 143a or b, or 144a, or 146a, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 107b in previous years. Four class hours per week. An advanced culture course that enhances advanced language skills through examination of Israeli woman’s role, image, and unique voice reflected in the Israeli literature, history, tradition, and art. Usually offered every second year in the fall. Will be offered in the fall of 2003.

Ms. Hascal

HBRW 167b The Revival of Modern Hebrew
(formerly HBRW 108b)

Prerequisite: HBRW 141a, or 143a or b, or 144a, or 146a, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 108b in previous years. Four class hours per week. An advanced course that surveys the origins of the Hebrew language and its development throughout the centuries, focusing on its major stages (biblical, Rabbinic, medieval, and modern). Explores the unique phenomenon of its revival as a spoken language and its adaptation to the modern world. Usually offered every fall.

Ms. Porath

HBRW 168a Proficiency Based Instruction in Hebrew I
(formerly HBRW 119a)

Prerequisite: HBRW 141a, or 143a or b, or 144a, or 146a, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 119a in previous years. Three class hours per week. An advanced level methodology course that focuses on the theories and methodologies for teaching Hebrew. Course taught in Hebrew and in English. Designed primarily for students at the advanced level who are interested in eventually being able to teach Hebrew. Usually offered every fall.

Ms. Ringvald

HBRW 168b Proficiency Based Instruction in Hebrew II
(formerly HBRW 119b)

Prerequisite: HBRW 141a, or 143a or b, or 144a, or 146a, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 119b in previous years. Three class hours per week. An advanced seminar that focuses on student’s understanding of second languages, particularly the students of Hebrew, as well as understanding the foundations of curriculum development. The course is taught in Hebrew and in English and is a continuation of HBRW 168a. Students participate in teaching practicum through internship and learn how to apply their knowledge. Usually offered every spring.

Ms. Ringvald

HBRW 170a Israeli Cinema
(formerly HBRW 104a)

Prerequisite: HBRW 141a, or 143a or b, or 144a, or 146a, or permission of the instructor. This course may not be repeated for credit by students who have taken HBRW 104a in previous years. Four class hours per week. An advanced culture course that focuses on the various aspects of Israeli society as they are portrayed in Israeli films and television. In addition to viewing films, the students will be asked to read Hebrew background materials, to participate in class discussions, and to write in Hebrew about the films. Usually offered every spring.

Ms. Azoulay

(200 and above) Primarily for Graduate Students

HBRW 301a Hebrew Practicum I

Required of all Master’s degree students.

Staff

HBRW 301b Hebrew Practicum II

Continuation of HBRW 301a.

Staff

HBRW 303a Readings in Accessing the Learning and Teaching of Hebrew

Staff