Why pursue Near Eastern and Judaic Studies at Brandeis University?

Brandeis has one of the strongest and largest departments of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies (NEJS) outside Israel. NEJS faculty examine a wide variety of fields, including the Bible and the ancient Near East, the modern Middle East, Jewish civilization from its inception through contemporary times, as well as Christianity and Islam. Courses are taught at many levels and introduce a wide variety of scholarly approaches, including historical, textual, sociological, and literary. Students of all backgrounds are encouraged to explore the diverse traditions represented in the department.

What will your curriculum look like?
Students have the option of completing a Bachelor of Arts with a major or a minor in NEJS, or a combined B.A./M.A. The minor requires five courses; the major requires eight courses in addition to advanced language courses. Two tracks are available within the major:
- Judaic Studies
- Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies

Additionally, students may consider majors and minors in Hebrew language and literature, and Islamic and Middle Eastern studies, as well as the Yiddish and East European Jewish culture minor. Many students also choose to major in NEJS in addition to another major, such as history, English, psychology, philosophy, politics, women's and gender studies, and biology.

NEJS offers electives in the following areas:
The Bible and the ancient Near East (languages, literatures, and cultures), Rabbinic texts and culture, Christianity, Jewish history, Jewish philosophy and thought, Jewish sociology, Jewish education, Jewish literature (in Hebrew and other languages), Near Eastern and Judaic Studies and the arts, modern Middle East, Israel studies, and feminist approaches to Near Eastern and Judaic Studies. Many NEJS students complete independent studies and senior honors theses, working one-on-one with a faculty member.

Hands-On Learning Experience
The NEJS department encourages students to design internships that integrate academic study with experiential knowledge. The department sponsors credit-bearing internships for junior and senior majors and minors. Former students have completed internships with these organizations:
- New York Blueprint
- Jewish Family and Life
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
- The Museum of Jewish Heritage
- Lilith Magazine
- Israel Consulate in Boston
- Facing History and Ourselves

What else does NEJS program offer?
The interdisciplinary nature of the NEJS program provides students with the tools to critically engage and appreciate central cultural, religious, and political traditions from multiple perspectives. Students also benefit from a wide variety of cultural events, and may participate in the annual student-faculty softball and basketball games. Most NEJS courses are relatively small, and offer excellent opportunities for interaction with faculty members. The NEJS department administers various grants, including Dorot Summer Travel Grants.

What related resources can be found at Brandeis?

What kind of career and education options will you have?
Majoring in NEJS opens up all the career opportunities afforded by a liberal arts education. Past majors have entered the fields of education, law, medicine, business, advertising, entertainment, government, diplomatic service, and journalism. Many students move on to graduate school to prepare for careers in Jewish education, the rabbinate and ministry, and academia.

How can you learn more?
Visit the department website at www.brandeis.edu/departments/nejs or contact the department chair, Professor Marc Brettler, at brettler@brandeis.edu.