

## For Undergraduate Students

### **FYS 18A: Understanding Evil and Human Destiny**

**Reuven Kimelman** (TF 9:30-10:50)  
Designed to introduce students to some of the Western classics that deal with the impact of evil on human destiny. Suffering, justice, and death are studied in their relationship with God, the world, and history.

### **NEJS 5A: The History of Judaism**

**Reuven Kimelman** (TF 11-12:20)  
A survey of the Jewish experience and thought, focusing on the varieties of historical Judaism, including its classical forms, its medieval patterns and transformations, and its modern options.

### **NEJS 10A: Biblical Hebrew Grammar and Texts**

**Daniel Berman** (TF 12:30-1:50)  
*Prerequisite: HBRW 20b or the equivalent as determined by placement examination.*  
A review of biblical Hebrew grammar followed by a survey of the major genres of the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Torah, history, prophecy, psalms, wisdom). Texts are read in Hebrew; the course is taught in English. Emphasis on literary and grammatical aspects of the texts.

## Visiting, Part-time Faculty

Walker Robins – Israel Studies

## For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

### **NEJS 112A: The Book of Genesis**

**Tzvi Abusch** (MW 2-3:20)  
*Prerequisite: HBRW 122a or b, NEJS 10a, or permission of the instructor.*  
An in-depth study of the Hebrew text of Genesis, with particular attention to the meaning, documentary sources, and Near Eastern background of the accounts of creation and origins of human civilization in chapters one to eleven, and of the patriarchal narratives, especially those about Abraham.

### **NEJS 114A: Death, Memorial, and Immortality in Biblical Literature**

**Jacqueline Vayntrub** (TTh 3:30-4:50)  
Surveys biblical concepts of death in its social, historical, and literary context. Topics include human mortality and divine immortality, dying as a social process, the afterlife and the 'soul', and communication with the dead.

### **NEJS 117B: Dead Sea Scrolls**

**Jacqueline Vayntrub** (TTh 5-6:20)  
*Prerequisite: NEJS 10a or a strong knowledge of biblical Hebrew.*  
Studies in the literature of Qumran texts, with particular attention to the exegetical literature.

### **NEJS 132B: Against the Apocalypse: Jewish Responses to the Holocaust**

**Laura Jockusch** (MWTh 11-11:50)  
Provides an overview on the multifaceted Jewish responses to the Nazi destruction of European Jews in the years 1945-1961. Familiarizing students with Jews' historical, legal, cultural, political, religious and commemorative reactions to the Holocaust, it refutes the unwarranted claim of a postwar Jewish silence.

### **NEJS 150A: The Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany**

**Laura Jockusch** (MWTh 10-10:50)  
Explores the history of the German Jewish community in the years 1918-1945, a period characterized by the dramatic change from the solid social, professional and cultural integration of the Jews into German society to their disfranchisement, discrimination, and ultimate destruction.

### **NEJS 152A: Jerusalem: Holy and Contested**

**Walker Robins** (TF 12:30-1:50)  
Traces the development of Jerusalem from a small Jebusite stronghold to a modern metropolis, along the way exploring the many societies, cultures, and, of course, religions that have shaped and been shaped by the holy city.

### **NEJS 155A: Maimonides: A Jewish Thinker in the Islamic World**

**Jonathan Decter** (TTh 2-3:20)  
A study of the life, world, and thought of Moses Maimonides, the most significant Jewish intellectual of the Islamic world. This course traces his intellectual output in philosophy and Judaism, from its beginning in Islamic Spain to the mature works produced in Morocco and Egypt, in the context of the Arabic-Islamic milieu. Half of the course is dedicated to studying his *Guide of the Perplexed*, a Judeo-Arabic work that engages the demands of revealed religion and philosophical rationalism.

### **NEJS 156b: A Philosophical Introduction to Judaism**

**Jon Levisohn** (TF 9:30-10:50)  
Explores selected topics central to Jewish thought and practice. Appropriate for those with and without background in Jewish texts and religions.

### **NEJS 160A: Liberal Judaism through the Lens of the Prayer Book**

**David Ellenson** (T 6:30-9:20)  
*Prerequisite: Basic knowledge of prayer book Hebrew.*  
*Special one-time offering.*  
Modern liberal Jews have expressed their approaches to Judaism in their liturgical creations. This course will study their prayer books so as to trace the growth and development of non-Orthodox varieties of Judaism in the modern period.

### **NEJS 160B: The Zionist Idea: Sources, Advocates and Critics**

**David Ellenson** (TTh 5-6:20)  
*Special one-time offering.*  
Provides an overarching survey of the Zionist ideal from its inceptions to the present. The impact Zionism has had upon modern Jewish identity and thought among Jews and Gentiles alike will be explored.

### **NEJS 162A: American Judaism**

**Jonathan Sarna** (MW 3:30-4:50)  
American Judaism from the earliest settlement to the present, with particular emphasis on the various streams of American Judaism. Judaism's place in American religion and comparisons to Judaism in other countries.

### **NEJS 169B: From Sunday Schools to Birthright: History of American Jewish Education**

**Jonathan Krasner** (Th 2-4:50)  
Empowers students to articulate a reality-based, transformative vision of Jewish education that is grounded in an appreciation for the history and sociology of American Jewish education. It will familiarize students with and contextualize the present Jewish educational landscape, through the use of historical case studies and current research, encouraging students to view the field from an evolutionary perspective. The seminar will address Jewish education in all its forms, including formal and informal settings (e.g., schools, camps, youth groups, educational tourism).

### **NEJS 170B: Inside Jewish Education**

**Sharon Feiman-Nemser** (T 2-4:50)  
Combines autobiography, classroom videotapes, curriculum investigation and fieldwork to explore the purposes, practices and effects of contemporary Jewish education in its many forms and venues.

### **NEJS 174A: Minorities and Others in Israeli Literature and Culture**

**Ilana Szobel** (TTh 3:30-4:50)  
*Taught in Hebrew.*  
An exploration of poetics and identity in modern Hebrew literature. By offering a feminist and psychoanalytic reading of various Hebrew texts, this seminar explores questions of personal and national identity, otherness, visibility, and marginality in the Israeli context.

**NEJS 183B: Global Jewish Literature**

**Ellen Kellman** (MWTh 1-1:50)  
*May not be taken for credit by students who took NEJS 171a in prior years.*  
 Introduces important works of modern Jewish literature, graphic fiction, and film. Taking a comparative approach, it addresses major themes in contemporary Jewish culture, interrogates the "Jewishness" of the works and considers issues of language, poetics, and culture significant to Jewish identity.

**NEJS 184B: Disability in Israeli Literature, Film, and the Arts**

**Ilana Szobel** (TTh 2-3:20)  
 Explores representations of disability within Hebrew and Israeli culture. By focusing on literature, film, dance, and visual art, it pursues various applications of physical, mental, and emotional disability experiences and theories to Zionist, Jewish-Israeli narratives and rhetoric.

**NEJS 186A: Introduction to the Qur'an**

**Suleyman Dost** (MWTh 11-11:50)  
 Traces the history of the Qur'an as text, its exegesis, and its role in inter-religious polemics, law, theology, and politics. Examines the role of the Qur'an in Islamic teachings and its global impact.

**NEJS 195A: Muhammad: From Early Muslim Accounts to Modern Biographies**

**Suleyman Dost** (MW 2-3:20)  
 Studies the life of Muhammad based upon the earliest biographical accounts and the academic analyses in both Islamic and non-Islamic sources, accompanied by an examination of his legacy in different aspects of Islam, such as Shi'ism and Sufism.

**IMES 104A: Islam: Civilization and Institutions**

**Carl El-Tobgui** (MWTh 12-12:50)  
 Provides a disciplined study of Islamic civilization from its origins to the modern period. Approaches the study from a humanities perspective. Topics covered will include the Qur'an, tradition, law, theology, politics, Islam and other religions, modern developments, and women in Islam.

## For Graduate Students

**NEJS 200A: Elementary Akkadian**

**Jared Pfost** (TF 11-12:20)  
*May not be taken for credit by students who took NEJS 101a in prior years.*  
 Introduction to Akkadian grammar and lexicon and cuneiform script. This course is for beginning students of Akkadian.

**NEJS 202A: Akkadian Mythological/Religious Texts I**

**Tzvi Abusch** (MW 5-6:20)  
*Prerequisite: NEJS 200b or the equivalent.*

**NEJS 260B: The Jewish Intellectual and Historical Consciousness**

**Eugene Sheppard** (MW 2-3:20)  
 Explores foundational primary and secondary texts relating to the development of "the Jewish Intellectual" and its articulation of historical consciousness since medieval times. The course looks at how Jews came to rethink their temporal and special situatedness in dramatically changing conditions from medieval times to the present.

**NEJS FACULTY:**

Tzvi Abusch – Languages and cultures of ancient Mesopotamia  
 Guy Antebi – Hebrew language  
 Bernadette Broten – Christian studies  
 Jonathan Decter – Medieval Judaism; Sephardic Jewry  
**Chair, NEJS**  
 Suleyman Dost – Classical Islam  
 David Ellenson – Israel Studies  
 Carl Sharif El-Tobgui – Arabic & Islamic Studies  
**Director of Arabic Language Program**  
 Sharon Feiman-Nemser – Jewish education  
 Sylvia Barack Fishman – Contemporary Jewry and American Jewish sociology and literature  
 ChaeRan Freeze – East European history  
 Sara Hascal – Hebrew language  
**Acting Director, Hebrew Language & Literature Program**  
 Laura Jockusch – Modern Jewish history/Holocaust studies  
 Ellen Kellman – Yiddish language and literature  
 Reuven Kimelman – Talmud, Midrash & Liturgy  
 Jonathan Krasner – Jewish education  
**Undergraduate Advising Head**  
 Jon Levisohn – Jewish education  
 Yehudah Mirsky – Israel studies  
 Sharon Rivo – Jewish film  
 Jonathan D. Sarma – American Jewish history  
 Eugene Sheppard – Modern Jewish history and thought  
**Director of Graduate Studies**  
 Esther Shorr – Hebrew language  
 Ellen Smith – Museum, visual & material culture  
 Ilana Szobel – Modern Hebrew literature  
 Jacqueline Vayntrub – Hebrew Bible  
 David Wright – Languages and literatures of the Ancient Near East

For course prerequisites & limits, please consult the **2017-2018 Brandeis University Bulletin**:  
[www.brandeis.edu/registrar/bulletin/provisional/](http://www.brandeis.edu/registrar/bulletin/provisional/)

**Brandeis University**

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 BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF  
 NEAR EASTERN AND  
 JUDAIC STUDIES