

JEWISH STUDIES, B.A.

Begin Campus: Any Penn State Campus

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The Jewish Studies major provides broad inquiry into the history, culture, society, literature, philosophy, politics, language, and religious beliefs of the Jewish people from Biblical times to the present. By nature interdisciplinary, and emphasizing critical thinking and global engagement, the Jewish Studies major is flexible and adaptable to a wide variety of courses of study. Students in the major must complete a total of thirty (30) credits, at least fifteen (15) of which must be at the 400-level. No more than eight (8) credits of Hebrew may count toward the 30-credit total. All students in the major must complete JST 10, an introduction to Jewish Civilization, and select from approved lists or in consultation with the Director three courses that address Jewish studies across its history:

- one course in Jewish Studies of the Ancient through the Medieval periods,
- one course in Jewish Studies of the Early Modern through the Contemporary periods, and
- one course in Jewish Studies of the Diaspora.

All students in the major are particularly encouraged to participate in a relevant internships, education abroad programs, and/or archaeological fieldwork for which course credits and scholarships are available. Penn State students also may enroll to study abroad at a university in Israel, and up to 15 credits of related education abroad courses in any country may be applied to requirements for the major in consultation with the adviser.

What is Jewish Studies?

Jewish Studies is an interdisciplinary program where students can learn about the history, cultures, literatures, and languages of the Jews. Specializations can include, but are not limited to, Modernity and the Jews; Ancient Israel, Bible, and Early Judaism; Holocaust, Anti-Semitism, and Genocide; Jews in America; Jewish Culture and Literature; Israel and Zionism; or Jewish-Christian Relations.

You Might Like This Program If...

- You want to think critically about the world we all live in.
- You have interest in experiences such as lectures, film series, symposia, discussions, and sponsored trips to museums and Jewish cultural sites.
- You hope to enrich your understanding of Jews, Judaism, and the Jewish experience.

Entrance to Major

In order to be eligible for entrance to this major, a student must:

1. attain at least a C (2.00) cumulative grade-point average for all courses taken at the University; and
2. have at least third-semester classification (<https://www.registrar.psu.edu/enrollment/semester-classification.cfm>).

READ SENATE POLICY 37-30: ENTRANCE TO AND CHANGES IN MAJOR PROGRAMS OF STUDY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/37-00-entrance-to-a-college-or-major/>)

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Arts degree in Jewish Studies, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Electives	21
Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements	24
Requirements for the Major	30

3 of the 24 credits for Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements are included in the Requirements for the Major, General Education, or Electives and 0-12 credits are included in Electives if world language proficiency is demonstrated by examination.

Per Senate Policy 83-80.5, the college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Requirements for the Major

15 of these must be at the 400-level. No more than 15 credits in courses numbered 99, 199, 299, 399, or 499 may count toward the requirements for the major.

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
JST/HEBR 10	Jewish Civilization	3
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 3 credits in Jewish Studies in the Ancient Period through Medieval Period from approved program list or in consultation with the director		3
Select 3 credits in Jewish Studies from the Early Modern Period through the Contemporary period from approved program list or in consultation with the director		3
Select 3 credits in Jewish Studies concerned with Jewish culture in Diaspora from approved program list or in consultation with the director		3
Select 18 credits from Jewish Studies, Hebrew, or appropriate courses in Anthropology, Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies, Comparative Literature, English, History, Philosophy, or Religious Studies from approved program list		18

No more than 8 credits of Hebrew Language courses may count toward the requirements for the major.

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- **United States Cultures:** 3 credits
- **International Cultures:** 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

B.A. Degree Requirements

World Language (0-12 credits): Student must attain 12th credit level of proficiency in one world language in addition to English. This proficiency must be demonstrated by either examination or course work. See the Placement Policy for Penn State World Language Courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/advising-planning-degree-program/course-placements/placement-policy-world-language-courses/>).

B.A. Fields (9 credits): Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Arts, World Languages, Natural Sciences, Quantification (may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major; world language credits in this category must be in a second world language in addition to English or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the first language). Credits must be selected from the list of approved courses.

World Cultures (0-3 credits): Select 3 credits from approved list. Students may count courses in this category in order to meet other major, minor, elective, or General Education requirements, except for the University Cultural Diversity (US/IL) requirement.

Program Learning Objectives

- **Content Knowledge:** Students will be able to summarize the evolution of different forms of Jewish life within various settings and time periods with a focus on cultural, religious, social and economic aspects, as well as contemporary relevance.
 - Students will be able to discuss the different forms of Jewish-non-Jewish relations in different cultural settings over time and comparatively.
 - Students will read major Jewish texts and will be able to explain their significance within Jewish spheres and beyond.
 - Students will be able to compare different conceptions and currents of Judaism and how these relate to ideas about human existence, God, and the world.
 - Students will demonstrate a specific skill set related to a course or sub-discipline (i.e. Archaeology, Comp. Lit., History, Political Science, Philosophy).

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will be able to implement specific skills in analyzing texts, images and objects related to Jewish history, religion, and culture.
 - Students will be able to address the topics studied by going beyond personal impressions to an analytical examination of the assigned sources.
 - Students will be able to recognize stereotypes and reject simplistic generalizations.
- **Expressive Skills:** In both written and oral form, students will craft a sound narrative on a question related to Jewish Studies that is backed up by sources, contains an argument, and reflects the results of the research conducted using a range of different materials.
 - Students will be able to summarize information in a concise and accessible manner.
- **Reading Skills:** Students will be able to identify and evaluate authors' arguments and perspectives about Jews and Jewish life.
 - Students will differentiate between relevant and less relevant information for the understanding and study of Jewish history.
- **Research Skills:** Students will describe and apply relevant theoretical and conceptual approaches for guiding their research in Jewish Studies.
 - Students will be able to develop questions that engage critically with a topic connected to Jews and Jewish life and devise a research strategy to analyze a certain aspect of the topic in greater detail.
 - Students will be able to differentiate between primary vs. secondary sources.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

Liberal Arts Academic Advising

814-865-2545

Use the Liberal Arts Meet the Academic Advisers web page (<https://la.psu.edu/student-services/academic-advising/meet-the-academic-advisers/>) to see the contact information for the specific adviser(s) of this program

Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>)

to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Jewish Studies, B.A. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
JST 10*	3 Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3
General Education Course (GWS) [†]	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course (GQ) [†]	3
General Education Course (GQ) [†]	3 General Education Course	3
HEBR 1	4 HEBR 2	4
LA 83	1.5	
	17.5	16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
General Education Course (GWS) [†]	3 LA 283	1.5
Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3 400-Level Course in HEBR*	3
General Education Course	3 Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
HEBR 3	4 General Education Course	3
	B.A. Knowledge Domains	3
	16	16.5

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3 General Education Course (GWS) [†]	3
400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3 400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3
	15	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3 400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3
World Cultures	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3

General Education Course (GHW)	1.5 Elective	3
	13.5	13.5

Total Credits 123

- * Course requires a grade of C or better for the major
- ‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education
- # Course is an Entrance to Major requirement
- † Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Notes:

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.

Jewish Studies, B.A. at Commonwealth Campuses

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
JST 10*	3 Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3
General Education Course (GWS)†	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course (GQ)‡	3
General Education Course (GQ)‡	3 General Education Course	3
HEBR 1	4 HEBR 2	4
	16	16

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
General Education Course (GWS)‡	3 400-Level Course in HEBR*	3
Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3 Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course	3
HEBR 3	4 B.A. Knowledge Domains	3
	16	15

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
LA 283	1.5 General Education Course (GWS)‡	3
Course at Any Level in JST or Related Area*	3 400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3
400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3 General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3 Elective	3
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 Elective	3
Elective	3	
	16.5	15

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3 400-Level Course in JST, HEBR, or Related Area*	3
World Cultures	3 General Education Course (GHW)	1.5
B.A. Knowledge Domains	3 Elective	3
Elective	3 Elective	3

General Education Course (GHW)	1.5 Elective	3
	13.5	13.5

Total Credits 121.5

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

Bachelor of Arts Requirements:

Bachelor of Arts students must take 9 credits in Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) Fields (Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Arts; World Languages [2nd language or beyond the 12th credit level of proficiency in the 1st]; Natural Sciences; Quantification). The B.A. Fields courses may not be taken in the area of the student's primary major. See your adviser and the Degree Requirements section (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-information/academic-information/>) of this Bulletin.

Bachelor of Arts students must take 3 credits in World Cultures. See your adviser and the full list of courses approved as World Cultures courses (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/course-lists/ba-world-cultures/>).

Advising Notes:

- 24 credits within the major must be completed at University Park (policy 83-80). Talk with your academic adviser for additional details.

Career Paths

Jewish Studies offers a flexible curriculum that's a natural complement to many other courses of study. Our graduates have gone on to work in business, education and academia, public service, museums, philanthropy, and many other fields. A Jewish Studies degree will make you more attractive to employers seeking well-rounded applicants who are globally conscious citizens and critical thinkers.

Careers

- Secondary and College Level Teaching
- Public Service
- The Ministry (both Jewish and non-Jewish)
- Business

- Law
- Medicine
- Archaeology

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POTENTIAL CAREER OPTIONS FOR GRADUATES OF THE JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM (<https://la.psu.edu/current-students/career-enrichment-network/>)

Contact

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