Frequently asked questions

Who can take Jewish Studies classes?
Anyone! You don’t have to be Jewish or a Jewish Studies major to take Jewish Studies classes.

Do Jewish Studies courses count only as electives?
Because most Jewish Studies courses originate in other departments like Government, History, or Middle Eastern Studies, they will likely count toward your university core or College of Liberal Arts requirements.

Can I take Jewish Studies courses abroad?
Several study abroad opportunities, including the Normandy Scholars Program and a Maymester in Prague, complement the Jewish Studies major. The center hopes to offer a Maymester in Israel soon.

What funding is available for SCJS students?
The center offers study abroad funds and research support for students working on Jewish Studies topics. For more information, contact Dr. Robert Abzug.

Does the center offer extracurricular activities?
Last year the center offered more than 25 events, including lectures, concerts, and film screenings, to the university and the greater community. SCJS works closely with Texas Performing Arts and other academic units to provide wide-ranging free, public programming. The center also maintains a special partnership with Texas Hillel and collaborates with the Jewish Community Association of Austin to ensure our students’ access to some of the city’s richest cultural offerings.

Great! Where do I sign up?
To take a Jewish Studies class without declaring a major, simply sign up for one during your regular registration period. To declare a major, contact the SCJS academic advisor, Dr. Cynthia Gladstone.

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What is Jewish Studies?

Jewish Studies is a field of study in the Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Combining courses in religion, history, philosophy, language and literature, sociology, political science, and more, programs in Jewish Studies examine the role of Jewish thought, the role of Jews in various societies and epochs, and the prevalence of Jewish themes in literature and other arts.

What is the Schusterman Center?

The Schusterman Center for Jewish Studies provides a multi-disciplinary Jewish Studies curriculum with a focus on Jewish life in Eastern Europe, Israel, and the Americas. It draws upon faculty from more than ten departments in the College of Liberal Arts, as well as from the College of Fine Arts. Beyond the classroom, the center hosts lectures, conferences, exhibits, and concerts displaying the full range of Jewish culture.

Courses offered

Over 1000 students enroll in over 20 Jewish Studies courses housed in departments across the Colleges of Liberal Arts and Fine Arts each year. Past and present courses include:

- American Jewish Literature and Music
- American Jewish Material Culture
- America and the Holocaust
- Anti-Semitism
- Classic Jewish Texts
- Concepts in Judaic Culture
- European Jews in the Modern World
- Holocaust Aftereffects
- Introduction to Jewish Civilization
- Israel: Society and Politics
- Israel-Palestine Conflict in Literature and Film
- Jewish Ethics
- Jewish Identity in American Performance
- Jewish Martyrdom
- Jews in America: The Yiddish Experience
- Judaism, Christianity & Islam: An Introduction
- Latin American Jewish Writers
- Multi-Cultural Israel
- Queen of Sheba in History and Legend
- Spinoza and Modernity
- The Church and the Jews
- Women in the Hebrew Bible

And remember: Most Jewish Studies courses are cross-listed in one or more departments across the college and may count for credit toward those departmental majors.

Degree requirements

The Major

The major for the 2010–2012 catalog consists of 27 semester hours (18 upper-division) of the following:

- 3 hours of JS 304M (Jewish Civilization: Beginning to 1492) or JS 304N (Jewish Civilization: 1492 to Present)
- 6 hours of JS 363 (Topics in Humanities) or comparable courses identified by faculty advisor
- 6 hours of JS 364 and/or JS 365 (Topics in History and Social Science) or comparable courses identified by faculty advisor
- 12 additional hours of Jewish Studies (6 must be upper-division)

Students are encouraged to use Hebrew or Yiddish to fulfill their Area A foreign language requirement.

Minor for Jewish Studies majors

Twelve semester hours (6 upper-division) in any one other field of study. If the minor is in a foreign language other than that used to fulfill Area A, the 12 hours may be lower-division credits, but must include at least 6 hours beyond course 507 or the equivalent.

Minor in Jewish Studies

A minor in Jewish Studies for non-majors usually consists of 12 semester hours (6 upper-division).