

*THE ANNE TANENBAUM
CENTRE FOR JEWISH STUDIES*

2025-2026

GRADUATE
COURSE HANDBOOK



Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

מרכז למדעי היהדות

www.jewishstudies.utoronto.ca

[facebook.com/cjsuoft](https://www.facebook.com/cjsuoft) [@cjsuoft](https://twitter.com/cjsuoft) [@cjsuoft](https://www.instagram.com/cjsuoft)

[Anne Tanenbaum Centre for Jewish Studies](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

Graduate Course Handbook 2025–2026

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

No courses in 2025-26

DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY

No courses in 2025-26

CENTRE FOR COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COL5081H BENJAMIN'S ARCADES PROJECT

Instructor: Rebecca Comay

Time: Thursdays, 1-3

This course will be devoted to a close reading of the Arcades Project, Walter Benjamin's unfinished and posthumously published montage of fragments, quotations and aphorisms on the urban culture of Second Empire Paris – “capital of the nineteenth century.” The birthplace of consumer capitalism and the site of numerous failed revolutions and counterrevolutionary innovations, nineteenth century Paris crystallized, for Benjamin – writing in exile from fascist Germany — the multiple ambiguities of modernity itself. Many of these ambiguities were registered in disorienting new experiences of space and time. While exploring Benjamin's reading of the various strands of visual, literary and architectural culture, we will consider the implications of his approach for thinking about history, memory, and politics today. Our reading of the Arcades will be supplemented with readings from Baudelaire, Blanqui, Fourier, Marx, Adorno, Brecht, Aragon, Simmel, and Freud as well as contemporary critical theorists.

No specific background is required, but it would be helpful to have read Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire beforehand.

Assignments: will likely involve a seminar presentation, short reflection paper, and final essay.

JGC1855H CRITICAL THEORY: THE FRENCH-GERMAN CONNECTION

Instructor: Willi Goetschel

Time: Tuesdays, 3-5

This course examines central theoretical issues in contemporary thought with particular attention to the role that the “Frankfurt School” and its affiliates such as Benjamin, Kracauer, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas and others play in the context of modern German social and cultural thought. In France, thinkers like Foucault, and Derrida respond to this tradition and enrich it. The course explores in which way the continuing dialogue between these thinkers informs current critical approaches to rethinking issues and concerns such as theorizing modernity, culture, secularization, multiculturalism, and the vital role of cultural difference.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

No courses in 2025-26

CENTRE FOR DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

GER1051H F Sexuality and Secularization in the Yiddish Haskole

Time: Tue 3:00-5:00

Instructor: Naomi Seidman

This course will explore the Yiddish literature of the Haskole (alt. Haskalah, sometimes translated as “Jewish Enlightenment”), primarily written in the nineteenth century in Eastern Europe. We will focus on the interrelated themes of secularization and sexuality, recognizing the Haskalah as a project for reconceiving Jewish gender roles, sexuality, and marital practices in the light of European norms; among our theoretical lenses will be postcolonial studies, reading the Haskalah as a project of internal European colonialism, with maskilim (“enlighteners”) as a “native elite”. Our primary sources will be the closet drama characteristic of the era as well as novels (romanen, or romances) and short stories, attending to both the ways they borrow from European conventions and resist these in the name of Jewish difference. Readings include Ettinger’s Serkele, Aksenfeld’s Dos shterntikhl, and Linetski’s Dos poylish yingl. We will also read secondary sources in Yiddish and English to understand this period from the perspective of various critical schools, including Marxist criticism.

GER1050H S Methods in Yiddish

Time: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00

Instructor: Anna Shternshis

This is the core course for the Field of Yiddish Studies, focusing on methods of analysis of major literary, historical, religious and sociological texts created in Yiddish language from 1500 until 2000. Conducted fully in Yiddish, the course trains the students both in advanced understanding of the Yiddish civilization as well as how Yiddish societies incorporated cultures of neighbouring communities. The texts analyzed will include Tsena Urena (1616) (Woman’s Companion to the Bible), stories by Nakhman from Bratslav (1700s), works by Alexander Abramovich, Sholem Rabinowitch, Itskhok Perets, Dovid Bergelson, Yankev Gladshtein and others.

CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES

ERE 1159HF: Truth and Post-Truth: A History - Topics in Russian and Eurasian Studies

Instructor: Marci Shore

Time: Tuesdays, 2:00-4:00

God was sidelined during the Enlightenment, relegated to a minor role as reason took center stage. Some time later—in the 1880s—God was killed off entirely. Modernity is about replacing God. It’s about searching for another source of certainty to ground truth. Modern philosophy, in turn, begins with the question: does the world exist? How can we be certain that what we perceive is what is real? How can we be certain of anything at all? In the absence of certainty, we’re condemned to homelessness and alienation. If modernity is the attempt to replace God, postmodernity begins when we gave up on replacing God, when we accept that there is neither a God nor a viable surrogate. If modernity is a searching for certainty and groundedness, post-modernity, in turn, is an embracing of uncertainty and groundlessness. This European intellectual history seminar explores the epistemological question in modern thought: is there such a thing as truth? And is it possible—in Václav Havel’s phrase—to live in truth? We begin with Plato’s cave and move through Descartes’ malicious genius; Kant and Husserl; the role of ideology and lies in 20th century totalitarianism; the post-structuralism that develops in France as a protection against the absolutist truth claims bound

up with totalitarian terror; dissident thought in Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s; the twenty-first century emergence of post-truth, and the possibilities of an antidote.

ERE1151HS: Topics in European and Eurasian Studies: Policing, Crime and Justice

Instructor: Ron Levi

Time: Tuesdays 11 am-1 pm

This course examines the responses of justice system institutions to concerns over crime, violence, and policing in Europe. Our substantive focus will be on how police and other justice institutions (such as prosecution and courts) respond to crime, violence, and insecurity, the outcomes of these interventions, and the views, hopes, concerns, and aspirations of individuals who experience them. We will also examine concerns and proposed solutions regarding police violence, bias, discrimination, and the effects of justice

interventions for inequality and social cohesion, including the social upheavals and political disputes generated by high-profile events, current and past. Course readings will draw from a wide range of materials, ensuring that students engage with diverse perspectives, including social science research, legal texts, official documents, and journalistic accounts. Since the course is thematic, we will include research and examples from a range of countries, likely including France, Denmark, and Sweden, along with attention to the UK, and with occasional comparisons with North America. This discussion-based seminar requires students to complete all assigned readings before class and to engage in collective discussions weekly.

ERE 1195HF: Topics in Ukraine: Ukraine as the World: 5000 BCE to Present

Instructor: Timothy Snyder

Time: Tuesdays 12-2

This course explores how the lands of Ukraine have been central to the direction of global history since before the beginning of civilization. We observe there early human settlements and the spread of Indo-European languages. The structure of western myth—from the Greek to the Norse—has depended heavily on encounters with and the lands and peoples of today's Ukraine. In the modern period, Ukraine was at the centre of the slave trade and of modern colonialism as well as the central territory of Nazi and soviet totalitarianism. Today, Ukraine is an experiment in post-imperial democracy and a laboratory for new conversations about human freedom.

Department of History

HIS 1783H Jews of the Premodern Islamic World

Instructor: Alan Verskin

Time: Thursday 1-3

For a millennium, most of the world's Jews lived in Islamic lands. The result of this extended encounter was that Jewish literature and culture developed in intimate dialogue with Muslims. This course explores key facets of that Jewish-Muslim relationship. Topics may include: social and legal history, the political and legal institutions that shaped the Jewish experience of minorityhood; the Islamic religious milieu which simultaneously challenged and inspired Jews; and the popular and scholarly culture which Jews both consumed and contributed to. A major focus of the course will be on investigating the promises and challenges provided by different genres of primary sources, most of which were written between 900 and 1600. We will examine legal, documentary, and literary sources, and consider the strategies that scholars have developed to draw information from them. Prior course work in either Jewish or Islamic studies is recommended. All texts will be provided in English although students with knowledge of Hebrew and/or the languages of the Islamic world will be encouraged to put those skills to use.

HIS1265H Atrocities and Memory in Postwar Europe and North America

Instructor: Rebecca Wittmann

Time: Wednesday 1-3

This course will examine how Europeans and North Americans confront the memory of both Nazi mass murder and the Allied bombing of Germany through the law, literature, left wing agitation, film, memorials and museums, and political debates. How do postwar representations of German atrocities and the Allied liberation of Europe, or conversely, German suffering and Allied war crimes shift throughout the postwar period, and what do these representations mean for “overcoming the past?” We will juxtapose generational responses, national reactions (including Germany, Poland, Israel, and the US and Canada), and official vs. unofficial representations of the atrocities of the Second World War. Among the focal points: the Nuremberg and postwar West German trials of Nazis, the fascination with Anne Frank, anti-fascist terror in 1970s Germany, The Berlin Memorial and the US Holocaust Museum, and films such as Shoah and Schindler’s List, and the explosion of debate on the bombing of Germany between 1943-45.

DEPARTMENT OF NEAR AND MIDDLE EASTERN CIVILIZATION

NMC1316HF Modern Hebrew Poetry

Instructor: Harry Fox

Mondays 1:00-3:00pm

[Course Description found here.](#)

NMC1302HF Introductory Biblical Hebrew

Instructor: Laura Hare

Time: Mondays and Wednesday, 1:00-3:00pm

An introduction to biblical Hebrew prose. Grammar and selected texts. For students with no previous knowledge of Hebrew.

NMC1303HS Intermediate Biblical Hebrew

Instructor: Laura Hare

Time: Mondays and Wednesday, 1:00-3:00pm

A continuation of the study of ancient Hebrew grammar and texts. Focus is given to covering a wide variety of genres, e.g., narrative, chronicle, genealogy, oracle, prayer, hymn, and proverb.

Prerequisites: NMC 1302H or other intermediate biblical Hebrew course

NMC1111YY Babylonian Talmud

Instructor: T. Meacham

Time: Thursdays 11:00-1:00

[Course Description found here.](#)

NMC1314HF Law in Ancient Judaism

Instructor: S. Metso

Time: Thursdays 1:00 – 3:00pm

[Course Description found here.](#)

NMC1330HF Elementary Modern Hebrew I

Instructor: Yigal Nizri

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00am-1:00pm

[Course Description found here.](#)

NMC1332HF Intermediate Modern Hebrew I

Instructor: Yigal Nizri

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00-5:00pm

[Course Description found here.](#)

NMC 1331HS Elementary Modern Hebrew II

Instructor: Yigal Nizri

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:00am-1:00pm

[Course Description found here.](#)

NMC1333HS Intermediate Modern Hebrew II

Instructor: Yigal Nizri

Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00-5:00pm

[Course Description found here.](#)

NMC2002HS Advanced Topics in Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations: Hebrew Without Borders: The Contemporary Diasporic Hebrew Novel

Instructor: O Yirmiya

Tuesdays 3:00-5:00pm

[Course Description found here.](#)

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

PHL2051H 17th Century European Philosophy: Spinoza's "Ethics"

Instructor: Michael Rosenthal

Time: Wednesday 9:00 – 12:00 pm

Description: In this course, students will study the development and structure of Spinoza's philosophical system. We will begin with selections from Spinoza's early works, which include a treatise on philosophical method, a summary and analysis of the Cartesian system, and a critique of religion. We will spend most of our time on a careful reading of the Ethics, which presents Spinoza's mature views on metaphysics, epistemology, psychology, and the ethical life. We will analyze his arguments in detail, compare them to those of his contemporaries (e.g., Descartes, Hobbes, Leibniz), and discuss the influence and relevance of Spinoza's work to contemporary philosophical projects.

JGC1855H Critical Theory

Instructors: Willi Goetschel

Time: Tuesdays 3:00-5:00 PM

Description: This course examines central theoretical issues in contemporary thought with particular attention to the role that the "Frankfurt School" and its affiliates such as Benjamin, Kracauer, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas and others play in the context of modern German social and cultural thought. In France, thinkers like Foucault, and Derrida respond to this tradition and enrich it. The course explores in which way the continuing dialogue between these thinkers informs current critical approaches to rethinking issues and concerns such as theorizing modernity, culture, secularization, multiculturalism, and the vital role of cultural difference.

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

No courses in 2025-26

DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION

RLG3114HF- Christianity and Judaism in a Colonial Context

Instructor: Ronald Charles and John Marshall

Time: Fridays 11am to 1pm

This seminar sets the study of early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism into relation with a movement in critical historiography of the modern world, namely postcolonial theory. Though the term “postcolonial theory” encompasses a panoply of approaches and dispositions, the basic insight that founds the seminar is the non-givenness of colonial domination and the resulting close attention to the endeavour of constructing such domination as “natural” as well as to the subaltern strategies of negotiation to which such situations typically give rise. Ideally, the conversation between contemporary postcolonial theory and research and scholarship on early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism will go two ways. On the one hand, students of early Christianity and Second Temple Judaism into awareness of methodological developments in historical research on other periods and settings. On the other hand, postcolonial theorists can benefit from how some of their insights are modified, applied, and developed in the context of the ancient world. This, in turn, expands and strengthens both the scope of the theory and the field of early Christian studies.

RLG3144HF Isaiah and Post-Exilic Prophecy

Instructor: Judith Newman

Time: Mondays 1pm to 3pm

The course considers the various ways in which the role of Israelite prophecy is reconceived in the post-exilic period, particularly as this relates to the retrieval and extension of Isaianic traditions. The course will focus on the exilic and post-exilic expansion of the book of Isaiah and the deployment of Isaiah traditions in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the New Testament, and other early Jewish literature. The prerequisite languages for this course are Biblical Hebrew and Koine Greek.

RLG3200HF Politics of Bible Translation

Instructor: Naomi Seidman

Time: Tuesdays 11am to 1pm, JHB213

This course will explore the history of Bible translation from antiquity to our own day, focusing on translation as political and cultural as well as linguistic negotiation. We will ground ourselves in the history of translation theory (and in particular in postcolonial translation theory), recognizing that theoretical approaches to the problem of translation themselves emerge from theological and politically charged historical conditions. With our philological, cultural, and historical tools in hand, we will explore the history of translations and revisions of the Bible, immerse ourselves in unusual examples of translation (children’s Bibles, the Emoji Bible, R. Crumb’s Genesis, etc.), and try our hand at the craft of Bible translation.

RLG3621HF Modern Jewish Thought

Instructor: Ken Green

Time: Thursdays 11am to 1pm, UC44

The course will consist of a close study of major themes, texts, and thinkers in modern Jewish thought. Attention will be focused on the historical development of modern Judaism, with special

emphasis on the Jewish religious and philosophical responses to the challenges of modernity. Among the modern Jewish thinkers to be considered will be: Spinoza, Mendelssohn, Krochmal, Steinheim, Cohen, Rosenzweig, Buber, Scholem, Strauss, and Fackenheim. For 2025-2026: The Thought of Emil Fackenheim

RLG1004HS, Religions of Mediterranean Antiquity

Instructor: Judith Newman

Time: Tuesdays 3-5pm, JHB213

This gateway seminar will introduce students to approaches to the study of religions of Mediterranean antiquity. The purpose of the course is to provide a broad understanding of the history of the discipline and how methods have evolved in the study of Hebrew Bible, Early Christianity, and Early Judaism in the context of Greco-Roman antiquity. Topics covered in the course include source and form criticism; archaeology; social sciences; conceptualization of diversity; the material text; and positionality. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to teach a range of methods at the introductory level and equipped to refine an approach to frame their own research projects.

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

No courses in 2025-26